



Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Report shows 20 percent of Baton Rouge bridges are structurally deficient

By: [Amber Smith](#)



BATON ROUGE, La. (LOCAL 33)(FOX 44) - A [new report](#) from a national transportation research group, TRIP, revealed 20 percent of bridges 20 feet or longer in the Baton Rouge area are structurally deficient.

The report finds that in both East Baton Rouge Parish and West Baton Rouge Parish, 122 of the 613 bridges are structurally deficient. The report said those bridges on the list carry approximately 419,000 vehicles per day.

Responding to the report, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary Shawn Wilson clarified that structural deficiency does not mean the bridges are unsafe. Instead, it is an engineering term used to identify that the structure could use repair.

"Structurally deficient or having elements of structural deficiency does not mean it is not safe. It just speaks to the way we create priorities for repairs," Wilson said.

Department spokesperson Rodney Mallett said there are a lot of older bridges in the area, so it makes sense that they would be in need of repair. When that work is necessary for the safety of drivers, Mallett said LaDOTD closes it.

"We make repairs on bridges constantly. We inspect them. When they are in need of repairs, we make the repairs. If we can't make the repairs to make the bridge safe, we will close that bridge. If the bridge is open, it's safe. If it's closed, it's unsafe," Mallett said.

Local plumber Muhammad Aziz said he drives all over the Baton Rouge area for work. He said the study revealing 20 percent of the area bridges are structurally deficient came as no surprise.

"I travel over the bridges every day," Aziz said. "If you're from Baton Rouge, you know the roads are bad here."

When it comes to making repairs to the bridges on the list, LaDOTD officials said funding is the largest roadblock.

"We do not have a lot of funding for the repairs. A lot of our bridges need to be replaced. They need to be upgraded. A good example of that is Intracoastal Waterway Bridge on LA 1, but the funding for that is not there right now," Mallett said.

To see how the bridges you travel fare, see [TRIP's full report](#).