



TRIP Reports: LOUISIANA MOTORISTS LOSE \$7.6 BILLION PER YEAR ON ROADS THAT ARE ROUGH, CONGESTED & LACK SOME DESIRABLE SAFETY FEATURES – UP TO \$2,431 PER DRIVER

Posted on [April 14, 2021](#) by [Greg](#)



Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost Louisiana motorists a total of \$7.6 billion statewide annually – as much as \$2,431 per driver in some areas – due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support short- and long-term economic growth in Louisiana, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation research nonprofit.

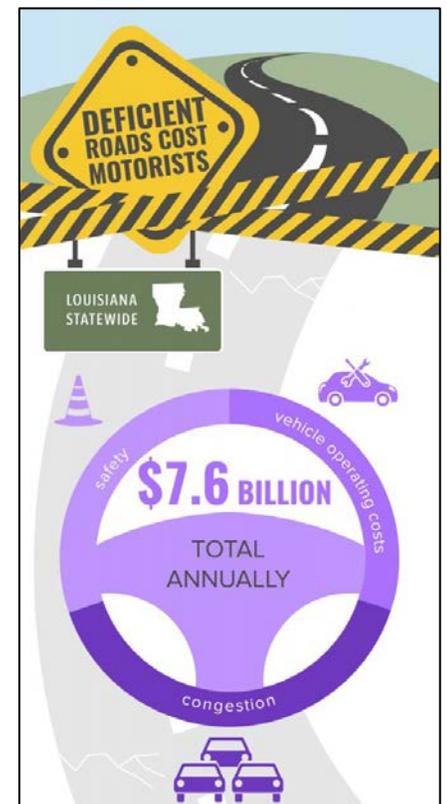
The TRIP report, “[Louisiana Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that throughout Louisiana, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition, 13 percent of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or more in length) are rated poor/structurally deficient, and more than 3,700 people lost their lives on the state’s roads from 2015-2019. Louisiana’s major urban roads are congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce.

Driving on Louisiana roads costs the state’s drivers \$7.6 billion per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway features, while not the primary cause, likely were a contributing factor. The report includes regional pavement and bridge conditions, a list of the most congested corridors, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Baton Rouge, Lafayette, New Orleans and Shreveport urban areas and statewide. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in the state’s largest urban areas, along with a statewide total, is below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Baton Rouge	\$615	\$1,202	\$614	\$2,431
Lafayette	\$782	\$738	\$507	\$2,027
New Orleans	\$685	\$1,312	\$406	\$2,403
Shreveport	\$878	\$694	\$563	\$2,135
Louisiana Statewide	\$2.3 Billion	\$3 Billion	\$2.3 Billion	\$7.6 Billion

Due to inadequate state and local funding, nearly half of major roads and highways in Louisiana are in poor or mediocre condition. Twenty-five percent of major roads in the state are in poor condition and 22 percent are in mediocre condition. Seventeen percent of the state’s major roads are in fair condition and the remaining 36 percent are in good condition. Driving on rough roads costs the average Louisiana driver \$667 annually in additional vehicle operating costs – a total of \$2.3 billion statewide.

Thirteen percent of Louisiana’s bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, the seventh highest share in the nation. Bridges that are in poor/structurally deficient condition have significant deterioration of the bridge



deck, supports or other major components. Thirty-nine percent of the state's bridges are rated in fair condition and the remaining 48 percent are in good condition. Most bridges are designed to last 50 years before major overhaul or replacement, although many newer bridges are being designed to last 75 years or longer. In Louisiana, 33 percent of the state's bridges were built in 1969 or earlier.

"If the Governor and the Legislature can't lead on transportation issues to significantly increase funding, Louisiana will continue to rank as one of the worst places for infrastructure and, here in our Capital Region, for traffic congestion," said Adam Knapp, president and CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber. "When will they decide that enough is enough? When will *we* decide to hold them accountable for their failure to pass structural reforms for transportation? They can do it this year, this Legislative session, and they should. Infrastructure is the key to Louisiana's future job growth, for everyone."

Traffic crashes in Louisiana claimed the lives of 3,738 people from 2015 to 2019, 20 percent of whom were pedestrians or bicyclists. Louisiana's overall traffic fatality rate of 1.42 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2019 is higher than the national average of 1.11 and the eighth highest in the U.S. The traffic fatality rate on Louisiana's rural, non-Interstate roadways in 2019 was approximately two-and-a-half times higher than on all other roads (2.52 per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 1.04). From 2015 to 2019, there were 630 pedestrian and 130 bicycle fatalities in Louisiana, 20 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities in the state. The annual statewide financial impact of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary cause, were likely a contributing factor was a total of \$2.3 billion.

"The Baton Rouge and New Orleans metros have long been bound by economic ties, but the deteriorating and congested infrastructure between the two severely limits growth," said 2021 chair of the SoLA Super Region Committee and southeast vice president of government and public affairs for Cox Communications. "This is a fixable problem. Lost revenue for businesses, lost time for commuters, and lost opportunity for everyone does not have to be our future reality. Investment in our infrastructure must be a priority."

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle travel in Louisiana dropped by as much as 36 percent in April 2020 (as compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year), but rebounded to six percent below the previous year's volume in January 2021. Congested roads choke commuting and commerce and cost Louisiana drivers \$3 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel. In Louisiana's most congested urban areas, drivers lose up to \$1,312, spend as many as 60 extra hours per year stuck in traffic and waste 26 gallons of fuel due to congestion.

"This report highlights the high price we pay for our congestion," said Scott Kirkpatrick, executive director of Capital Region Industry for Sustainable Infrastructure Solutions (CRISIS). "We need to get serious about infrastructure funding to build a south bridge in Baton Rouge and allow interstate drivers to bypass this congestion."

The efficiency and condition of Louisiana's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$584 billion in goods are shipped to and from Louisiana, relying heavily on the state's network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.

"Until the Louisiana Legislature decides to tackle the long-term transportation infrastructure spending, Louisiana will continue to fall behind with the condition of our roads and bridges," said Ken Naquin, CEO of LAGC. "Louisiana is the only Southern state to not have addressed long term transportation infrastructure spending in the last five years.

The only state, and yet we continue to decline in the area of economic growth." "These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at the federal, state and local levels of government," said Dave Kearby, TRIP's executive director. "Without adequate funding, Louisiana's transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life."

LOUISIANA KEY TRANSPORTATION FACTS

In addition to statewide data, the TRIP report includes regional data for the Baton Rouge, Lafayette, New



Orleans and Shreveport urban areas. An urban area is defined as a region’s municipalities and surrounding suburbs for pavement condition and congestion data; bridge and traffic fatality data include a region’s major counties.^[1]

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DEFICIENT ROADS

Driving on Louisiana roads that are deteriorated, congested and that lack some desirable safety features costs Louisiana drivers a total of \$7.6 billion each year. TRIP has

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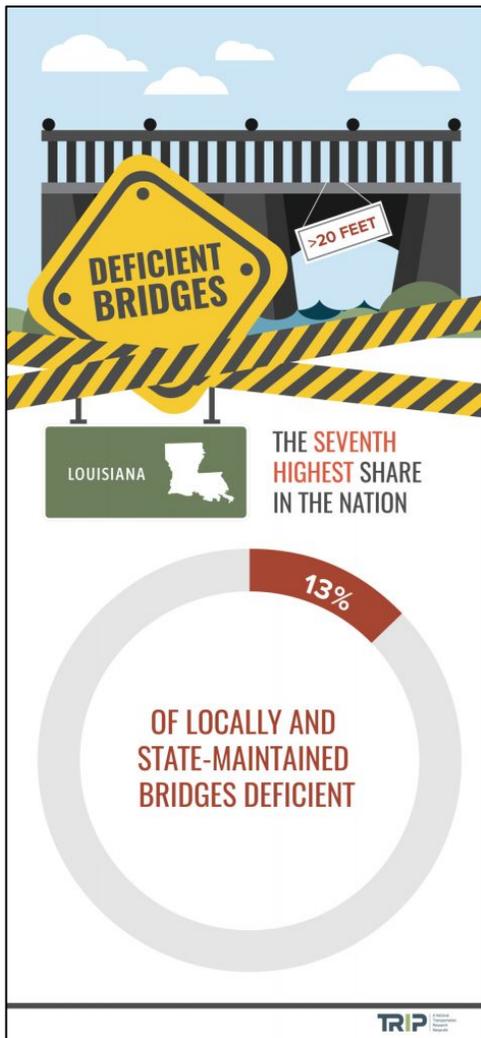
calculated the cost to the average motorist in the state’s largest urban areas in the form of additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on rough roads, the cost of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion, and the financial cost of traffic crashes. The chart below shows the cost of deficient roads statewide and for the average driver in the state’s largest urban areas.

LOUISIANA ROADS PROVIDE A ROUGH RIDE

Due to inadequate state and local funding, nearly half of major roads and highways in Louisiana are in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on rough roads costs the average Louisiana driver \$667 annually in additional vehicle operating costs – a total of \$2.3 billion statewide. The chart below details pavement conditions on major roads in the state’s largest urban areas and statewide.

Location	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Baton Rouge	26%	24%	19%	30%
Lafayette	39%	23%	16%	22%
New Orleans	30%	29%	17%	25%
Shreveport	45%	31%	7%	17%
Louisiana Statewide	25%	22%	17%	36%

LOUISIANA BRIDGE CONDITIONS



Thirteen percent of Louisiana’s bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, the seventh highest share in the nation. Bridges that are in poor/structurally deficient condition have significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Thirty-nine percent of the state’s bridges are rated in fair condition and the remaining 48 percent are in good condition. Most bridges are designed to last 50 years before major overhaul or replacement, although many newer bridges are being designed to last 75 years or longer. In Louisiana, 33 percent of the state’s bridges were built in 1969 or earlier. The chart below details bridge conditions statewide and in the state’s largest urban areas.

	POOR/STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT		FAIR		GOOD		TOTAL BRIDGES
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	
Baton Rouge	122	20%	214	35%	280	45%	616
Lafayette	37	8%	221	50%	181	41%	439
New Orleans	89	11%	304	38%	409	51%	802
Shreveport	109	11%	452	47%	408	42%	969
Louisiana Statewide	1,634	13%	5,041	39%	6,178	48%	12,853

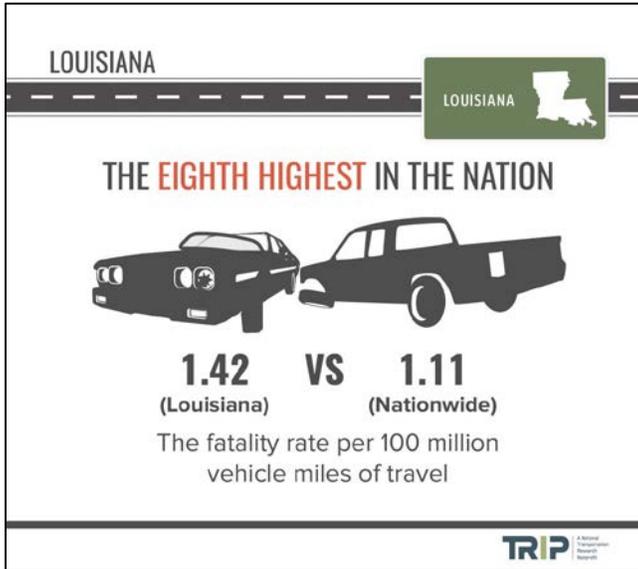
LOUISIANA ROADS ARE INCREASINGLY CONGESTED

In 2019, the state’s transportation system carried 51.4 billion annual vehicle miles of travel (VMT). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle travel in Louisiana dropped by as much as 36 percent in April 2020 (as compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year), but rebounded to six percent below the previous year’s volume in January 2021. Congested roads choke commuting and commerce and cost Louisiana drivers \$3 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel. In Louisiana’s most congested urban areas, drivers lose up to \$1,312, spend as many as 60 extra hours per year stuck in traffic and waste 26 gallons of fuel due to congestion. The chart

below shows the annual number of hours and gallons of fuel lost to congestion per driver, and the average cost per driver of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion in the state's largest urban areas.

Location	Hours Lost	Congestion Cost	Gallons Wasted
Baton Rouge	60	\$1,202	26
Lafayette	32	\$738	17
New Orleans	60	\$1,312	26
Shreveport	28	\$694	15

LOUISIANA TRAFFIC SAFETY AND FATALITIES



From 2015 to 2019, 3,738 people were killed in traffic crashes in Louisiana. In 2019, Louisiana had 1.42 traffic fatalities for every 100 million miles traveled, the eighth highest rate nationally and higher than the national average of 1.11 and the eighth highest rate in the U.S. The traffic fatality rate on Louisiana's rural, non-Interstate roadways in 2019 was approximately two-and-a-half times higher than on all other roads (2.52 per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 1.04). From 2015 to 2019, there were 630 pedestrian and 130 bicycle fatalities in Louisiana, 20 percent of the total number of traffic fatalities in the state.

Traffic crashes imposed a total of \$6.8 billion in economic costs in Louisiana in 2019 and traffic crashes in which a lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, were likely a contributing factor imposed \$2.3 billion in economic costs. The chart below shows the average number of

Year	Total Fatalities	Pedestrian Fatalities	Bicycle Fatalities	Share Bike and Ped.
2015	726	106	34	19%
2016	757	127	22	20%
2017	760	115	23	18%
2018	768	164	29	25%
2019	727	118	22	19%
TOTAL	3,738	630	130	20%
AVERAGE	748	126	26	20%

people killed in traffic crashes in the state's largest urban areas between 2015 and 2019, and the cost of traffic crashes per driver.

TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The health and future growth of

Location	Average Fatalities 2015-2019	Safety Cost
Baton Rouge	68	\$614
Lafayette	36	\$507
New Orleans	83	\$406
Shreveport	49	\$563

Louisiana's economy is riding on its transportation system. Each year, \$584 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in Louisiana. Increases in passenger and freight movement will place further burdens on the state's already deteriorated and congested network of roads and bridges. The value of freight

shipped to and from sites in Louisiana, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is expected to increase 78 percent by 2045 and by 112 percent for goods shipped by trucks.

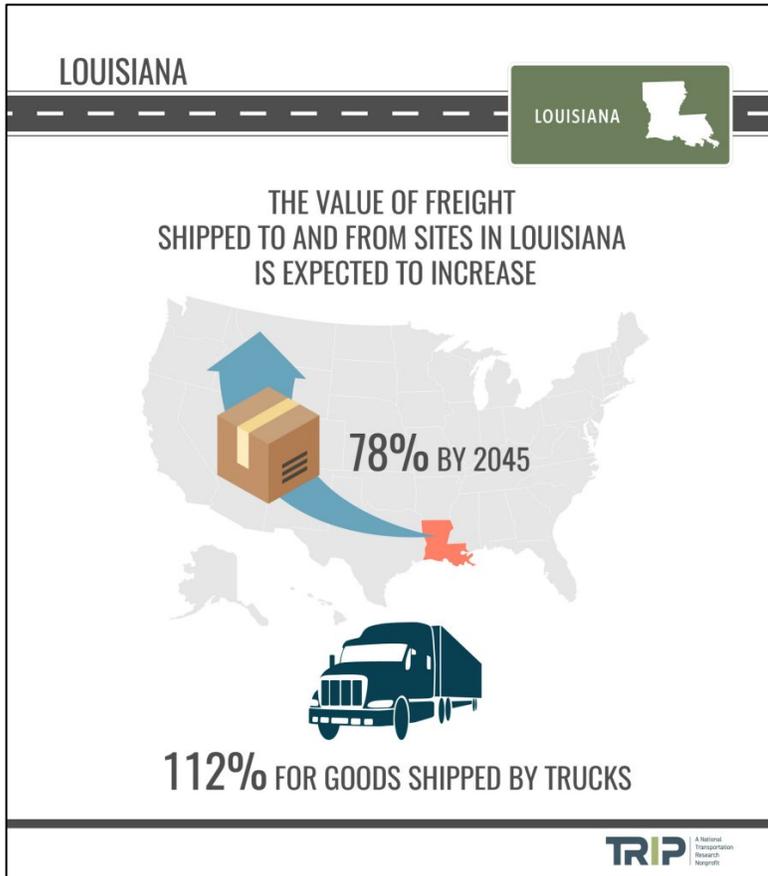
According to a [report by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association](#), the design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in Louisiana supports approximately 78,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy. These workers earn \$3.2 billion annually. Approximately one million full-time jobs in Louisiana in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are completely dependent on the state's transportation network.



LOUISIANA TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Investment in Louisiana's roads, highways and bridges is funded by local, state and federal governments. A lack of sufficient funding at all levels will make it difficult to adequately maintain and improve the state's existing transportation system.

The ability of revenue from Louisiana's motor fuel tax – a critical source of state transportation funds – to keep pace with the state's future transportation needs is likely to erode as a result of increasing vehicle fuel efficiency and the increasing use of electric vehicles. The average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger vehicles increased from 20 miles per gallon in 2010 to 24.5 miles per gallon in 2020. Average fuel efficiency is expected to increase another 31 percent by 2030, to 32 miles per gallon, and increase 51 percent by 2040, to 37 miles per gallon. The share of electric vehicles of total passenger vehicle sales in the U.S. is expected to increase to five percent by 2023 and to 60 percent by 2040, by which time they will represent approximately 30 percent of the passenger vehicle fleet.



The current federal transportation legislation, [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act \(FAST Act\)](#), was set to expire on September 30, 2020. Congress extended it by one year to September 30, 2021. The FAST Act is a major source of funding for road, highway and bridge repairs in Louisiana. Throughout the FAST-Act – fiscal years 2016 to 2021 – the program provided \$4.5 billion to Louisiana for road repairs and improvements, an average of \$748 million per year.

CONCLUSION

As Louisiana works to enhance its thriving, growing and dynamic state, it will be critical that it is able to address the most significant transportation issues by providing a 21st century network of roads, highways, bridges and transit that can accommodate the mobility demands of a modern society.

Louisiana will need to modernize its surface transportation system by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient, safe and reliable mobility for residents, visitors and businesses. Making needed improvements to the state's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems would provide a significant boost to the economy by creating jobs in the

short term and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access.

Numerous projects to improve the condition and expand the capacity of Louisiana's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems will not proceed without a substantial boost in state or local transportation funding. If Louisiana is unable to complete needed transportation projects it will hamper the state's ability to improve the condition and efficiency of its transportation system or enhance economic development opportunities and quality of life.

To view the complete report visit: tripnet.org

Founded in 1971, [TRIP](#)® of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.