



REGIONAL STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2017

CAPITAL REGION Mobility Strategy



PREFACE

The Capital Region Industry for Sustainable Infrastructure Solutions (CRISIS) launched the grant-funded Capital Region Mobility Strategy (CRMS) in 2016 in response to growing concerns about transportation in the Baton Rouge area. The strategy recognizes the important ties between effective transportation systems and strong regional economies. With consideration for the Capital Regional Planning Commission's Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update, the CRMS considers the unique competing interests that affect the regional transportation system, including unpredictable funding levels, shifting demographics, a growing economy, rising expectations, and natural uncertainty. The strategy aligns short- and long-term transportation strategies with broader regional goals and initiatives, such as mobility, safety, and economic vitality.

At its core, the CRMS helps guide conversations at the local, regional, and state levels as the area faces very real and difficult decisions concerning its economic future. Though it's clear the problem exists, agreeing on potential solutions is challenging as decision-makers try to find a balance between infrastructure investments, policies, and programs. Many of these actions require a strong sense of regional ownership. The CRMS sends a message that local and regional leaders recognize the importance of the issue, agree in principle on a course of action, and stand ready to achieve results.

BACKGROUND

Over the past 15 years, the five-parish region centered around Baton Rouge — known as the Capital Region—has experienced unprecedented growth in population, traffic, and job creation. Meanwhile, the forces and trends that influence transportation decision making have continued to evolve. Therefore, the Capital Region needs to adjust its infrastructure priorities to align with diverse community objectives. This need stems directly from:

- **Stagnant Funding Levels**—Despite soaring needs, federal and state funding levels have remained nearly unchanged. Furthermore, revenues are decreasing due to changes in travel behavior and enhanced vehicle fuel efficiencies. With competition for resources at an all-time high, project selection and implementation timetables have been unpredictable.
- **Shifting Demographics**—The region’s unprecedented growth—seven years of normal population growth during a single year after Hurricane Katrina—has magnified the changing commuting patterns and the resulting overwhelming travel demand.
- **Growing Economy**—The Capital Region offers a competitive business climate and continued economic expansion and diversification is critical. However, even as growth creates opportunity, it compounds many of the challenges facing the region. While traffic congestion often is mentioned as a barrier for growth and retention, it also is evidence of the region’s success.
- **Rising Expectations**—The people of the Capital Region have high expectations for quality of life, social responsibility, and economic opportunities. It’s no surprise that quality of life has become a primary indicator of the region’s economic competitiveness. Quality choices can lead to quality investments by the private sector.
- **Natural Uncertainty**—The transportation system is a major contributor to quality of life and economic competitiveness. This infrastructure is vulnerable, and its resiliency influences many issues—economic vibrancy (how we connect people to opportunity), safety (how we respond in times of emergency), and social justice (how we empower the area’s most vulnerable populations).

The Capital Region Mobility Strategy (CRMS) considers each of these characteristics by taking a deliberate look at the region’s transportation system, and works in tandem with the Capital Region Planning Commission’s Long Range Transportation Plan Update. The ultimate goal is to align the region’s short- and long-term transportation strategies with broader regional goals, including efforts for safety, resiliency and economic development.

CAPITAL REGION INDUSTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS

The Capital Region Industry for Sustainable Infrastructure Solutions, or CRISIS, supports economic growth and productivity in the region by advocating for the effective movement of employees, customers, and goods. Focusing on funding and data-driven accountability, CRISIS' mission is to "provide a leadership voice to address the Baton Rouge Area's transportation crisis, identifying solutions and advocating for their prioritization and funding."



The CRMS is the latest CRISIS initiative. As a follow up to its February 2015 Regional Projects Analysis, the mobility strategy emphasizes many of the organization's priorities:

- ➔ Work cooperatively toward the creation of a comprehensive regional mobility plan
- ➔ Push accelerated action to improve the "I-10 bottleneck"
- ➔ Deliver an additional major alternative route through the region
- ➔ Support multimodal strategies that give citizens greater transportation options
- ➔ Develop comprehensive, fiscally responsible funding strategy to implement the regional plan

The CRISIS Leadership Team is a well-connected network of industry leaders with a vested interest in the infrastructure of the Capital Region.

- Aptim
- Axiall
- BASF
- Baton Rouge General Hospital
- Bengal
- CB&I
- Dow Chemical Co.
- ExxonMobil Baton Rouge
- Lamar Advertising
- L'Auberge Baton Rouge
- Lard Oil Company
- Lyons Specialty Co.
- Methanex
- Mexichem Fluor Inc.
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center
- Performance Contractors
- SGS Petroleum Service Corp.
- St. Elizabeth Hospital
- Walmart

The CRISIS Coalition was formed by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), the Greater Baton Rouge Industry Alliance, and the Center for Planning Excellence. Development of the CRMS is being supported with funding and technical support from BRAC, the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Unit, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

CRMS: INFORMED DECISION MAKING

The Capital Region Mobility Strategy process involved community and industry leadership, engaged the public, and built on data driven decision making. It required a stakeholder group committed to the process and the ability to effectively mine the wealth of information contained in the region's past and current plans.

To ensure success, the CRMS also coordinated directly with Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update and the Governor's Task Force on Infrastructure Investment - the two major planning activities under way in the region. The CRMS will complement these two activities by making the connection between an effective transportation system and regional economic growth and identifying transportation projects, programs, and strategies that advance the region's economic vitality.

CONCURRENT & ONGOING PROCESSES

The CRMS comes at an opportune time as officials around the region and state are collaborating to identify transportation strategies that align with regional expectations. These processes include:

Move 2042—The Capital Region Planning Commission is updating the region's LRTP, which primarily focuses on regional transportation safety and operations goals.

Governor's Task Force on Transportation Infrastructure Investment—Governor John Bel Edwards appointed this task force to recommend ways to best address the state's backlog of infrastructure needs.

CRMS—The Capital Region Mobility Strategy finds ways to further the region's economic competitiveness through strategic transportation investments.

ENGAGEMENT

The CRMS included a focused stakeholder engagement process, including an oversight committee and two stakeholder events designed to gather input during strategy development. The Strategic Mobility Forum on October 7, 2016 organized stakeholders into one of three groups:

Elected Officials—local, parish, and state representatives

Practitioners—public sector staff at the local, parish, and state levels

Private Industry Representatives—business leaders from a variety of industry sectors

THE REGION

The CRMS study area includes five parishes: the entirety of East Baton Rouge Parish and Ascension Parish as well as portions of West Baton Rouge, Iberville, and Livingston Parishes. Today, the area is home to approximately 14% of the state of Louisiana's population and 19% of the state's workforce, despite being less than 3% of its land area.

As of 2014, the study area had an estimated population of 721,000 with an additional 24,000 living outside the study area in West Baton Rouge, Iberville, and Livingston Parishes. The total five-parish population is up approximately 13% from 2004. However, from 2005 to 2006, the region experienced an 8% population surge, mostly due to Hurricane Katrina evacuees from neighboring New Orleans. Though not all of those residents remained in Baton Rouge permanently, the population growth has continued steadily since 2005 with lasting effects on the area's transportation system.

The region's population is expected to grow to approximately 1 million by 2042, further exacerbating the region's existing mobility challenges.



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FROM 2005 TO 2006, THE REGION EXPERIENCED AN 8% POPULATION SURGE, MOSTLY DUE TO HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEES FROM NEIGHBORING NEW ORLEANS.

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Square Miles: 1,386

Population (2014): 721,000

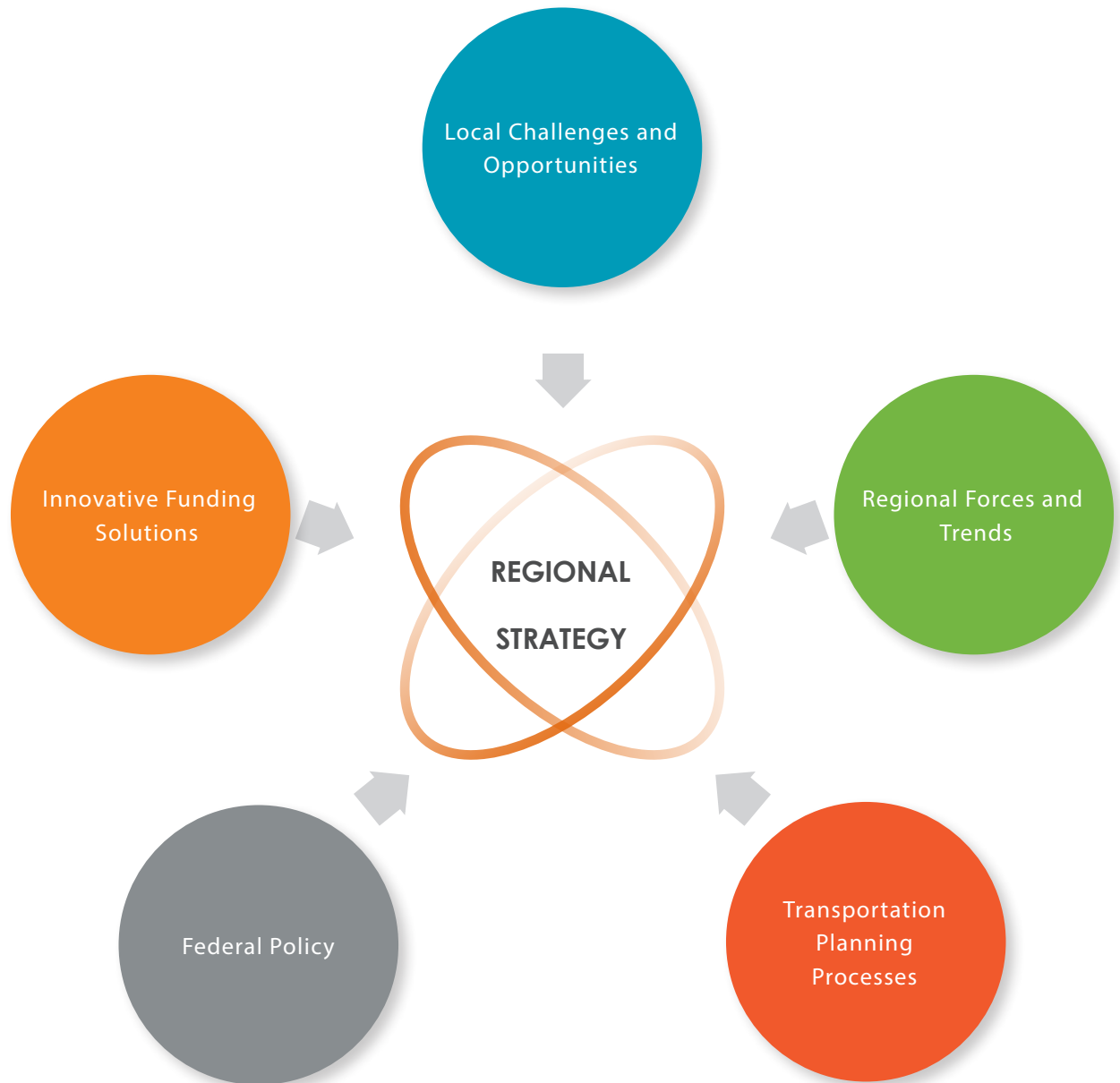
Federally Classified

Highway miles: 1,837

The CRMS Study Area is based on the Capital Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's study area for their current LRTP update. Though it includes only portions of the West Baton Rouge, Livingston and Iberville Parishes, some statistics in this report cover the entire five-parish area, due to the availability of U.S. Census Bureau data.

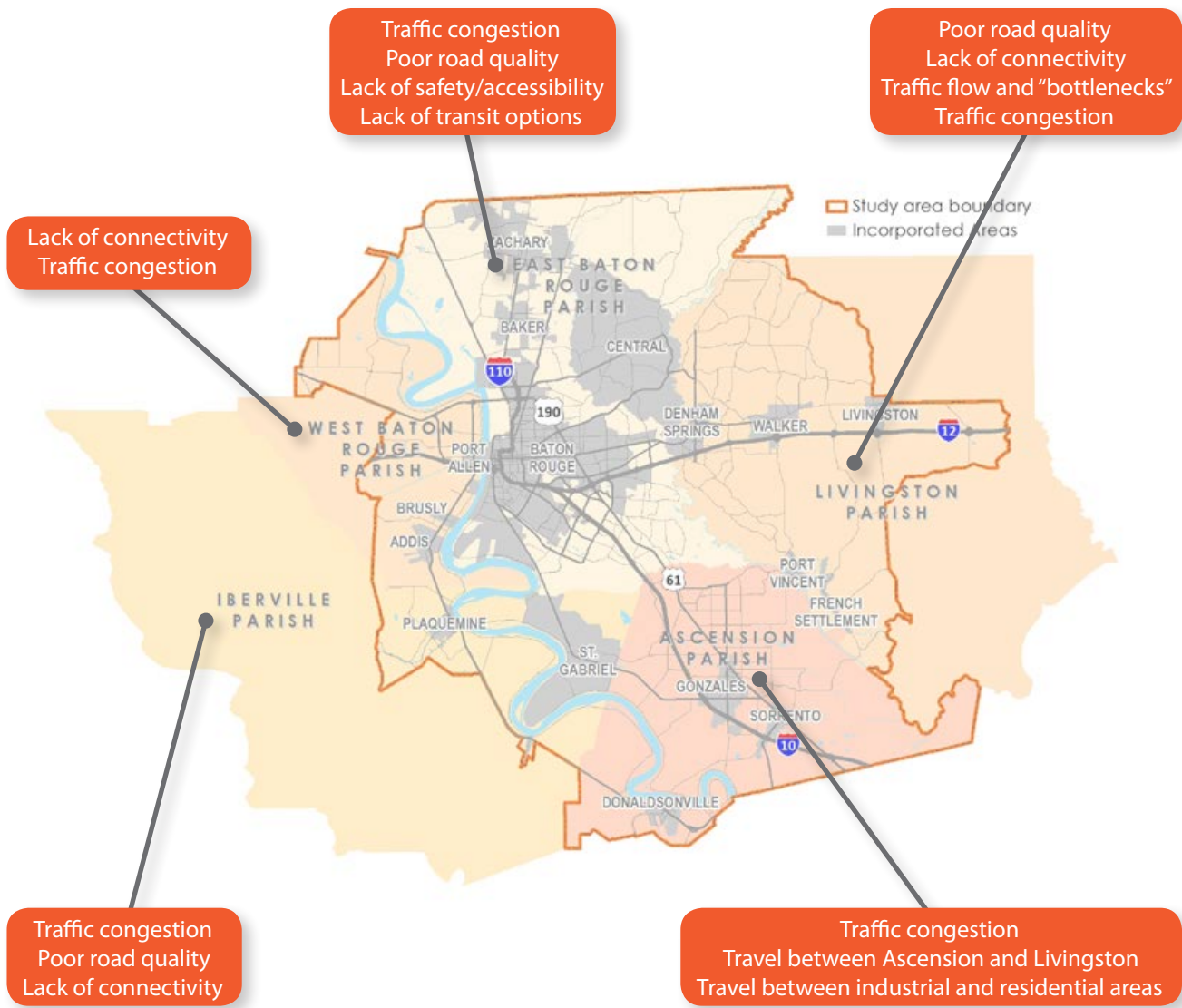
STRATEGY INFLUENCERS

The Capital Region is complex—geographically, economically, and environmentally. Given this complexity, planning for transportation investments must consider how local issues, needs, and solutions affect the larger region and state and also support community initiatives, such as economic development, social equity, and resiliency. Several factors influence the CRMS, which balances these competing interests to position the area for a more prosperous future.



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Each parish within the study area of which has unique mobility challenges. To understand local issues and opportunities, the CRMS included feedback from stakeholders and elected officials. As part of the Capital Region Planning Commission’s Move2042 LRTP Update, meetings were held in each parish in February 2017. At these meetings, attendees identified the biggest challenges their parish is facing today.

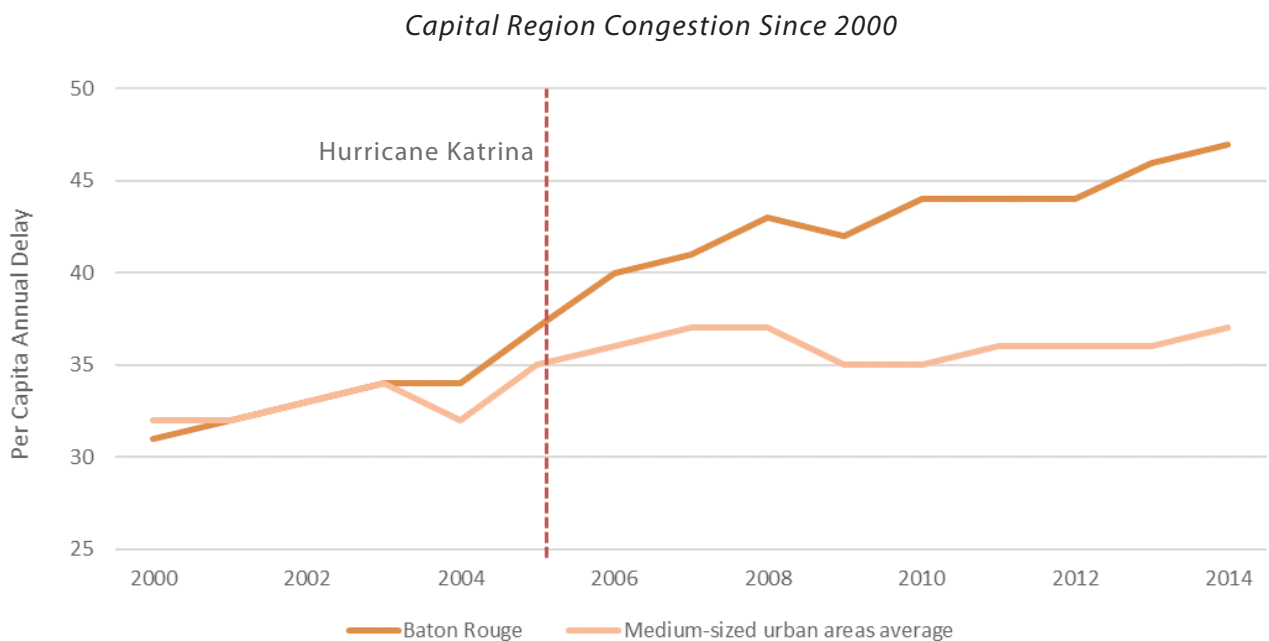


Traffic congestion appeared at or near the top of the list for each parish, with local issues such as safety or connectivity also frequently mentioned. **The shared concerns of the five parishes and the overwhelming call for major infrastructure projects and additional funding further established the need to respond to transportation problems in a coordinated and regional way.**

REGIONAL FORCES AND TRENDS

The Capital Region is a fast-growing area with economic, social, and political ties. Historically, individual parishes and municipalities have maintained some level of self-reliance. However, the emphasis on regional economies in the competitive marketplace over the past few decades has elevated the importance of shared economic goals in the Capital Region.

According to national data, congestion in the Capital Region prior to 2004 was on par with other medium-sized cities. Following the post-Katrina population boom in 2005, congestion worsened and the congestion gap between Baton Rouge and other similarly sized cities has widened. Today, more than three-quarters of local business leaders noted “transportation and traffic issues” as the region’s top obstacle to doing business.



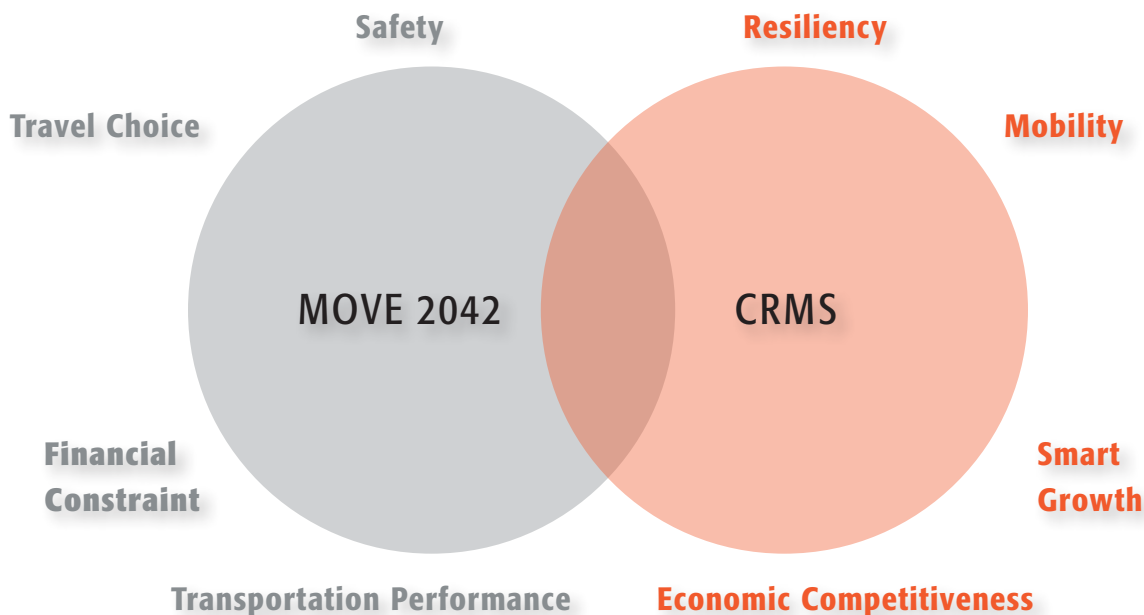
Additionally, Baton Rouge is a highly car-dependent city, with more than 84% of the workforce commuting to work alone in a personal vehicle—higher than the state or national averages. This leads to lost time and money due to congestion, increased pollution, and additional road maintenance costs. Important strides have been made in the past five years to enhance transportation choice, including expanding the area’s bicycle network and launching a travel demand management pilot program. However, options to travel via bus, bicycle, foot, or rail remain limited (or nonexistent).

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESSES

Move2042 is the Capital Region Planning Commission's federally-required long-range transportation plan update. For a major transportation project to receive federal or state funding, it must be included in this financially constrained plan. The CRMS works in tandem with Move2042 to ensure that the region's overall transportation strategy supports the broader regional vision.

Though the objectives are somewhat similar, several key features distinguish Move2042 from the CRMS. Federal requirements mandate that the plan be financially constrained, meaning only projects that can be reasonably funded under current revenue levels are included in the plan. The CRMS is an industry-led initiative, so it is not bound by traditional financial constraints. Therefore, the CRMS enjoys the flexibility to consider innovative solutions that include policies, programs, and ideas outside the ideas. The LRTP and CRMS are able to work together as a collaborative strategy to accomplish regional goals by bringing together the public and private sectors to consider regional solutions.

Achieving broad regional goals will require a unified approach to transportation. Therefore, formalizing the policy components of the Capital Region Mobility Strategy by folding them into Move2042 will strengthen the strategy as a well-rounded approach to addressing the region's transportation needs. The Capital Region Mobility Strategy team and Capital Region Planning Commission staff have been in close contact throughout the process jointly collaborating with regional leaders to ensure that goals and objectives of both plans closely align and work in tandem toward shared solutions.

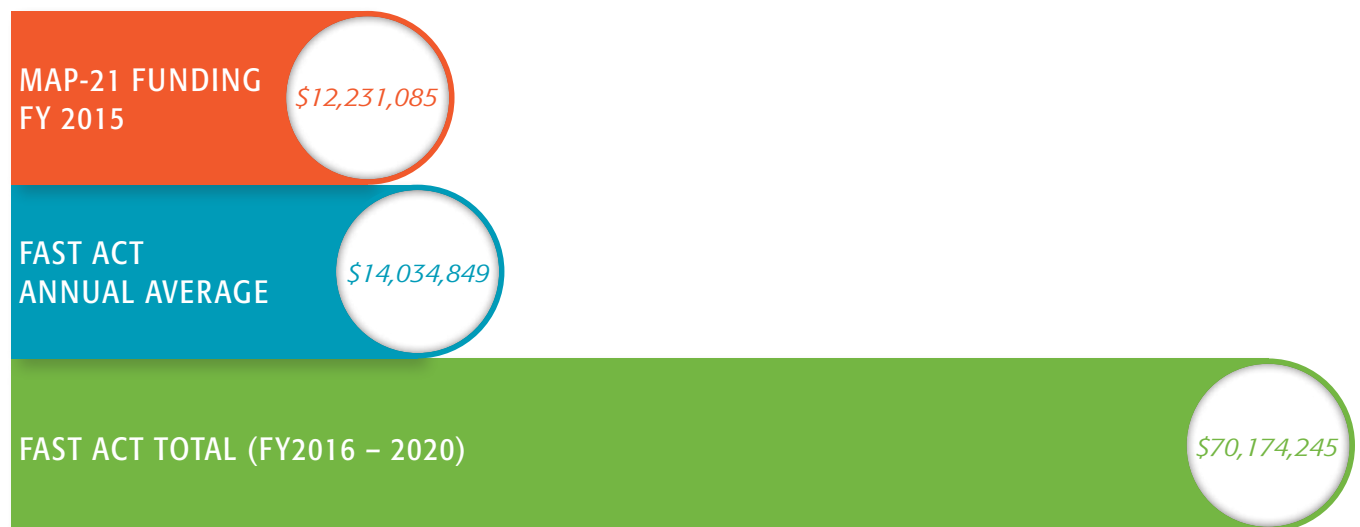


FEDERAL POLICY

At the federal level, transportation funding is governed by a spending authorization bill that sets the nation's agenda and priorities for the next few years. In 2015, the legislature passed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which provided federal transportation funding through 2020.

The FAST Act carried forward most programs that had been established and funded under the 2012 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act, including funding for highways, public transportation, safety programs, and active transportation. The law also included funding for passenger rail and increased efforts to provide financing for safer, more accessible streets and transit-oriented development. In addition, it also provided opportunities to test alternative funding solutions and refocused national attention on improving highway freight movement.

Like many urbanized areas, Baton Rouge received a modest increase in estimated funding under the FAST Act, from \$12.2 million in 2015 to an annual average of \$14 million. The total allocation to the Capital Region is approximately \$70 million over the five-year period that the bill covers. Since most transportation projects in the region will involve some federal funding, understanding and adhering to the national priorities set by the FAST Act are critical to advancing regional transportation objectives.



INNOVATIVE FUNDING SOLUTIONS

The 2017 Louisiana state legislative session convened in Spring 2017 to consider, among other things, the state budget for the for the 2018–2019 fiscal year. Key was a measure to raise the state gas tax to fund a portion of the state’s \$13 billion backlog of transportation projects. This opportunity ultimately failed, requiring the Capital Region to search elsewhere for potential short- and long-term strategies.

With additional revenues at the state level unlikely and local governments facing the dual threat of aging infrastructure and rising transportation demand, the people of Louisiana and the Capital Region will need a balanced set of strategies that look beyond large infrastructure projects. The transportation challenges facing the Capital Region will require local leaders, state officials, and the private sector to work together to find funding solutions. A combination of revenue sources will be necessary to make up the staggering transportation shortfall the state faces to address unmet current and future needs, including:

- **Vehicle Registration Fees:** Louisiana’s vehicle registration fees are among the lowest in the nation. When a resident registers a \$10,000 vehicle in Baton Rouge, the state receives only \$10 in annual registration fees. These rates should be modernized to be in line with the nationwide averages and raise revenues for the state transportation fund.
- **Tax revenues:** In East Baton Rouge Parish, voters approved a half-cent sales tax called the “Green Light Project” that has raised over \$700 million toward the completion of several dozen local transportation projects. With state transportation funds in jeopardy, other local jurisdictions should consider similar strategies. With the success of that project as a model, gas tax increases and dedicated property tax levies are other likely revenue sources to fund road repairs and local projects when traditional funding sources aren’t enough.
- **Tolling:** Though not popular initially, tolling is a proven way to fund transportation projects that otherwise would not be fiscally feasible. With the state’s first toll bridge now open on LA-1, LADOTD has opened the door for future projects to use this time-tested method.

Louisiana’s citizens and the nation as a whole have become increasingly aware that financing transportation improvements requires innovative funding solutions. The CRMS outlines options for transportation policy and programming but the real test will be the ability of the region to agree on a funding strategy and push forward with long-needed projects.



MOBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The region is fortunate to have great plans and studies in place. These documents outline visions and recommendations across a variety of geographies—neighborhood, to city, to parish, to region. As the CRMS took shape, it was important to capitalize on these plans by finding ways to align their outcomes with the core values of the region.

The CRMS distinguishes between plans (visionary documents supported by general frameworks for implementation) and studies (detailed solutions for specific transportation issues based on data and analytics). The mobility strategy, in turn, focuses on transportation decisions that balance a broader set of community and regional objectives. The strategy is organized around five overlapping themes, which are discussed in detail in the following chapters:



INFRASTRUCTURE PERFORMANCE

The condition and effectiveness of existing roads, bridges, and transportation infrastructure.



LAND USE AND URBAN FORM

The organization and distribution of the built environment.



RESILIENCE AND PREPAREDNESS

The mitigation of threats to critical infrastructure and emergency response.



TRAVEL OPTIONS

The provision of transit service, regional bicycle infrastructure, and demand-based solutions.

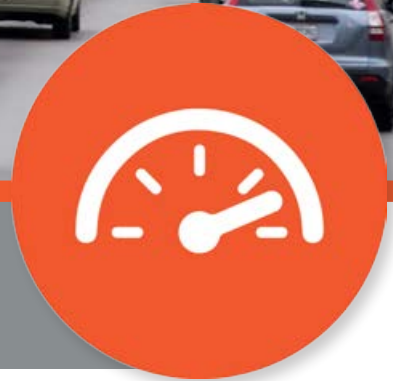


REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

The Capital Region's ability to attract and retain a competitive workforce.



INFRASTRUCTURE PERFORMANCE



THE CONDITION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING ROADS, BRIDGES, AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

A 2014 report from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute named Baton Rouge the 3rd most congested medium-sized metro area in the country based on numerous mobility measures, including hours of yearly delay, wasted fuel due to congestion, and total cost of congestion to consumers. *Infrastructure Performance* speaks to the effect these types of transportation metrics have on quality life.

In the Capital Region:

Critical corridors are congested and in need of repair.

Road congestion and condition is costing the region money.

The current response is helping, but the problem isn't going away.

Critical corridors are congested and in need of repair.

- On the I-10 bridge over the Mississippi River, traffic volumes have increased from 76,000 vehicles per day in 1998 to 106,000 per day in 2013. At the same time, TRIP reports that Baton Rouge has the 11th worst road condition in the country, with 38% of its major roads in “poor” condition compared to a national average of 28%.
- According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Baton Rouge has a peak-period planning time index of 2.8, travelers must plan approximately 28 minutes to complete what should normally be a 10-minute trip, due to the unpredictability of traffic conditions.

Road congestion and condition are costing the region money.

- According to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute report, commuters waste 25 gallons of fuel and spend an average of \$1,262 per year due to traffic congestion. The trucking industry is expected to spend an additional \$189 million annually due to local congestion.



- According to the 2015 report by TRIP, poor road conditions cost local drivers an average of \$705 annually in additional repairs and maintenance.

The current response is helping but the problem isn’t going away.

- Congestion remains despite the Green Light Plan, a \$700 million capacity-building effort by East Baton Rouge Parish under way since 2006. The plan identified 45 projects of various scales for completion by 2030, with 70% of the projects completed or currently under way.



\$3.3 BILLION IN CAPITAL REGION



LAND USE AND URBAN FORM

THE ORGANIZATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



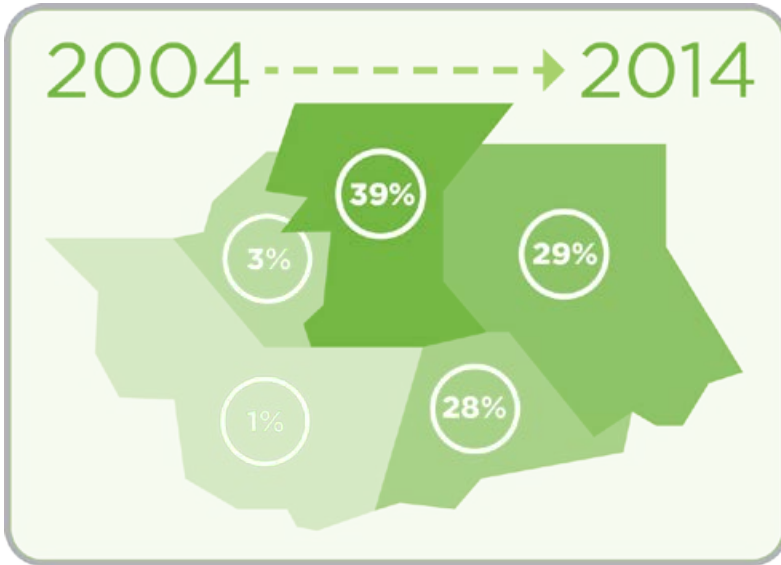
The built environment has a profound impact on how people in the Capital Region experience transportation on a day-to-day basis. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 25% of all jobs within the study area are concentrated within just 21 square miles along the I-10 corridor in East Baton Rouge. At the same time, population growth has become more decentralized. *Land Use and Urban Form* speaks to this disconnect between where we live and work and the effect it has on mobility.

In the Capital Region:

Regional growth is occurring farther away from jobs.

Commutes are getting longer.

Regional growth is occurring farther away from jobs.



From 2004 to 2014, East Baton Rouge Parish captured 39% of the region's overall population growth; Livingston captured 29%, and Ascension Parish captured 28% of the growth. West Baton Rouge and Iberville Parishes each remained relatively stagnant.

- The dispersed growth pattern stresses the transportation network. Because most of the region's jobs are centrally located, travel time and distance increases as workers move further into the outlying areas. The result is increased traffic congestion. The shift in development patterns has changed commuting in the Capital Region during the past decade. **More than one third of workers live east or southeast of their workplace, following the I-10 and I-12 corridors.**

Commutes are getting longer.

- Commute distance and time in the region have both increased in recent years. **In 2014, 21% of the area's workers drove 50 miles or more to work each day.**
- The percentage of the region's workforce commuting less than ten miles to work is shrinking (44% in 2014 compared to 49% in 2004). The region's mean travel time to work in 2014 was 26 minutes, and **those living in Livingston Parish already have an average travel time of more than 34 minutes.**

MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF WORKERS
LIVE EAST OR SOUTHEAST
OF THEIR WORKPLACE, FOLLOWING
THE I-10 AND I-12 CORRIDORS.



RESILIENCY AND PREPAREDNESS

THE MITIGATION OF THREATS TO CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

The Presidential Policy Directive on Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience defines resiliency as “the ability to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions and withstand and rapidly recover from disruptions.” These disruptions, including accidents and naturally occurring threats, can significantly affect the movement of people and goods within and through the region. *Resiliency and Preparedness* addresses the need to minimize disruptions to mobility before, during, and after these events.

In the Capital Region:

The built environment is susceptible to natural and man-made events.

The transportation network lacks alternatives when incidents disrupt major corridors.

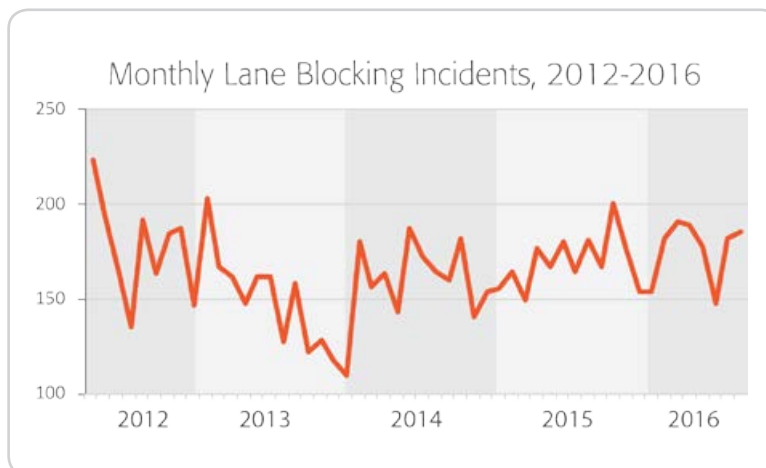
The built environment is susceptible to natural and man-made events.

- Louisiana has experienced two 24+ inch rain events in the 12-month period between August 2016 and September 2017, including the disastrous flooding in August 2016. This single event had a significant impact on life and property in the Capital Region, with 13 deaths and 60,000 homes damaged.
- The Capital Region's status as an evacuation site as well as a community vulnerable to large-scale natural disasters makes resiliency particularly important to this region.
- The recent flooding event took a toll on Louisiana's transportation system, temporarily closing 78 miles of I-10, along with 280 miles of roadway around the region. With few significant arterial options, these closures seriously disrupt economic activity and emergency response.
- In 2015, more than 44,000 crashes occurred throughout the five-parish region, with 385 causing severe injuries or fatalities. More than half of these crashes occurred in East Baton Rouge, and each severe crash caused a lane to close for an average of 39 minutes.



The transportation network lacks alternatives when incidents disrupt major corridors.

- The transportation system in the Capital Region suffers from a lack of predictability. Crashes, weather events, and construction closed interstate lanes in Baton Rouge an average of 169 times per month in 2015. With so few travel options available, a lane closure during peak travel time can cause major backup throughout the region.
- Baton Rouge's main designated evacuation routes are I-10 and I-12, both prone to closures during major weather events. In addition, a single bridge over the Mississippi River becomes a major chokepoint during high-volume traffic, with no other crossing point within five miles.





TRAVEL OPTIONS

THE PROVISION OF TRANSIT SERVICE, REGIONAL BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND DEMAND-BASED SOLUTIONS.



Providing reasonable and accessible transportation options helps address limited funding, increased appetite for active living, and strong outcries for healthy communities. Travel choices also contribute to a region's brand. In the Capital Region, recent jumps in transit ridership and an improving bicycle network has failed to keep pace with overall growth. *Travel Options* speaks to this disconnect between where we live and work and the effect it has on mobility.

In the Capital Region:

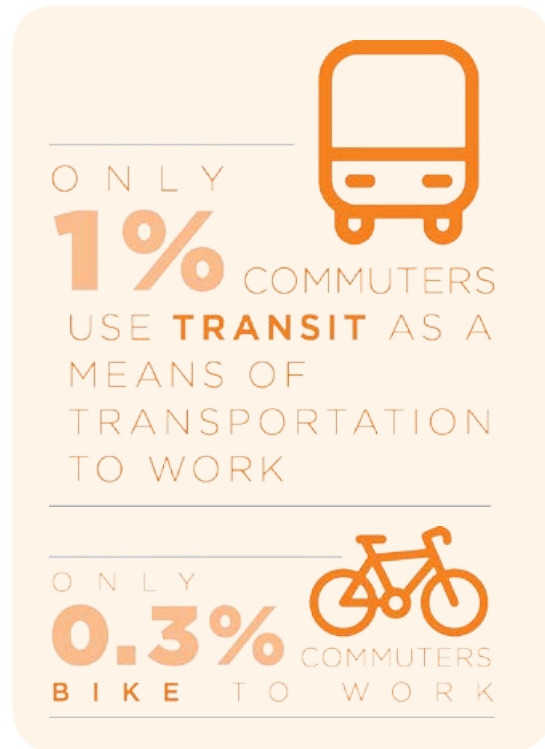
Opportunities to bike and take transit are limited.

The workforce lacks access to passenger rail service.

The region has opportunities to influence transportation demand.

Opportunities to bike and take transit are limited.

- The East Baton Rouge Parish has taken great strides in improving bicycle infrastructure in the past 5 years. Since FutureBR's creation in 2011, bicycle infrastructure has grown from 23.4 miles to 59 miles, including bike lanes, shared lanes, and shared-use paths. **The League of American Bicyclists has designated the East Baton Rouge Parish as a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community. However, only 0.3% of commuters bike to work.**
- The region's transit options are limited to service provided in Baton Rouge by the Capital Area Transit System (CATS). Currently less than 40% of the population lives within ½-mile of a transit route, compared to an average of almost 48% of the U.S. Population. While ridership increased to an all-time high of 3.9 million rides in 2014, only 1% of commuters in the study area use transit as a means of transportation to work.



The workforce lacks access to passenger rail service.

- According to BRAC, more than 58,000 people commuted between the New Orleans and Baton Rouge metropolitan areas in 2013, accounting for 7% of the Baton Rouge region's workforce. **The 11.4% increase in commuters since 2010 is nearly four times the rate of population growth over that same period.**
- Approximately 19,000 commuters travel from Ascension Parish to East Baton Rouge Parish for work. Though no plan for local rail service has been finalized, Ascension already has a site set aside for a commuter rail station, reflecting strong local support for the service.

The region has opportunities to influence transportation demand.

- Due to the centrality of the workforce, presence of large institutional employers, and abundance of shift work, regional travel demand management efforts can effectively reduce congestion. GeauxRide provides carpool matching and alternative commuting options, and the Capital Region Planning Commission launched a three-year program to reduce congestion and fuel consumption and improve air quality.



REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS



THE CAPITAL REGION'S ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the Capital Region rose 3.3% in 2015 to its highest-ever level. Since 2013, the region's job growth rate has outperformed the national, state, and peer-cities averages. *Regional Competitiveness* addresses the role mobility plays in industry recruitment and workforce retention.

In the Capital Region:

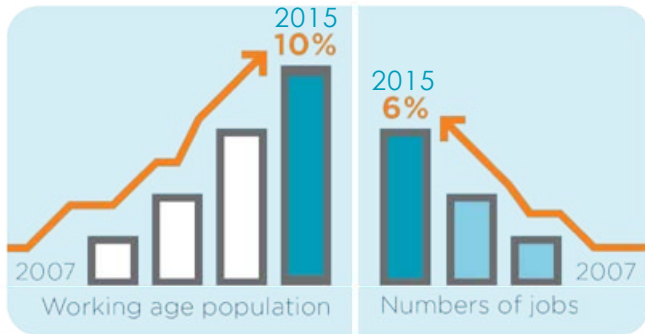
The region continues to add jobs ... but is that enough?

Workforce characteristics contribute to our travel trends.

Transportation challenges are a threat to our economic competitiveness.

The region continues to add jobs ... but is that enough?

- Job growth has been slow but steady over the past decade, increasing by approximately 5% from 345,000 in 2004 to 363,000 in 2014. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the region rose 3.3% in 2015, with a growth rate outperforming the national, state, and peer-cities average since 2013. However, job growth has not kept pace with population growth, and the increased competition for available jobs likely contributes to the region's lengthening commute times.



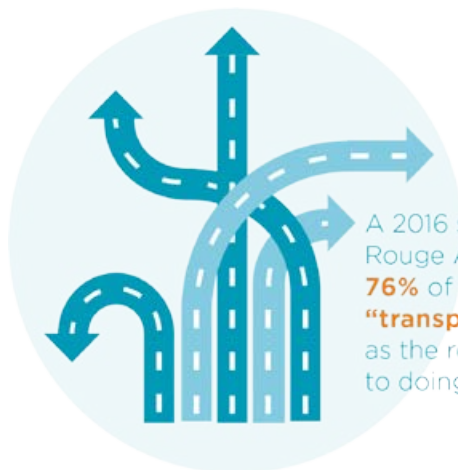
JOB GROWTH HAS NOT KEPT UP WITH POPULATION GROWTH OVER THE PAST DECADE.

Workforce characteristics contribute to our travel trends.

- The region's workforce earns high wages (43% earn more than \$39,600 per year compared to the statewide average of \$24,800) and are in the middle of their careers (55% are between 30 and 54 years old). These workers are more likely to choose where to live based on community assets rather than on commute time. This trend contributes to the more dispersed suburbanized development prevalent in the region.

Transportation challenges are a threat to our economic competitiveness.

- Prior to 2004, congestion in the Baton Rouge region mirrored national trends for other medium-sized cities. Based on several measures since 2005, congestion in the region has steadily worsened compared to the national average.



A 2016 survey by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber found that **76%** of business leaders noted **"transportation and traffic issues"** as the region's top obstacle to doing business.



WHAT WE HEARD

On October 7, 2016, a group of approximately 60 local stakeholders gathered in Baton Rouge for a Strategic Mobility Forum to discuss the state of transportation in the Capital Region. The attendees represented three groups: elected officials, practitioners, and private industry representatives.

This interactive event allowed attendees to learn more about the CRMS and provide input through a variety of exercises that asked stakeholders to think about the condition of the regional transportation system, rank the importance of the mobility considerations in reaching regional goals, and describe their preferred course of action.

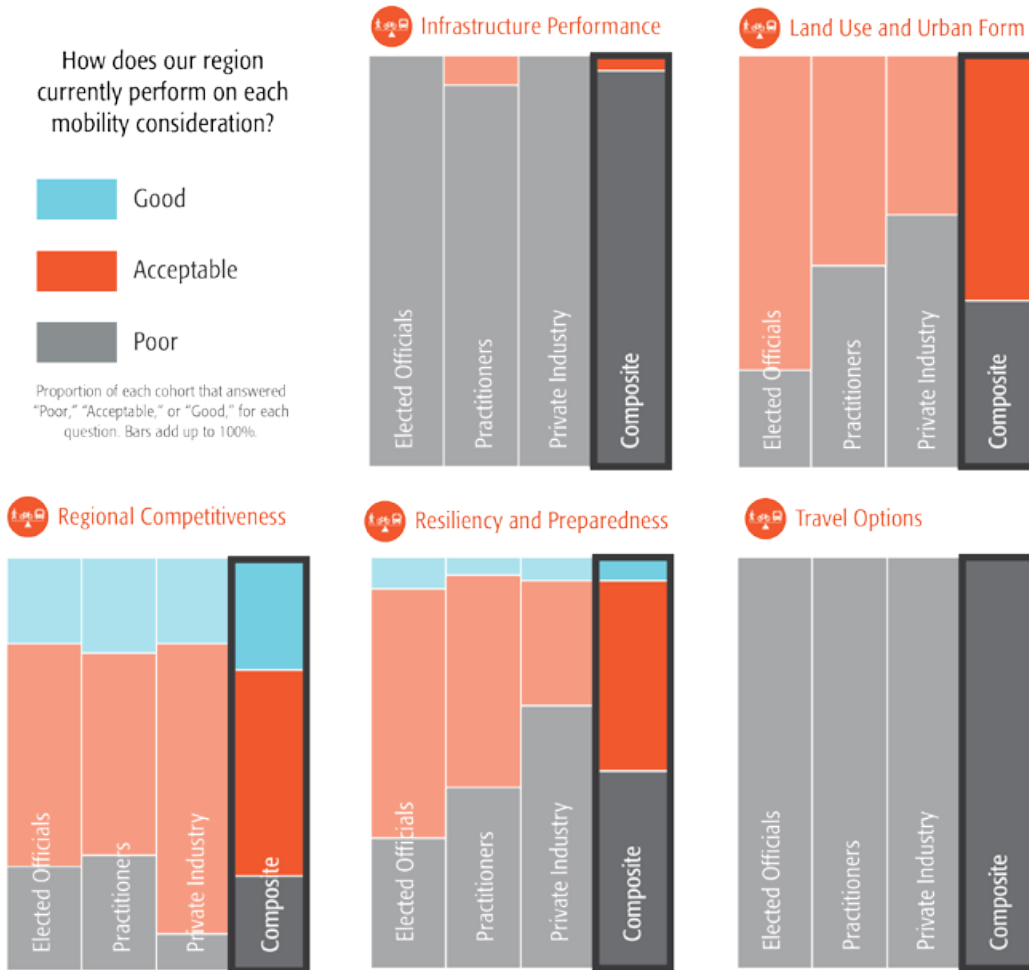


The data collected from these exercises has been analyzed in a variety of ways to examine the priorities that tie stakeholders together, as well as the disconnects that separate the three cohorts. This information informed the development of the CRMS.

CONDITION

In the “Regional Mobility Dashboard” exercise, participants rated the region’s current performance on each mobility consideration as poor, acceptable, or good. The data was then collected and used to compare the group’s composite opinion to each individual group and uncover any major disconnects.

Infrastructure Performance and Travel Options receive poor marks across the board, but opinions are mixed on Land Use, Resiliency, and Regional Competitiveness.



Though the region’s Infrastructure Performance and Travel Options were almost universally rated as “poor,” opinions differed on Land Use, Resiliency, and Regional Competitiveness. Overall, elected officials were much more likely than practitioners or private industry representatives to feel the region’s land use performance was acceptable. Similarly, private industry ranked the region’s Resiliency and Preparedness somewhat lower than other groups, and were more likely to describe the region’s competitiveness as “acceptable” or “good.”

IMPORTANCE

Thinking about the five mobility considerations, participants were asked to rank these topics in terms of how important they are in planning for the region's future. Again, responses were broken down based on their role to determine what aspects are most important to certain stakeholder groups.

Infrastructure Performance ranked as the highest priority across all groups, followed by Travel Options.

When asked to rank the five planning themes from most important to least important, Infrastructure Performance vastly outranked all other themes. With a weighted score of 223 (based on the frequency it was chosen as the top-, second-, or third-tier priority) it received nearly double the score of Travel Options, the second-highest ranking theme.

Not everyone agrees on how important the other mobility considerations are.

While elected officials ranked Resiliency and Preparedness as the third priority, followed by Regional Competitiveness and Land Use and Urban Form, practitioners placed Resiliency and Land Use tied for third, followed by Competitiveness. Private industry representatives see Land Use as more important than Competitiveness, followed by Resiliency.

ACTION

	Most Important	Somewhat Important			Less Important
Composite	Infrastructure Performance 	Travel Options 	Resiliency and Preparedness 	Regional Competitiveness 	Land Use and Urban Form
Elected Officials	Infrastructure Performance 	Travel Options 	Resiliency and Preparedness 	Regional Competitiveness 	Land Use and Urban Form
Practitioners	Infrastructure Performance 	Travel Options 	Land Use and Urban Form 	Regional Competitiveness 	Resiliency and Preparedness
Private Industry	Infrastructure Performance 	Land Use and Urban Form 	Regional Competitiveness 	Resiliency and Preparedness 	Travel Options

Everyone agrees the Capital Region has distinct mobility challenges, but differed on how to get the job done. Through keypad polling and a strategy wall, participants were asked to share their thoughts on the best way to tackle the region’s major challenges.

Participants posted 123 ideas for transportation projects, initiatives, or strategies they would like to see implemented.

These ideas included 21 local projects, 23 parish-level projects, and 77 regional projects to improve the larger transportation system. A new bridge over the Mississippi River was the most frequent request, with elected officials being its greatest supporters. The bridge was also the most popular suggestion among private industry representatives.

Increasing transit options was another popular suggestion.

Thirteen project suggestions at various scales were targeted toward transit, with 85% of these projects posted by practitioners. None of the suggestions came from elected officials. Improvements to or expansion of the regional transit system was the most popular suggestion from the practitioner group.

Funding is by far the greatest barrier, but political will is also a problem.

Ninety-two percent of participants said that more funding for transportation is “absolutely necessary” and that the region cannot be successful without it. However, political will was also considered significant, with 24% of participants ranking it as the greatest barrier.

Participants want projects that reduce congestion and can be completed quickly.

When asked to select the top three criteria that should be used to identify future projects, congestion reduction and timing rose to the top. Participants also wished to see projects chosen based on identified funding sources and their benefit/cost ratios.

123
projects listed

29
mentions of a
new Mississippi
river crossing

Other common suggestions:

- Widening I-10 through Baton Rouge
- Improving regional transit options
- Improvements to Highway 30
- 190 Improvements or BUMP project
- Baton Rouge to New Orleans rail line

92% of participants said that increased transportation funding was “absolutely necessary” for the region to be successful.



REGIONAL STRATEGY

REGIONAL STRATEGY

It is unrealistic to believe that any one project or solution is the answer to the Capital Region's mobility challenges. Real success will come through the adoption and implementation of a region-wide strategy that invests equally in increasing capacity, shifting regional travel patterns, and changing regional policies to align with current realities.

The CRMS capitalizes on the region's various plans and studies that have defined visions and recommendations across their various geographies, and outlines a coordinated strategy to ensure region-wide success.

The set of strategies fall into three categories:

- Those that enhance the capacity and efficiency of the transportation system;
- Those that provide increased travel choice and management;
- Those that improve transportation performance through strategic policy and partnerships.

Capacity and Efficiency

- Enhanced River Crossings
- Regional Arterials
- Transportation Technology

Travel Choice and Management

- Active Transportation Alternatives
- Travel Demand Management
- Shared Ride Transit Services

Policy and Partnerships

- Complete & Safe Streets Policies
- Smart Growth Initiatives
- Regional Leadership

The CRMS takes a holistic approach to address traffic problems—from major infrastructure investments to local land use policies. Traffic problems are systemic and complex; therefore, it is unlikely that any one of these strategies alone will make a significant difference. Real change will come when multiple actions are coordinated through incremental decisions at the local, regional, and state levels and the region takes a long-term approach to redefining its expectations.



CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY

ENHANCED RIVER CROSSING

As one of the region's most often cited needs, modernizing and expanding the region's river crossings increases economic competitiveness while helping the region better accommodate a growing population and increased travel demand.



The Mississippi River is a natural barrier to traveling in the region. Each day, the two bridges in Baton Rouge bottleneck as a growing number of people commute between home and work. The resulting traffic compromises the transportation network's resiliency and suppresses economic growth. Improvements that modernize and expand the way commuters cross the river would help alleviate the pressure on the two existing bridges by providing commuting options and improving resiliency during weather events and traffic incidents.

Local, regional, and statewide leaders continue to discuss options for constructing a third bridge across the Mississippi River. While a third crossing remains the preferred solution, the estimated cost of \$1 billion coupled with a \$13 billion transportation shortfall in the state suggests other options are necessary. Constructing major infrastructure projects such as a new bridge crossing will require innovative funding mechanisms. Once funding is identified, the extended construction schedule means a new bridge will not open to traffic in the near term.

To remain economically competitive, the region needs shorter-term strategies. Improvements to US 61, I-10, and US 190 would encourage use of the US 190 bridge, while operational improvements to the I-10/I-110 interchange would improve backups that occur at merges and exits. These projects have considerable costs and significant impacts during construction, but also bring the long-term benefit of advancing the reliability of the network.

Additionally, the current ferry system should be expanded and promoted as a commuter alternative. This action would require an initial investment to modernize and expand the system—and provide park-and-ride amenities and last mile connections. However, the result would free some capacity on the bridges and offer travel alternatives.

Recommendations

- Make improvements to encourage more use of the US 190 bridge
- Make improvements to I-10 bridge/I-110 interchange to alleviate bottlenecks
- Reconfigure ferries as an alternative crossing method and new commuting strategy
- Construct a new river crossing (long-term strategy requiring viable funding solution)
- Explore innovative funding solutions such as tolling and tax increases

Challenges

- Funding challenges for major improvements
- Provides temporary relief, but no new crossing
- Requires regional cooperation to identify preferred location, advocate for funding, and proceed to implementation

Outcomes

- Congestion relief on existing bridges during peak travel times and provides a redundancy to the network in the case of major incidents
- Reduced regional freight delays to increase economic competitiveness

Actions

- Complete a feasibility study
- Secure Funding
- Identify a preferred alignment
- Begin construction

CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY

REGIONAL ARTERIALS

Critical links in the roadway network become increasingly important as travel demand rises and advancing a plan to fill critical gaps in the regional network supports transportation goals, economic vibrancy, and resiliency initiatives.



Arterial and collector streets fill an important gap between interstates that focus on fast travel over long distances and local streets that offer access to destinations. The Capital Region simply has too few arterial roadways, which forces motorists to rely on a few over-burdened streets. What's worse, Capital Region roadways are aging and funding for improvements has failed to keep up with increasing travel demand. The result is deficiencies and gaps in the network.

Last updated in 1958, the Capital Region's major thoroughfare plan does not provide an adequate vision for an arterial street network built for efficient and effective travel. To remedy this, the region should create an updated thoroughfare plan that identifies future transportation corridors, assesses the necessary improvements for existing corridors, and formalizes connectivity requirements and policies that coordinate transportation planning with land use and development decisions.

Ultimately, improving travel conditions on the region's arterials will require large-scale thinking. Local improvement programs in Ascension (Move Ascension) and East Baton Rouge (Green Light Plan) are good blueprints for systematic improvement programs that tackle mobility issues through strategic improvement to priority corridors. Through a program of widenings, intersection improvements, and operational projects, these programs provide alternate routing options, travel time reductions, and additional capacity for a growing and vulnerable region. The updated thoroughfare plan should identify priority corridors and address existing local improvements programs to improve travel on a system-wide scale throughout Capital Area corridors.

Recommendations

- Support the creation of a regional thoroughfare plan
- Plan for a major street system that responds to growth and changing traffic needs
- Coordinate local priority corridor improvement efforts such as the Green Light Plan and Move Ascension

Challenges

- Securing funding for an updated thoroughfare plan
- Inclusion of identified priority projects in the region's long range plan
- Requires regional cooperation for adoption and agreement upon a regional strategy
- Traffic interruptions during construction and minimizing impacts to regional business

Outcomes

- Improved (or more predictable) travel times
- Provision of alternative routing choices due to enhanced connectivity
- Fewer freight delays

Actions

- Complete Regional Thoroughfare Plan
- Identify priority projects to be included in the MTP
- Include priority projects in the STIP
- Identify alternate funding sources for priority projects not included in STIP
- Begin construction

CAPACITY AND EFFICIENCY

TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY

The region's ability to expand its transportation capacity is limited. Therefore, the strategic use of technology can help maximize the effectiveness of our existing transportation infrastructure.



Transportation infrastructure must evolve to meet the region's changing needs. Embracing transportation technologies can improve the safety, reliability, and efficiency of the transportation network. Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) refers to the use of electronic technologies and communications to manage the transportation network. Examples include traffic and transit management centers, coordinated traffic signal systems, incident management programs, and travel information technologies.

The Capital Region's ITS plan is managed from the Baton Rouge Advanced Traffic Management and Emergency Operations Center, which monitors traffic conditions throughout the region. In addition, East Baton Rouge currently is expanding its signal management system through a fiber network that will eventually connect all traffic signals in the parish. Despite these advances, travel times remain unreliable. The region needs to fully leverage transportation technology to become more adaptable to real-time circumstances and quicker to respond to traffic incidents.

Regional leaders should prioritize investments such as coordinated signal systems, dynamic lane management, and improvements to the region's incident management program. To make the most of regional investment in this area, a leadership body should be designated to take ownership of the effort to encourage regional cooperation. In 2014, the City of Baton Rouge received a Smarter Cities Challenge Grant from IBM, which drafted several policy-level recommendations to address the City's transportation issues through data and technology. The most critical of these recommendations include:

- **Create a regional transportation governing body and technology team:** Designating a group to take ownership of regional technology initiatives will push solutions forward.
- **Establish a data exchange to share, analyze, and derive value from collective data:** Traffic does not stop at municipal borders, and neither should information. Each parish and municipality should come together to share information that sheds light on shared problems to encourage holistic, regional solutions.
- **Adopt a data-driven approach to transportation:** Sharing, collecting, and analyzing information fosters an incremental approach to adopting solutions that are proven to work, rather than just making politically expedient improvements.

These recommendations are not going to make the region's congestion disappear. But, together with capacity improvements and policy-driven solutions, adopting a data-driven and technology-based approach to traffic management and planning is a step toward increasing the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the existing roadway system.

Recommendations

- Follow through on key recommendations from the 2014 Smarter Cities Challenge
- Advocate for DOTD to build upon traffic camera/traffic information programs
- Synchronize traffic lights for normal conditions and adapting synchronization in real time for atypical conditions; Completing fiber optic communication to traffic signal controllers
- Launch training and funded programs to clear traffic incidents quickly and safely

Challenges

- Funding
- Smaller, incremental impacts
- Requires new approaches, tools, and skillsets
- Innovative solutions can be more challenging than traditional projects

Outcomes

- Improved traffic flow and travel time predictability at a relatively low cost
- Possible to redirect traffic during evacuation events or closures
- Reduce delay exponentially (for every minute a lane is blocked, traffic is delayed four minutes after the incident)

Actions

- Expand and enhance computerized systems yearly
- Create a regional ITS advisory group to set policy and guide initiatives
- Fund and expand on local incident management program
- Act on IBM Smarter Cities recommendations

TRAVEL CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Intentional efforts to expand active transportation options offer ways to create resilient travel choices, improve public health, and enhance quality of place.



Like most places in the United States, people overwhelmingly travel the Capital Region by car. However, local and national trends show active transportation modes on the rise as younger generations choose to live more active and urban lifestyles. Bicycle lanes and trails in Baton Rouge have expanded in recent years but largely serve a recreational purpose or provide local neighborhood transportation. Establishing an active transportation network that serves regional transportation goals would improve transportation capacity and create more vibrant and healthy communities.

Efforts should focus on connecting existing trails and providing facilities along or parallel to strategic commuter corridors. Facilities should link major activity nodes such as Downtown, the Louisiana State University and Southern University campuses, major shopping and entertainment centers, and BREC (Recreation and Park Commission for East Baton Rouge) facilities to surrounding neighborhoods. Facilities also should connect to each other to allow travel throughout the region by bicycle. In the future, passenger rail stations and a multimodal connection over the Mississippi River should be targeted.

Though these facilities could develop naturally over time, that Capital Region Planning Commission should consider developing a regional multiuse trail and bicycle master plan that combines local efforts already completed or under way with a focus on regional connectivity. The regional active transportation plan also should advocate strategic connections to likely transit and rail opportunities. During the plan development phase, regional leaders should work together to identify priority strategies and corridors and establish an action plan that allows for structured and predictable implementation. A coordinated strategy will help with incremental decisions, private-sector partnerships and enhanced competitiveness when applying for grants and funding programs.

Recommendations

- Focus on efforts that link existing trails and provide facilities along strategic commuter corridors
- Investigate options to enhance transit throughout the region
- Establish last mile connections as part of new or expanded ferry service
- Link activity nodes with comprehensive bicycle facilities to encourage people to travel by bicycle
- Support the development of a multi-use trail and regional bicycle master plan

Challenges

- Requires shifting local priorities, both for residents and regional leadership
- Lack of dedicated funding makes financing stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian projects difficult
- Requires regional cooperation for meaningful implementation

Outcomes

- Improved mobility, safety, and quality of life for all residents
- Improved access to economic opportunity and vital services for residents without vehicles
- Reduced transportation cost, vehicle emissions, and congestion
- Improved public health due to improved recreational opportunities

Actions

- Develop and adopt a regional bicycle and trails master plan and identify regional priority projects
- Adopt local bicycle and pedestrian master plans
- Secure a dedicated funding source for regional priority projects
- Implement active transportation improvements as part of roadway projects as opportunities arise
- Enhance access to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities through incremental improvements and connector facilities that serve local mobility

TRAVEL CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT

TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT

The region's ability to expand its transportation capacity is limited. Therefore, a systematic and coordinated approach to managing transportation demand must be one part of a broad regional solution.



When facing systematic congestion, the first reaction often is to seek ways to increase road capacity. However, space, funding, and natural constraints typically limit the effectiveness of this approach. Travel Demand Management (TDM) refers to strategies that achieve efficient use of the transportation system without physical modifications (e.g., additional capacity) to the transportation network. TDM strategies include policies or programs that change the way people travel, such as shifting from automobile to non-automobile modes, from single-occupant vehicles to higher-occupancy vehicles, and from peak-hour travel to off-peak travel. In other words, TDM focuses on travel behavior—how, when, and where people travel—to increase the efficiency of transportation systems and roadways, rather than travel supply or infrastructure improvements.

TDM strategies can be implemented and managed by many different types of organizations across the region, from state and local government agencies to private employers and universities. While no one strategy will solve the region's congestion problems, combining TDM efforts can have a large effect regionally. Some of these strategies can include:

- ➔ **Public transportation improvements:** Investments in public transportation, such as adding express routes and constructing park-and-ride lots, make transit a more viable option for commuters.
- ➔ **Flexible work schedules:** Encouraging employees to work from home or shift their workday by a few hours reduces the number of vehicles on the road during peak commute hours.
- ➔ **Ride share programs:** Carpool and vanpool programs allow workers with similar commuting patterns to travel together and share costs.
- ➔ **Active transportation facilities:** Bicycle lanes, trails, sidewalks, and supporting facilities such as bicycle parking, locker rooms, and showers allow employees who live closer to their work site to forgo a car altogether.

The Capital Region has experimented with isolated initiatives and, in 2017, CRPC launched a three-year pilot program to address travel demand region wide. The pilot program provides a great opportunity to make noticeable improvements in travel behavior, but widespread success requires strong local and region leadership as well as buy-in from major regional employers. Partners such as LSU, local hospitals, energy companies, and the state government should provide ongoing input on strategies that incorporate their unique situations. A successful initial showing can yield long-term, region wide initiatives that minimize congestion, offer environmental benefits, and save money.

Recommendations

- Build on CRPC pilot program and use it as a learning opportunity
- Establish coordinated regional strategies that change an individual's travel behavior (e.g., park-and-ride system, flexible work schedules, rideshare programs, active transportation facilities)
- Gain support and leadership from major regional employers

Challenges

- Public and private buy-in
- Some capital investment
- Focuses on cumulative impacts of small efforts rather than a single major project
- Takes time to show improvement
- Not as "flashy" as infrastructure projects (no ribbon-cutting opportunity)

Outcomes

- Trips shifted from single-occupancy vehicles
- Trips redistributed from peak-hour travel
- Lower transportation costs
- Additional travel options besides personal vehicle

Actions

- Document effectiveness of existing regional initiatives
- Establish a future mode share commute goal
- Enhance and promote the existing GeauxRide technology to serve a wider audience
- Establish local partnerships and funding for pilot programs with major local employers
- Complete three year pilot program and assess effectiveness

TRAVEL CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT

SHARED RIDE TRANSIT SERVICES

Investments in shared ride services offer unique opportunities to connect the state's largest economic centers, create viable regional travel choices, and remove commuters from congested arterials.



Infrastructure
Performance



Land Use and
Urban Form



Regional
Competitiveness



Resiliency and
Preparedness



Travel Options

Transit ridership in the Capital Region is well below national averages, with only 1% of commuters using transit as their primary means of transport in 2015 (compared to a national average of 5%). If regional transit ridership increased a single percentage point, nearly 4,000 vehicles per day would be removed from the roads. Increasing ridership to this level—and beyond—will require investments and partnerships that promote transit as a viable option to those who choose to take transit. Reliable regional, local, and premium connections can slowly build trust among a skeptical public and provide numerous economic benefits. Options for transit include:

- **Express connections:** Today, nearly every Capital Region worker represents one vehicle on the road. Convenient express bus routes stabilize congestion and connect corridors that currently lack multimodal accessibility. Routes may include connections between downtown Baton Rouge and Port Allen and Gonzales as well as to New Orleans if a passenger rail connection is not provided.
- **Local bus:** Local bus routes provide crucial last-mile connections from regional routes to final destinations. Shorter connection times and route tracking software can improve transit performance and increase ridership. Employer-sponsored shuttles from regional drop-off points also can promote alternative commute options with significant congestion improvements.
- **Passenger rail:** A planned passenger rail connection between Baton Rouge and New Orleans would serve the estimated 58,000 commuters and establish an important link between the state's largest economies. The federal government initially signaled their support of this option and provided funding in December 2016 to initiate planning along the corridor, but more recent funding uncertainty has made this project a long-term prospect.
- **Ferries:** Investing in additional and expanded ferry service, combined with park-and-ride options on the west side of the river, would provide an additional crossing option for daily commuters to East Baton Rouge. If employer-sponsored shuttles or local routes complete last-mile connections, this option could lessen the burden on the region's bridge crossings and enhance resiliency during major incidents.

When combined with TDM programs and active transportation facilities, a comprehensive regional transit system provides high quality service and limits the growth of congestion.

Recommendations

- Implement express connections that connect corridors with limited multimodal accessibility
- Provide local bus services with an emphasis on last-mile connections
- Support passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans
- Expand ferry service in combination with park-and-ride options west of the river as an additional crossing opportunity

Challenges

- Private partnerships and regional cooperation
- Culture and perception of transit within the region
- Corridor upgrades, annual subsidy, freight conflicts, and unclear timeline for passenger rail
- Low density development pattern, making efficient transportation connections difficult

Outcomes

- Thousands of vehicles removed from roads daily
- Increased mobility for those who lack vehicles
- Development potential around rail stations and increased economic exchange between Baton Rouge and New Orleans
- Evacuation alternative using passenger rail
- Environmental, social, and economic benefits along transit corridors

Actions

- Establish a regional compact of support for Baton Rouge to New Orleans passenger rail line
- Promote the initiative at the local, state, and federal levels
- Begin active planning for rail alignment, station locations, and transportation impacts
- Investigate innovative operational funding solutions

POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS

COMPLETE AND SAFE STREET POLICIES

Designing streets to safely accommodate multiple travel modes provides real travel choices, which, over time, increases the overall effectiveness of transportation and contributes to a positive quality of life.



For decades, transportation decisions have focused on moving vehicles, in effect encouraging nearly every trip—even very short ones—to be taken by car. Widespread congestion was just one consequence. **According to Federal Highway Administration, 50% of all trips in the U.S. are less than three miles,** representing a huge portion of daily errands that could be completed on foot, by bike, or via transit. By refocusing transportation strategy on moving people instead of vehicles, street design will naturally prioritize safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian facilities. “Complete Streets” are designed to provide appropriate access to all travelers (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders) and critical accessibility for people with disabilities, the elderly, and those who don’t own vehicles. These policies do not call for retrofitting bicycle lanes onto every street, but rather help determine which modes to prioritize based on a street’s context and its role in the overall network.

Louisiana is the third most dangerous state in the nation for pedestrians, with Baton Rouge being the 19th worst city in the country for pedestrian deaths. Many fatalities are preventable through roadway design, and design features that reduce travel speeds and provide adequate space for pedestrians and bicyclists reduce the likelihood of a crash and the severity of crashes if they occur. Special funding often is available for projects that are specifically designed to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

By adopting a regional complete streets policy, CRPC can promote safe and active transportation across the region and encourage member jurisdictions to adopt their own policies. East Baton Rouge already has a parish-wide policy, as does the state of Louisiana. Still, adopting a regional policy could encourage other local municipalities to adopt a similar policy by requiring projects receiving federal funding through CRPC to include safety and accessibility design features. The regional policy also should be accompanied by an “active transportation toolbox” of policies and projects as well as training and education on effective complete streets implementation. Redesigning corridors over time to focus on accessibility and safety will provide great regional transportation benefits, including more predictable travel and fewer deaths.

Recommendations

- Advocate for a regional complete streets policy that advances initiatives across jurisdictional lines
- Provide safe and equal access to all travelers: pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users
- Accommodate short trips without a vehicle (50% of all trips are less than 3 miles)

Challenges

- Requires a shift in current culture and practices
- Requires regional cooperation
- Provides only incremental improvements over a long timeline

Outcomes

- Reduced congestion by providing alternative transportation options for short trips
- Provides alternative travel options to the entire population

Actions

- Develop and adopt a regional Complete Streets policy
- Adopt of local policies in compliance with the regional policy
- Ensure proper application of policy as roadway projects occur

SMART GROWTH INITIATIVES

Smart growth serves the economy, community, and environment. Enhanced coordination between transportation, housing, and jobs achieves stated goals in local and regional plans.



No region can expect to achieve its transportation goals without also examining supportive land use priorities. For decades, the Capital Region has developed in an auto-centric way, prioritizing single-family subdivisions and growth along expensive highway corridors that require workers to commute via car into the city center and employment districts. As a result, people live farther from their jobs (30% of Capital Region workers commuted over 25 miles in 2014, up from 26% in 2004), which has led to higher transportation costs, lost time and money, more congestion, and a shortage of convenient, affordable housing.

One of the most effective long-term tools to reign in regional congestion is to execute land use initiatives that encourage sustainable growth patterns. These tools include:

- **Access management and corridor planning:** Requiring shared driveways and other access management techniques and creating multimodal corridors is part of a comprehensive approach to congestion mitigation along key corridors
- **Transit-supportive development:** Transit-supportive development increases density along existing or future transit corridors. Creating mixed-use activity centers near transit stops can help increase the use of the transit line, which, in turn, increases the attractiveness of the development. In addition, focusing residential development around transit reduces the distance between home and work.
- **Relaxed parking standards:** Many cities require commercial developments to include a minimum amount of parking even though street or surface parking is readily available nearby. Relaxing parking standards lowers developer costs and creates an environment conducive to transit or alternative modes.
- **Workforce Housing:** Though housing costs in the region are lower than many locations, many Baton Rouge workers live far away from their jobs. Building housing close to major employment destinations provides new opportunities to take advantage of transit, short commutes, and increased employment opportunities in the city center without the need for a long commute and increased congestion.

Together, these initiatives can create an environment conducive to high-quality transit and active transportation, as well as reduce the region's overall demand for single-occupancy vehicle trips. Though these changes will happen at the local level, over the long term they will contribute to providing additional travel choice, a healthier population and environment, and more vibrant places to work and live.

Recommendations

- Provide incentives to encourage development near existing town centers and activity nodes (e.g., streamlined development approval, relaxed parking standards, zoning codes that advocate mixed-use and transit-supportive development)
- Establish local development codes that work toward regional goals
- Apply principles to the things that matter most to local parishes (e.g., flooding, traffic, housing)

Challenges

- Calls for a significant shift in current development patterns
- Long-term solution – not a quick fix
- Requires regional cooperation

Outcomes

- Slower growth in travel times over a long-term trend
- Greater density and development options around activity centers
- Increased multimodal travel options
- Shorter travel distances that offer flexibility in travel options
- More efficient and cost-effective infrastructure system

Actions

- Develop a smart growth toolbox for the benefit of local municipalities
- Adopt local smart growth standards
- Measure consistency of local land use decisions over time and reevaluate approach and development incentives

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Effective cooperation among industry, local government, and regional partners is a characteristic of competitive places. These places emphasize participation in existing processes and identification of shared priorities through more formal partnerships.



The most economically successful regions in the country encourage strong regional collaboration. This collaboration can take a variety of forms but usually begins as a forum for public and private leaders to come together to share key concerns, collaborate, and advocate at the state and federal levels around a defined set of shared priorities.

Local and parish leaders should create a formal advisory structure that includes industry leaders to collaborate on topics that affect the region's economic competitiveness, such as major transportation projects. In this space, the interests of the region should be the priority, with the understanding that the region's overall economic health impacts each municipality within it.

Other high-growth regions have embraced a similar form of public/private collaboration by formally including industry representatives in MPO policy and advisory committees. By encouraging the participation of the private sector in this decision making capacity, MPO leaders can more directly understand the needs and challenges of the local economy while encouraging more involvement from local business leaders.

This cross-sector coordination allows the region to maintain its long-term economic competitiveness and proactively address unique challenges. However, having a seat at the table brings enhanced responsibility and a larger stake in the region's economic outcome. Major industry partners with an interest in transportation priorities should advocate for improvements and policy changes that affect their ability to do business and increase their participation in regional decision-making processes. They also should be supporters and participants in a diversified strategy, including those that promote travel choice and TDM programs. Major public and private employers in the Capital Region need to share responsibility in elevating transportation as an important part of the region's vibrancy and stand beside leaders to promote a regional approach to decision-making.

Recommendations

- Establish a formal advisory structure with regular interaction between the CRPC and business and industry to share concerns, solutions, and information
- Advocate together as a region to remain economically competitive
- Promote regional strategies together as joint partners in economic goals

Challenges

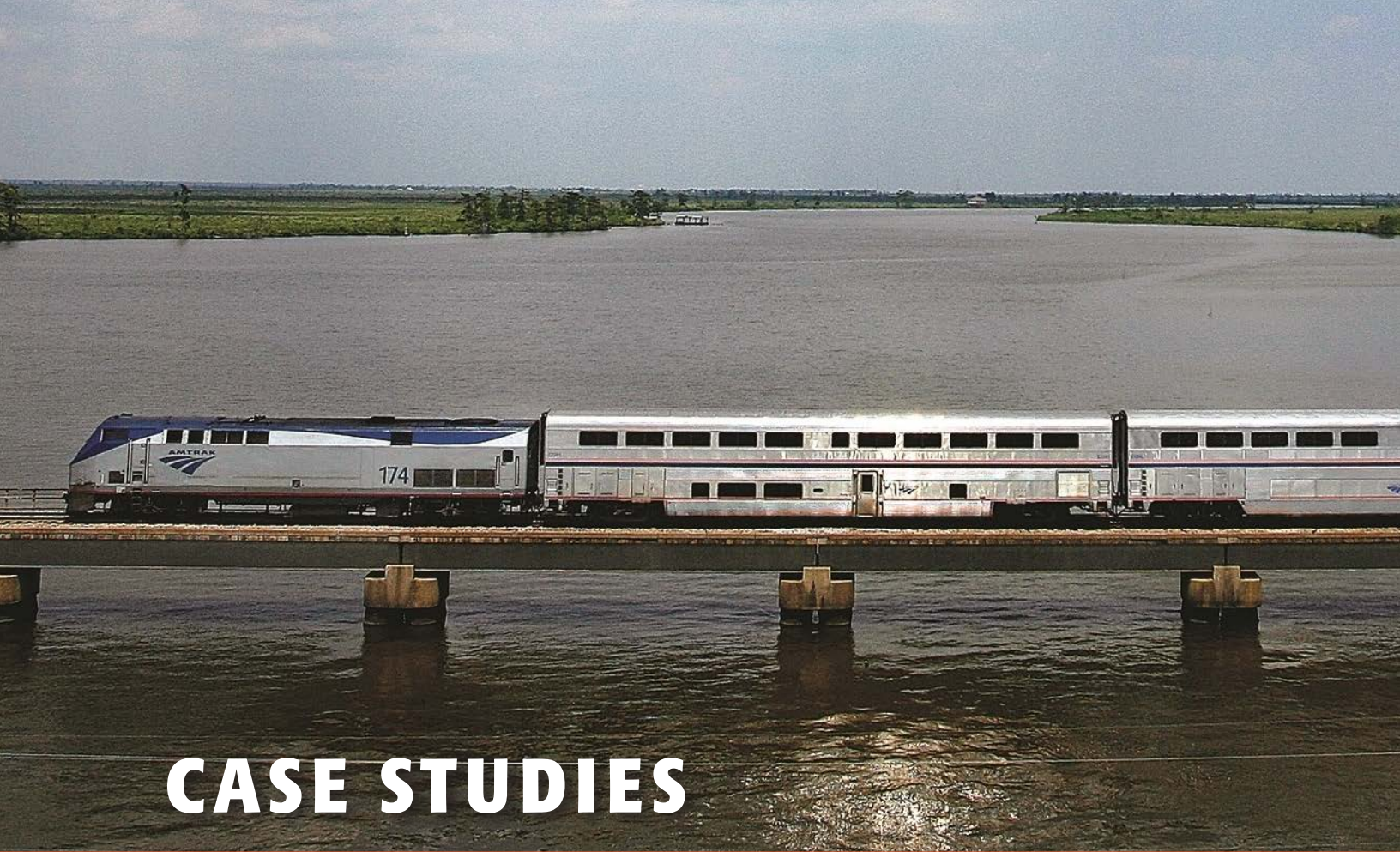
- Potential for conflicting priorities
- Public/private partnerships to fill the funding gap

Outcomes

- Unified regional voice
- Combined powers of influence to advocate for regional goals
- Streamlined processes ensuring economic competitiveness is considered when transportation decisions are made

Actions

- Create an annual transportation summit as a forum for regional collaboration
- Adopt a regional compact as a commitment to collaboration
- Evaluate participation across various stakeholder groups and reevaluate outreach and engagement efforts to increase participation

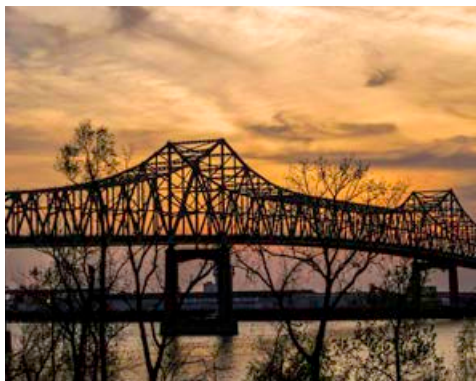


CASE STUDIES

MAKE THE CASE

One important element of outlining the strategies that will improve regional mobility is to understand how specific strategies have worked in other places with similar or dissimilar conditions. These case studies are crucial to providing an educated understanding of the effects that a particular strategy might have on the Capital Region. In short, these case studies are meant to:

- ➔ Provide an example of the strategy being used elsewhere
- ➔ Show strategies for implementation
- ➔ Prove the effectiveness of a particular mobility strategy



The Existing bridge over the Mississippi River on I-10, opened in 1968



Ferry service carries passengers and vehicles from Plaquemine landing to Sunshine.

WILMINGTON URBAN AREA MPO COLLECTOR STREET PLANS

Regional Arterials

Wilmington, NC, a port city with a coastal geography similar to Baton Rouge, has become a regional leader in planning for connectivity. The Wilmington MPO has completed several collector street plans for different geographies within the metro area over the last few years. Each plan includes proposed future connections, policy guidelines, and design recommendations that enhance safety, aesthetics, and connectivity. A set of general connectivity guidelines and regulatory toolbox in each plan guides policy in the region to ensure the plans are implemented and that best practices are followed as new development places pressures on the area's transportation network.

Though each plan was intended to serve local goals, they also enhance regional mobility, and each plan has been adopted by the MPO upon completion. Therefore, the plans serve as a guidebook for region-wide coordination. A prioritized action plan identifies where specified agencies should take the lead and where various parties and entities need to work together to ensure success.



Downtown Wilmington

BENEFITS OF INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Transportation Technology

Throughout the county, the quantitative benefits of ITS programs have been well-documented over a number of years.

- In Houston, a survey found that 85% percent of drivers reported having changed routes due to information displayed on a dynamic message sign. These can be especially useful to direct traffic during major traffic incidents or severe weather events.
- Eight separate studies have demonstrated that traffic signal coordination can smooth traffic flow, reducing stops along a corridor by up to 77% in some cases.
- Effective traffic incident management programs have demonstrated an ability to reduce the duration of traffic incidents by 30 to 40 percent.



Dynamic messaging sign

PIMA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (TUCSON, AZ)

Travel Demand Management

The MPO in Tucson, AZ places TDM initiatives at the center of regional planning objectives as a cost-effective way to reduce congestion. Their travel reduction program, which is mandatory for employers with more than 100 full-time equivalent employees, requires employers to assign a transportation coordinator and educate workers on alternative commute options. The MPO's transportation planning process also requires TDM to be examined as a viable alternative to capacity projects and sets performance measures to track the effectiveness of regional TDM programs as measured through employer surveys. More than 200 employers participated in the program in 2015.

EMPLOYER SHUTTLE SUCCESS STORIES

Shared Ride Transit Services

Employer shuttle services are ideal for institutional employers with centralized campuses. Many success stories from around the country highlight the benefits employers have found by offering these opportunities to their employees. Barnes-Jewish and St. Louis Children’s Hospital offer a shuttle system between local transit stations and campus. Participants are guaranteed a ride home for emergencies to overcome a common barrier to shared ride commuting. The hospital reports the commute programs have lessened the need for additional employee parking and have positively impacted their recruitment and retention efforts.

Texas Instruments (TI) in the Dallas/Fort Worth area provides employees numerous transit benefits, including a free shuttle service between TI campuses and nearby transit stations. An average of 600 employees used the shuttle daily in 2011. In total, the program estimates these activities—along with vanpools—amounted to nearly 58,000 total travel miles averted every day in the Dallas area.



A typical rideshare vehicle

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL (KANSAS CITY)

Complete and Safe Street Policies

MARC, the Kansas City, MO MPO became a national leader when it adopted a regional Complete Streets policy in 2008. In doing so, the MPO developed a toolbox of active transportation policy guidelines, leading more than a dozen local municipalities to adopt their own local version of the policy. MARC’s regional policy applies to all its planning activities and to any local project that seeks federal funding through the MPO. However, the policy is applied in a context-sensitive and thoughtful way and allows for exceptions when necessary.

Economic competitiveness was a key motivation for the policy adoption. MARC watched other cities and jurisdictions adopting Complete Streets policies and saw that they needed to keep up with 21st century transportation trends to attract new businesses and residents and maintain a high quality of life.



Grand Boulevard, Kansas City, MO

SAN DIEGO SMART GROWTH TOOLBOX

Smart Growth Initiatives

To aid implementation of their Regional Comprehensive Plan, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) produced a collection of planning tools to assist local municipalities. The tools include design guidelines, visualization tools, trip generation estimates and parking guidelines, research reports, and other references. Regional planning staff made presentations to local planners and municipal staff to explain the concept of smart growth and the new guidelines.

Additionally, SANDAG provided up to \$5 million a year for necessary improvements to implement the smart growth guidelines. The funding was available to local municipalities through a competitive grant program and dedicated through the region's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements. Since 2005, more than \$55 million has been awarded for capital improvements and planning projects throughout the metro region. The fourth round of funding is anticipated to begin its call for projects in the winter of 2017/2018.

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS AND KYOVA INTERSTATE PLANNING COMMISSION

Regional Leadership and Collaboration

The following MPOs, from vastly different populations and geographies, represent different ways that private industry partners have been brought to the table as regional partners.

- The Maricopa Association of Governments, representing the Phoenix, AZ region, brings industry leaders into the decision-making process through membership on an Economic Development Committee and Transportation Policy Committee – two boards separate from the MPO's formal advisory structure. These committees help inform initiatives that the MPO undertakes to foster economic development. Membership includes business leaders, elected officials, and state DOT staff.
- The Kentucky-Ohio-West Virginia Interstate Planning Commission (KYOVA), which represents the Huntington, WV region, allows community business leaders and citizen members to sit on the MPO's policy committee. This inclusion at the highest level of the MPO's advisory structure creates a formal partnership between the public and private sectors and an understanding that transportation challenges are a shared regional concern with responsibility shared among all parties.



CALL TO ACTION

CALL TO ACTION

Congestion in the Capital Region has grown beyond the aging transportation system's ability to accommodate it. Road congestion costs the region money and leaves it vulnerable to major incidents and natural disasters. **The CRMS comes at a unique turning point for the region and State of Louisiana, and at a time when there is growing national support for more efficient, effective, and diverse transportation systems.**

This regional strategy outlined in the CRMS addresses specific challenges and leverages unique opportunities. Implementing the CRMS is not a short-term endeavor; instead, it will unfold through a series of coordinated steps that build toward a broader vision of safety, accessibility, mobility, and resiliency. The Regional Dashboard (see following page) breaks down each strategy into measurable progress indicators to evaluate success.

This strategy document also is not the final solution to the region’s problem. Measuring progress and effectively tracking what’s working and what’s not working offers a way to regularly modify programs and policies to respond to lagging progress. In the decades to come, the forces and trends shaping the Capital Region will be different from those shaping the region today. A dynamic response to these changing circumstances is required.

The Capital Region faces an unknown future in the wake of political cycles, frequency and severity of extreme weather events, demographic shifts, and economic transitions. Combined, these circumstances create a sense of urgency for the region to align its priorities and advocate for a transportation system that serves its 21st century needs. Success will not come immediately, though signs of improvement should be evident. The Capital Region’s transportation challenges result from the union of numerous economic, environmental, demographic, and land use challenges—shared challenges for the region’s population. It will require coordination, commitment, accountability, and an emphasis on distant outcomes as short-term decisions are made. Despite the challenges, shared concerns for the future create a coalition of opportunity and shared optimism. It is not reasonable to expect one project or a single strategy to solve the region’s traffic tangle. Investing in the region’s long-term future through infrastructure projects, policies, programs, and initiatives at the local and regional levels is the best approach.

Implementing the CRMS is not a short-term endeavor; instead, it will unfold through a series of coordinated steps that build toward a broader vision of safety, accessibility, mobility, and resiliency.

REGIONAL DASHBOARD

STRATEGY		ACTIONS
CAPACITY & EFFICIENCY	Enhanced River Crossings	Complete a feasibility study
		Secure Funding
		Identify a preferred alignment
		Begin construction
	Regional Arterials	Complete Regional Thoroughfare Plan
		Identify priority projects to be included in the MTP
		Include priority projects in the STIP
		Identify alternate funding sources for priority projects not included in STIP
	Transportation Technology	Expand and enhance computerized systems yearly
		Create a regional ITS advisory group to set policy and guide initiatives
		Fund and expand on local incident management program
		Act on IBM Smarter Cities recommendations
Complete three year pilot program and assess effectiveness		
TRAVEL CHOICE & MANAGEMENT	Active Transportation Alternatives	Develop and adopt a regional bicycle and trails master plan and identify regional priority projects
		Adopt local bicycle and pedestrian master plans
		Secure a dedicated funding source for regional priority projects
		Implement active transportation improvements as part of roadway projects as opportunities arise
		Enhance access to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities through incremental improvements and connector facilities that serve local mobility
	Travel Demand Management	Document effectiveness of existing regional initiatives
		Establish a future mode share commute goal
		Enhance and promote the existing GeauxRide technology to serve a wider audience
		Establish local partnerships and funding for pilot programs with major local employers
		Complete three year pilot program and assess effectiveness
	Shared Ride Services	Establish a regional compact of support for Baton Rouge to New Orleans passenger rail line
		Promote the initiative at the local, state, and federal levels
		Begin active planning for rail alignment, station locations, and transportation impacts
		Investigate innovative operational funding solutions
	POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS	Complete & Safe Street Policies
Adopt local policies in compliance with the regional policy		
Ensure proper application of policy as roadway projects occur		
Smart Growth Initiatives		Develop a of smart growth toolbox for the benefit of local municipalities
		Adopt local smart growth standards
		Measure consistency of local land use decisions over time and reevaluate approach and development incentives
Regional Leadership & Collaboration		Create an annual transportation summit as a forum for regional collaboration
		Adopt a regional compact as a commitment to collaboration
		Evaluate participation across various stakeholder groups and reevaluate outreach and engagement efforts to increase participation

MOBILITY CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY



	Infrastructure Performance	Land Use and Urban Form	Regional Competitiveness	Resiliency and Preparedness	Travel Options
Enhanced River Crossings	✓		✓	✓	✓
Regional Arterials	✓		✓	✓	
Transportation Technology	✓		✓	✓	
Active Transportation Alternatives		✓			✓
Travel Demand Management	✓		✓		✓
Shared Ride Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complete & Safe Street Policies	✓			✓	✓
Smart Growth Initiatives	✓	✓			✓
Regional Leadership & Collaboration	✓		✓		

The table above gives a comprehensive overview of how the CRMS responds to the Mobility Considerations. Taken as a whole, the CRMS provides a complex and systematic response to the region's mobility challenges, with several solutions supporting each effort.



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