

ACTION 3- Evaluate and Improve Bridges

A significant amount of George County’s roads are within the vast watersheds of the Pascagoula River and the Escatawpa River, and their major tributaries. Although both rivers are valuable natural resources, these watersheds have required George County to build, install, and maintain 89 separate roadway bridges.

This is a relative high number of bridges for a small rural county with a current population of 24,000 residents. This overall bridge count does not include the hundreds of large drainage culverts serving as a paved roadway span over dozens of small tributaries and creeks throughout the watersheds and low lying areas within the Action Plan.

The George County Board of Supervisors has been actively and formally involved in strategic bridge planning since 2018. Each fiscal year the Board reviews and approves a significant bridge project for improved driver and traffic safety utilizing a combination of state/federal funds and matching County funds.

With the approval of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the vast expansion of federal bridge safety programs, it became clear George County needed to formalize its internal road safety process to reflect federal roadway system planning.

George County began discussing and developing a formal Action Plan in March 2022. Supervisors, the County Engineer, and the Community Development Office started a list of improvement projects. The County developed a list of priority bridges for modification per the findings of weight evaluation, traffic counts, and crash data review.

Below is a partial list showing the George County bridges with the lowest sufficiency ratings.

Asset Code	NBI 7: Facility Carried by Structure	NBI 6A: Feature Intersected: Narrative	ADT	Substructure Type	Sufficiency Rating	Open/Posted
SA2000000000065	BROOME SCHOOL ROAD	BRIDGE BRANCH	200	TIMBER	31.6	Posted
SA2000000000051	BEESLEY ROAD	LYONS BRANCH	50	TIMBER	36.0	Posted
SA2000000000083	MIRACLE LANE	PREE CREEK	20	TIMBER	40.1	Posted
SA2000000000054	TOM HEMPSTEAD ROAD	LIVE STREAM	50	TIMBER	44.0	Posted
SA2000000000021	SALEM SCHOOL ROAD	MCLELLAND LAKE	50	TIMBER	52.4	Posted
SA2000000000031	FIG FARM ROAD	TOPPLEY BRANCH	450	TIMBER	56.8	Posted
SA2000000000036	RIVER ROAD	REEDY CREEK	780	TIMBER	57.3	Posted
SA2000000000011	BEAVER DAM ROAD	BIG CREEK	1000		64.5	
SA2000000000047	BARTON AGRICOLA RD	BIG CEDAR CREEK	860		66.1	
SA2000000000059	VESTRY ROAD	LIVE STREAM	70	TIMBER	68.9	
SA2000000000050	BISMARCK RD.	LYONS BRANCH	50	TIMBER	71.3	Posted
SA2000000000071	SALLY PARKER ROAD	BRANCH OF WHITES CREEK	310	STEEL	72.7	
SA2000000000060	RED CREEK ROAD	RED CREEK	280		76.5	
SA2000000000077	SALEM SCHOOL ROAD	BLACK CREEK	50	TIMBER	76.6	
SA2000000000034	RIVER ROAD	BIG CREEK	340		78.6	
SA2000000000004	BEAVER CREEK ROAD	LIVE STREAM	410	STEEL	79.8	Posted
SA2000000000068	VESTRY ROAD	COOPER MILL CREEK	70	TIMBER	80.0	

ACTION 3- Evaluate and Improve Bridges

Many of the roadways throughout the County are incapable of safely carrying the level of service motorist required due to the increases in population. Narrow roadways and bridges with inadequate signage are noticeable safety hazards. Low weight bridges restrict the flow of commerce, emergency vehicle response times, and safety of school busses.

In July-August 2022, the Board formally accepted a ranked critical bridge list from the County Engineer for possible funding and future planning. The following bridge projects were approved in 2022, by the Board:

- 1) Beesley Bridge Replacement Project- Construction to begin in 2023
- 2) Merrill Bridge Replacement Project- Construction to begin in 2023/2024

Project timelines are estimated, and dependent upon available funding acquired from general funds, grants, and legislative efforts.