

DOTD, state and local officials break ground on LA 70 widening project in Ascension and St. James Parishes

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St. James Parish- Today, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D., along with state and local officials, celebrated the start of construction on the LA 70 widening project in Ascension and St. James Parishes.

This \$53.2 million project will widen LA 70 from the LA 22 interchange in Sorrento to the base of the Sunshine Bridge on the east side of the Mississippi River. A separate two-lane highway will be constructed parallel to the existing two-lane road, forming a four-lane divided highway.

"Because of the industry growth in this region, we have seen the need to move this project forward. This capacity project will be immensely beneficial to this region as it continues to grow and will allow for easier and safer travels for the businesses and industry of the region, as well as the citizens who use LA 70 on a regular basis," said Wilson. "The community and the trades rely on an efficient roadway system for their economic growth, which is what this project will accomplish for the success and future of not only Ascension and St. James Parishes, but this region of the state."

"Yet another huge project for District 81 that will help relieve traffic and create an industrial corridor for Ascension and St. James parishes. This will benefit the people and the region with future growth for jobs and industry," said House Speaker Clay Schexnayder.

"The expansion of Hwy 70 and the addition of a roundabout at the Hwy 70/3125 intersection is just another example of State's commitment to improving our infrastructure throughout the River Parishes," said Representative Ken Brass. "Hwy 70 is a critical East/West Bank corridor that is traveled by thousands of residents each day in which the flow of traffic impacts our local businesses and industries."

"This highway widening project on highway 70, between highway 22 and the Sunshine Bridge, will go a long way in improving traffic flow for our area and especially for those plant workers that has often been tied up in traffic going to and from work," said Senator Ed Price.

"Thanks to the relationships we have developed with the State, DOTD, and our Legislative Delegation, we were able to secure this major project to the joint benefit of not only Ascension Parish and St. James Parish, but all our surrounding Parishes whose residents travel this area daily," said Ascension Parish President Cointment. "This will go a long way in getting traffic moving through the Parish."

"We are very thankful that this much needed project finally came to fruition. Increasing the traffic capacity at every one of our Mississippi River crossings is going to open up a lot more economic development growth and opportunities," said St. James Parish President Peter A. Dufresne.

Currently, more than 33,000 vehicles travel along this corridor daily. In the next 20 years, the number of motorists who will utilize this corridor is anticipated to increase to nearly 50,000 vehicles per day.

Crews are currently working on utility relocations, with roadway construction estimated to begin in April, with an estimated completion in Spring 2025, weather permitting.