



SFY 2022-2023
Annual Report

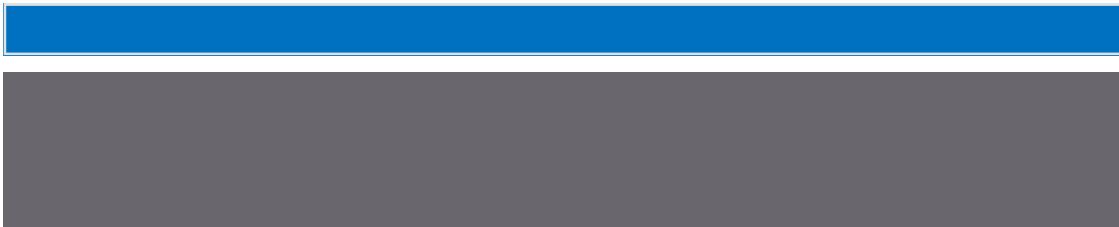


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Introduction

This report is a summary of some of the work that the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), in its capacity as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), conducted in LA state fiscal year 2022-2023 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023).

The report also includes a snapshot of various data and trends that tell a story of how our region's transportation systems are performing, and how we can improve service to our communities.



RPC: Your Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Regional Planning Commission's (RPC) Transportation Policy Committee serves as the MPO for the urbanized areas of southeast Louisiana. This jurisdiction includes all or part of eight Parishes: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, and Tangipahoa.

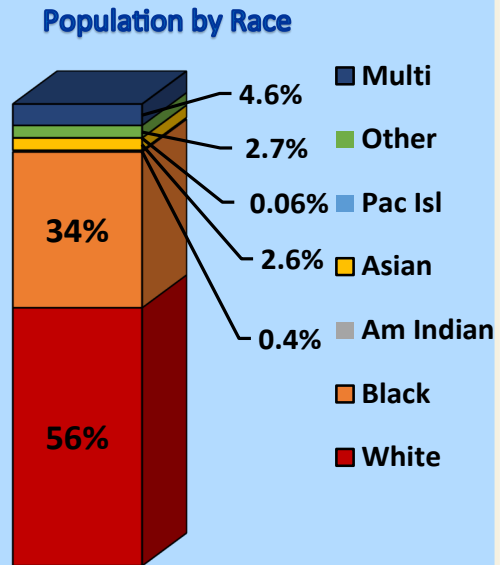
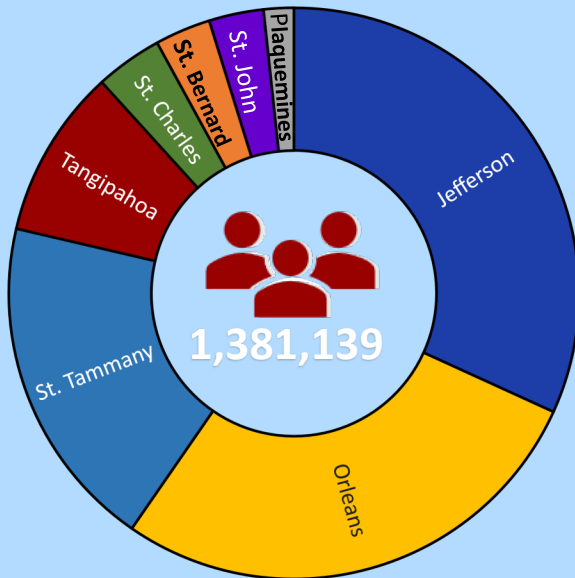
The RPC MPO board (the Transportation Policy Committee) is made up of elected officials, citizens, and representatives from various transportation entities who meet once a month.



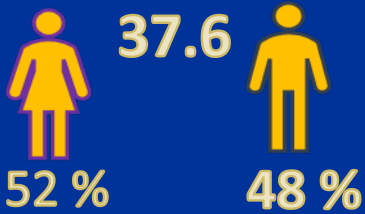
What is an MPO?

MPOs are created by Federal law and are responsible for carrying out the Metropolitan Planning Process. This process ensures that the planning for federal transportation funds are spent reflecting a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive manner.

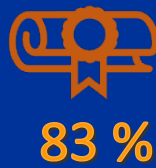
Region at a Glance



Median Age



High School



ACS 5-yr. 2017=2021

Median Income

\$ 61,602

Households

536,483

Commute to Work



86.3%



2.3%



0.9%



1.9%

ACS 5Yr 2017-2021

Top Five Employment Industries

125,851

Healthcare



90,511

Retail Trade



88,497

Food Service



60,169

Prof/Tech Services



54,725

Educational Services

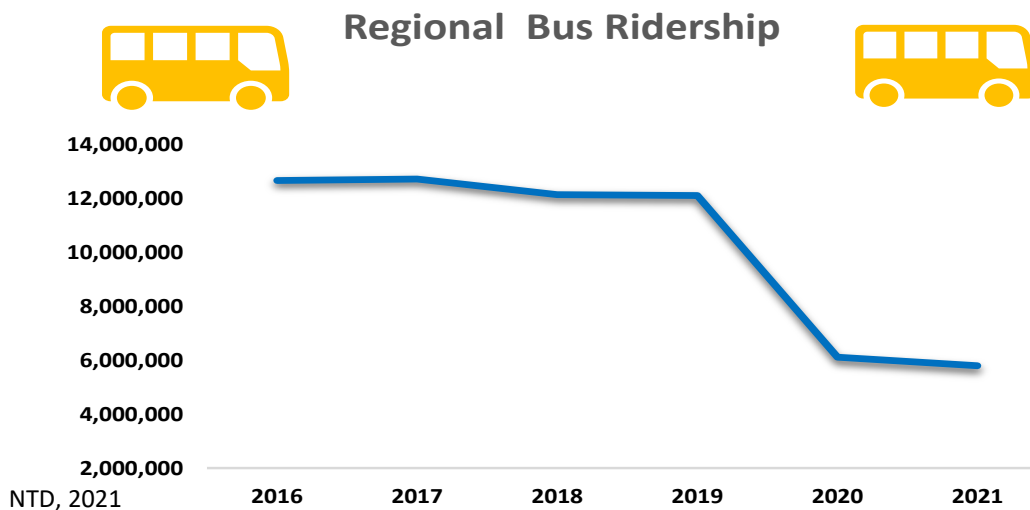


Database USA, 2022

Public Transportation

Jefferson Parish Transit and the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) are the two primary public transportation systems serving The New Orleans Metropolitan Area. Jefferson Parish Transit serves Jefferson Parish, while RTA operates primarily in New Orleans, with both systems coordinating interparish travel. These systems operate streetcars, buses, ferries, and paratransit. Jefferson Parish Transit and RTA bus ridership was steady prior to 2020, but both were starkly affected by the pandemic. As of 2023, ridership is slowly recovering back to pre-Covid rates.

Other public transit systems in the region include St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit, River Parishes Transit Authority, St. Tammany Area Transportation, Tangi Transit, and the Plaquemines Parish Ferry.



Projects and Studies

⇒ Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

RTA is planning for the region's first bus rapid transit (BRT) system. BRT is a rapid transit system that uses buses to provide rail-like service but at much lower costs

⇒ New Routes

RTA updated the service area bus network in 2022 that improved access and travel times through out the community

⇒ New Buses & Enhanced Shelters

-Jefferson Parish Transit and NORTA received Low No –Emissions grant for electric and hybrid buses

-Jefferson Parish Transit is updating bus shelters with solar power to enhance lighting

⇒ Consolidated Transit Application

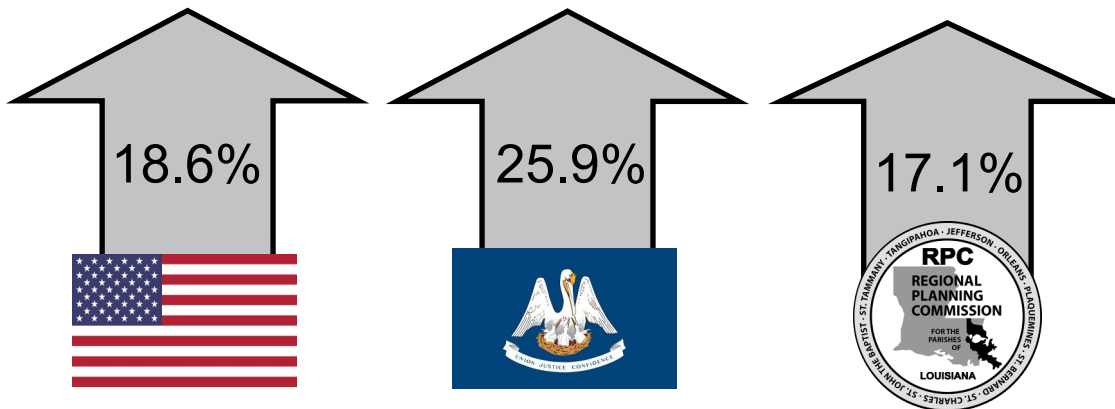
Jefferson Parish Transit & RTA have joined forces in Le Pass which is a trip planner and mobile payment system, and provides real time information on the transit application

Safety

The roads are getting more dangerous for travelers.

Transportation associated fatalities continue to be one of the leading causes of death in the United States. 42,795 traffic related deaths have been tentatively recorded nationwide in 2022¹, a slight decrease from 2021 but a tragically sharp rise from years past.

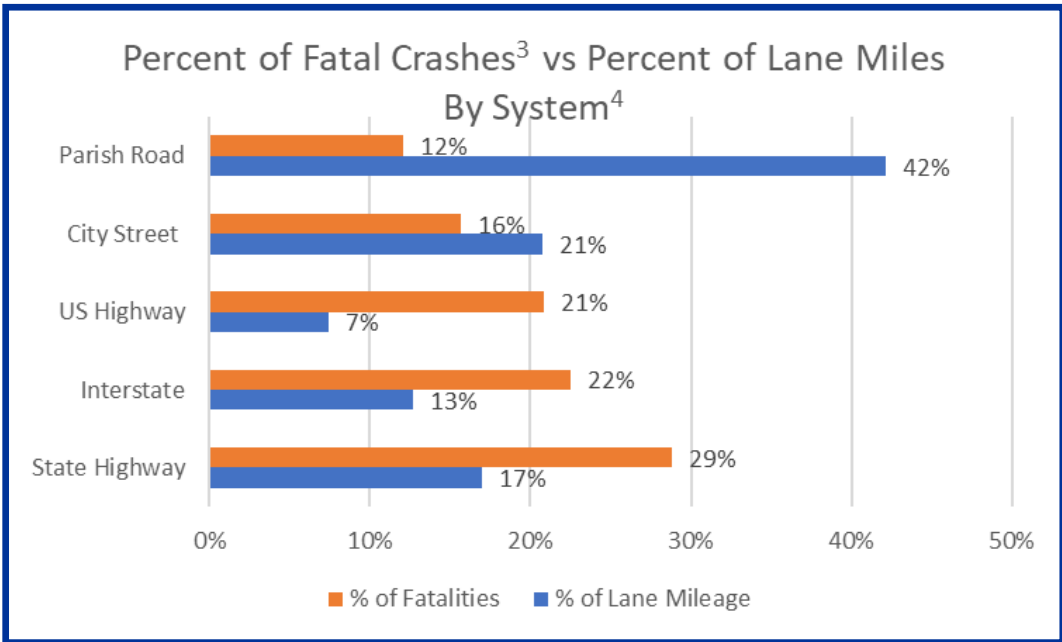
Our state and our region is unfortunately not an exception to this trend. In 2021 971² people lost their lives travelling on Louisiana's roadways, an increase from 771² in 2017. 185² of these deaths were in our member parishes, compared to 158² five years prior.



National, State, and Local percent increase in traffic fatalities between 2017 and 2021

Where are fatalities happening?

The roads we walk, bike, roll, and drive on everyday are owned and maintained by primarily three main entities: LADOTD, parishes, and municipalities. It requires coordination and cooperation between all three agencies to effectively make changes of reducing fatalities throughout our region's transportation network.



*One crash was coded as “not reported” for the roadway classification

*Note: Citations and sources are on the back cover.

What are the fatal crash contributing factors?

To reduce the tragic consequences associated with fatal crashes, we need to know what led to the crash. The Louisiana Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) identifies four main “emphasis areas” which are the leading contributing factors in fatal crashes: distracted/inattentive driving, impaired driving, occupant protection, and infrastructure and operations (lane departure, roadway departure, intersections, and pedestrians and bicycles). For the RPC’s region, the top contributing factors in fatal crashes from 2017-2021 were, Drug Involved + Predicted Alcohol, Lane Departure, and Distracted/ Inattentive Driving.



757 Crashes

Drug Involved + Predicted Alcohol³



345 Crashes

Lane Departure³



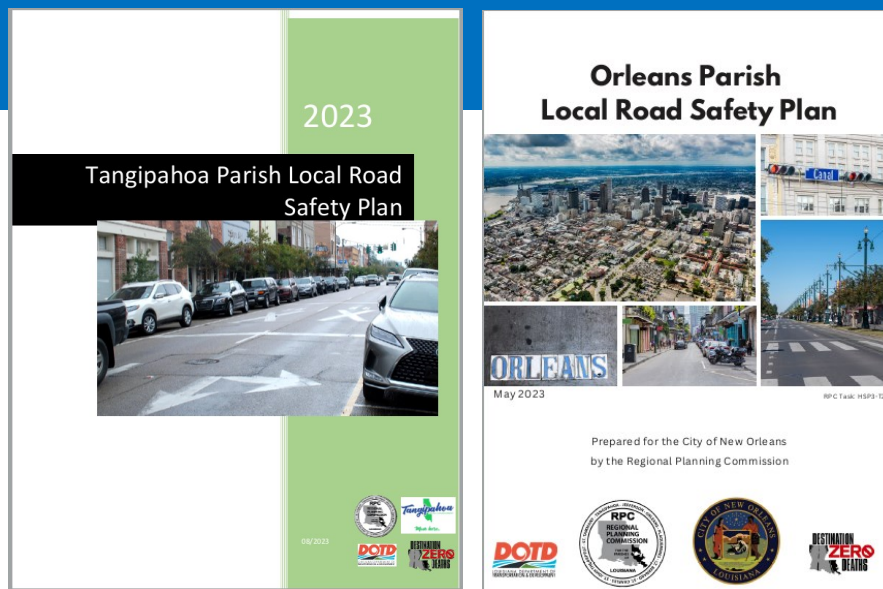
283 Crashes

Distracted driving/ inattentive³

Safety, continued

Planning for a safer future

In the past year, the Regional Planning Commission has completed several projects which focused on improving the safety for the traveling public. In particular, the Orleans and Tangipahoa Parish Local Road Safety Plans identified safety concerns and proposed countermeasures on locally owned and maintained roads. These plans will assist local agencies in receiving 100% federal funding for safety improvements from the Local Road Safety Program.



Safe Streets and Roads for All

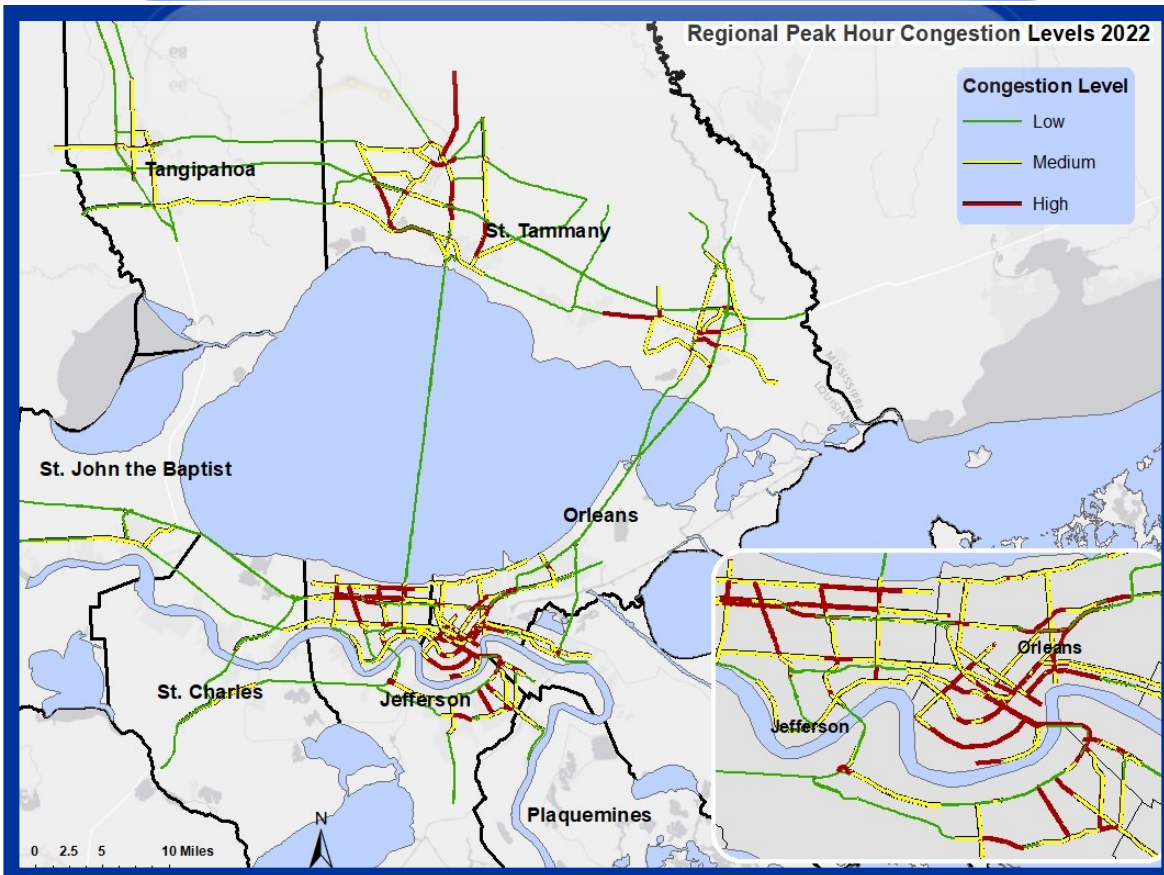
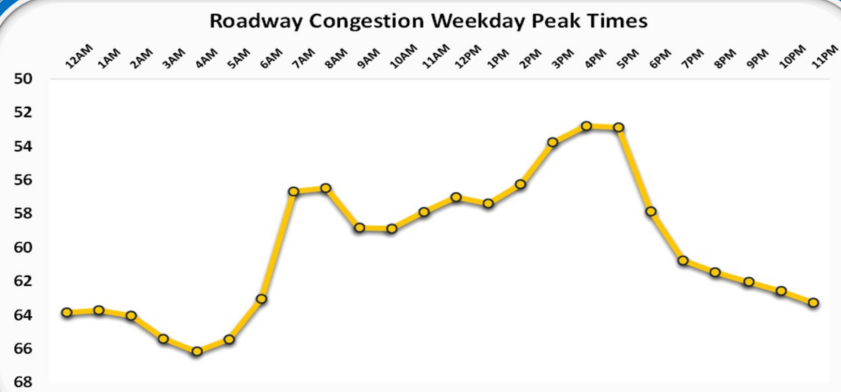


Improving roadway safety requires addressing both infrastructure and our learned driving behaviors. To address both of these issues, RPC was awarded a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant from the US Department of Transportation and is developing a regional safety action Plan for the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany, Parish.

The grant will seek to identify both behavioral and infrastructure crash contributing factors and propose countermeasures that can be equity implemented through SS4A implementation grants.

Congestion Management

Congestion Management include identifying traffic and congestion throughout the region, defining the need for congestion reduction, and advising on mitigating road congestion. As this chart and map illustrate, road congestion tends to happen when there is inadequate capacity to handle traffic demand at a particular location (bottlenecks) and at certain times (peak hours). RPC continues to work on travel reliability for motor vehicles through a variety of means, including real time traveler information, roadway geometry improvements, and providing alternatives to driving.



State of Good Repair

Maintaining our transportation system is vital, that's why system preservation and stewardship is one of the Regional Planning Commission's planning priorities that guides RPC's transportation planning process.

RPC tracks and reports on the condition of the interstate, non-interstate national highway system (NHS), and national NHS bridges. RPC works hand in hand with both DOTD and local governments to plan and implement projects which improve our region's transportation systems conditions.

Roadway Condition Ratings

Urbanized Area 2022	Interstate		Non-Interstate		NHS Bridges	
	Good%	Poor%	Good%	Poor%	Good%	Poor%
Mandeville-Covington	5.1%	0.0%	9.2%	22.1%	10.5%	0.0%
New Orleans	28.7%	0.1%	12.8%	8.5%	42.2%	8.9%
Slidell	24.8%	0.0%	0.0%	14.1%	94.1%	0.9%
South Tangipahoa	22.8%	1.3%	1.3%	6.1%	87.0%	0.0%

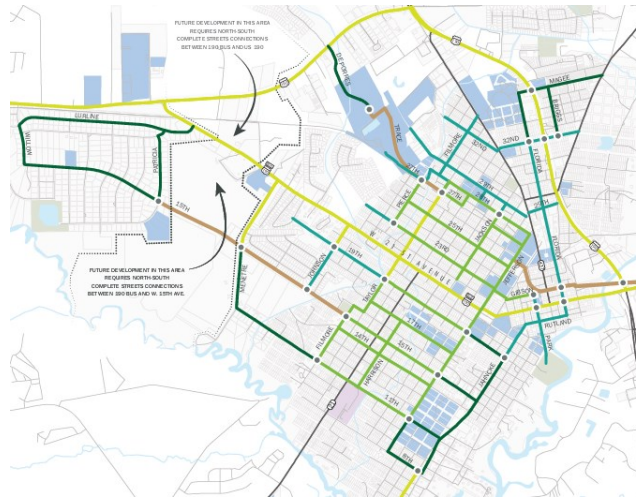
In Federal Fiscal Year 2023, 79 roadway projects were obligated (i.e., received a federal funding commitment) throughout the RPC planning area that contributed to our priority of system preservation and stewardship. This represents 56% of all obligated projects and a total federal, state, and local investment of nearly \$185 million.

In Public Transportation, over 80% of RPC's FY 23 financial programming was for maintenance, renovation, or replacement of the region's buses, paratransit vehicles, equipment, facilities, shelters, and equipment.



Bike and Pedestrian

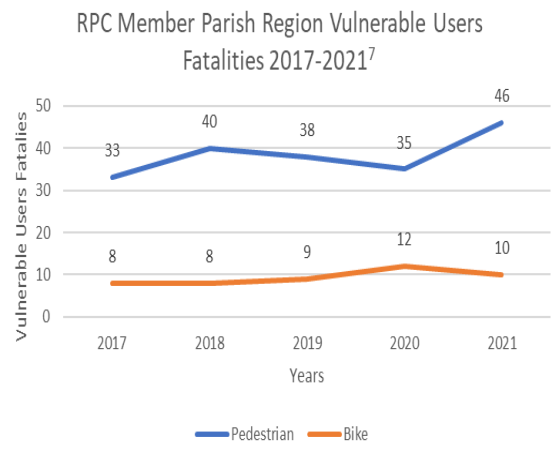
Our mission is to ensure the transportation mobility choice of walking or bicycling safely exists for all citizens. RPC strives to provide planning, policy assistance and funding to create complete streets, and to design and deploy appropriate facilities throughout our region that follow federal guidance and best practices. Our region currently has 432 miles⁵ of bike facilities, with another 321 miles⁶ proposed.



Bike and Ped Safety

Our regions roads are used for a variety of reasons, whether it be walking to transit, riding a bike, rolling in a mobility device, or driving. While great strides have been made over the past decade, there is still considerable work to be done to improve our systems safety for all users.

239 of the 843 traffic deaths (28%) documented in our region between 2017 and 2021 were pedestrians or bicyclists.⁷ This exceeds the state average of 22%⁷ and national average of 21%.¹

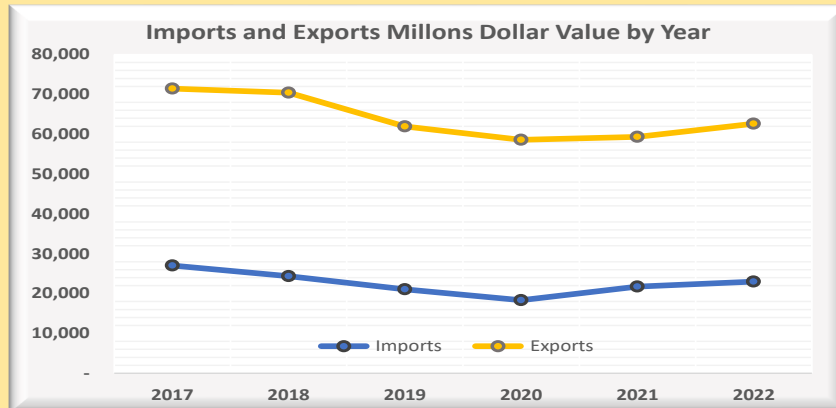


Counting

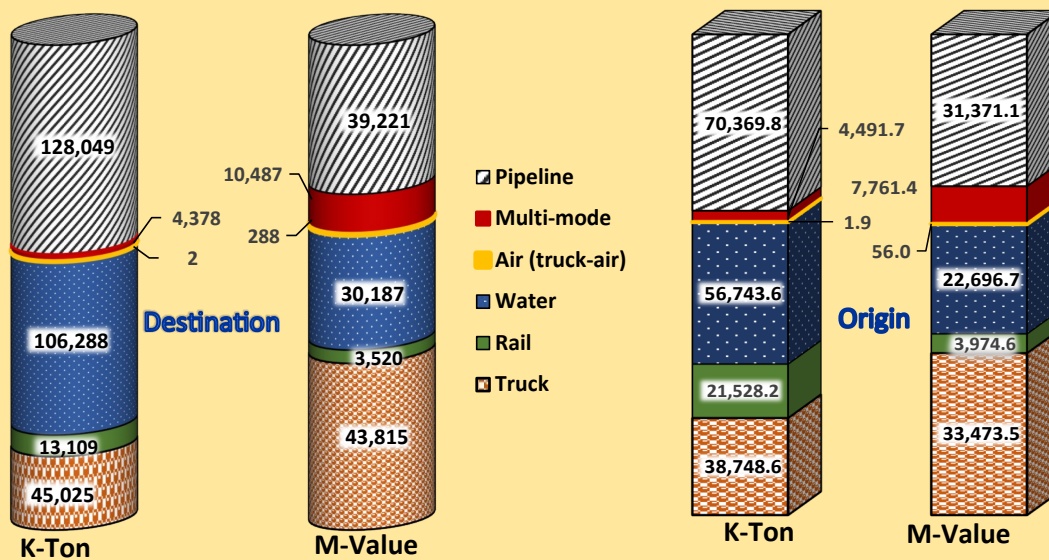
RPC has been working with LADOTD and the Louisiana FHWA division office to establish a statewide method for reporting bicycle and pedestrian data. Counting pedestrians and bicycles will improve our ability to plan and implement walking and bicycling projects throughout our region and state.

Freight: Regional Trends

The freight transport system facilitates the movement of commodities, including raw materials, perishable and non-perishable, merchandise goods, and cargo. Freight flows are vital to the economy and are carried by various modes: air, truck, rail, water, and pipeline. This chart shows the top imported goods that enter the US from our regional area, the exported goods that exit, and how the monetary value has changed over time. The columns below exhibit where freight begins and ends in our region and its value.



Origin and Destination Domestic Flows from the New Regional Area by Tonnage and Million Dollar Value



Top 5 Commodities and Million Dollar Value

Imported	2022	Exported	2022
Base metals	5,521.24	Other ag prods.	11,527.59
Fertilizers	2,357.40	Cereal grains	5,519.92
Basic chemicals	2,222.07	Fuel oils	4,017.77
Other foodstuffs	2,149.19	Basic chemicals	3,707.25
Fuel oils	1,980.01	Gasoline	2,220.57



Source: Freight Analysis Framework Version 5, 2022

Obligated Projects

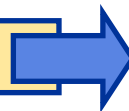


Every year the RPC develops a list of projects for which federal transportation funds were obligated in the preceding fiscal year. An obligation refers to the funding commitment made by FHWA or FTA to pay the federal share of a project's cost. This list allows our planning partners, stakeholders, and the public, to get a yearly glimpse of how many projects are funded, wholly or in part through RPC's programming of Federal dollars, and appropriated to the final step of the process: getting built.

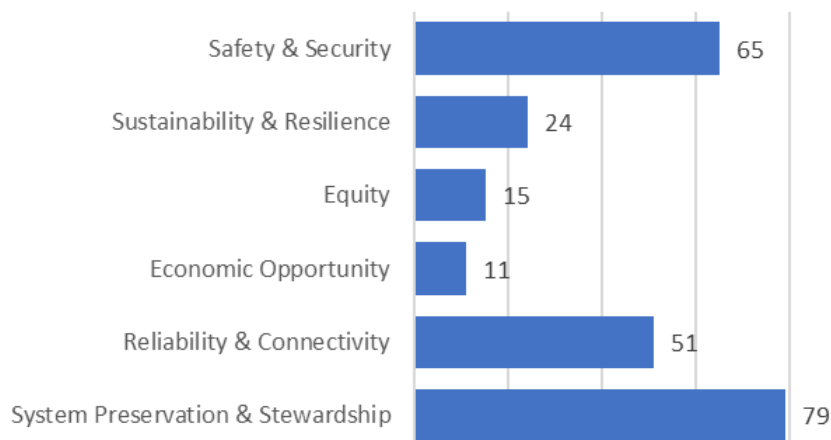
The list helps us assess the extent to which the things getting built are in line with our agency goals, as described in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. But are we really building projects that make the transportation system safer? As can be seen in the tables below, of the 65 projects obligated this year, 46% of all projects obligated were focused on safety.



See the 2023 Obligated Projects Report



RPC Region Obligated Highway Projects Contributing to MTP Priorities



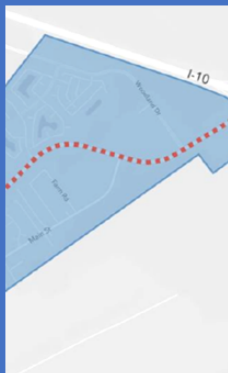
Completed and Upcoming Studies

From biking and walking in Mandeville, to paratransit in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes, to improved technology for forecasting trips, RPC plans that were completed in 2023 studied every mode of transportation for locations throughout the region. 2024 promises to be an even more ambitious year for looking at ways to better connect people and the places they want to go.

Active Transportation Improvements: New Orleans East I-10 Service Roads

The service roads of I-10 follow the interstate on both its north and south sides as it passes through New Orleans East. While these streets provide easy access to neighborhoods and services for drivers throughout the area, their high speeds and car-centric design make them a dangerous travel option for anyone not in a car.

This study proposed ways to make the service roads safer and more friendly to all travelers through a Complete Streets approach. It also recommends locations for potential elevated pedestrian and bicycle crossings that would better connect both sides of the Interstate. Should these improvements be implemented, the I-10 corridor could transform from a barrier to a multi-modal connector for New Orleans East communities.



Manchac Greenway Land Use and Transportation Corridor Analysis

The Manchac Greenway is a 26 mile recreational path that connects St. John the Baptist and Tangipahoa Parishes. It is one leg of the proposed regional “Ring Around the Lake” and statewide “Louisiana Bootlace Trail” bicycle networks. The study looked at ways to improve safety and connectivity of the portion of the Greenway in Laplace.

A preferred alignment for the trail was proposed by the study that helps bicyclists stay safe, access local services and amenities, and connect to the larger regional bicycle network.

New Links Transit Study: Paratransit

Following up on RPC’s New Links Operations Analysis and Network Redesign, The New Links Paratransit Study looked specifically at both Jefferson Parish Transit and Regional Transit Authority’s complimentary ADA demand response service.

Recommendations from the study address vehicle/equipment conditions and inventory, scheduling, dispatching, and coordination between the two agencies. Both JP Transit and RTA are currently using these recommendations to improve their paratransit service.





Mandeville Bicycle Plan

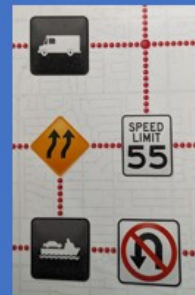
RPC assisted the City of Mandeville with a comprehensive update to their 2007 bicycle and pedestrian master plan. The plan applied best practices, design standards, and policies to existing and anticipated conditions in the City. It also proposed a Complete Streets policy that will guide the city in future transportation planning efforts.

The result is a plan for increasing mobility, connectivity, and safety for those who are walking and biking in the city. The plan's recommended network connects these travelers to destinations both in Mandeville and throughout the Parish.

Travel Demand Model Update

The RPC Travel Demand Model is a valuable tool for forecasting the future use of the region's transportation systems. Like any tool, the model requires occasional maintenance to maintain its usefulness.

In the case of 2023's update, this effort included general upkeep and streamlining of the model, staff support services and documentation, and an update to the region's fixed route transit network.



Coming soon...

- **Safe Streets for All**

A comprehensive transportation safety planning effort for St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, and Tangipahoa Parishes.

- **Bayou Sauvage Transportation Plan**

A Federal Lands Access Program project that will make recommendations for improving recreational walking and biking access to and within the Bayou Sauvage NWR.

- **Fremaux Sidewalk Study**

Recommendations for improving conditions for pedestrians on US 190B in Slidell, between US 11 and Town Center Boulevard.

- **South Range Road Operations Study**

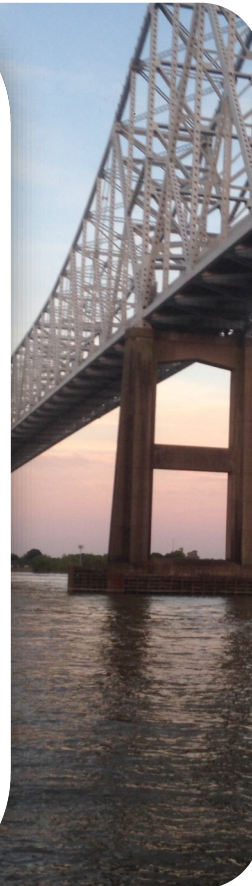
Recommendations for improving traffic conditions on the Tangipahoa Parish corridor near and at its intersection with Old Covington Highway.

- **US 11 Corridor Study**

A look at potential lane modifications, streetscaping, walking and bicycling infrastructure, water management, and other enhancements on US 11 in Olde Towne Slidell.

- **Louisiana International Terminal Roadway Network and Resilience Study**

Evaluation of impacts and potential improvements to the transportation network in St. Bernard Parish relating primarily to the implementation of the terminal in St. Bernard Parish.



Questions? Or do you want to help us plan our region's transportation future? Visit our website or contact our staff. We're here to listen!



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Citations

¹ The most recent verified fatality data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is from 2021. 2022 data is currently pending. (<https://www.nhtsa.gov/crash-data-systems/fatality-analysis-reporting-system>)

² <https://carts.lsu.edu/datareports/report/shspperson>

³ <https://carts.lsu.edu/datareports/report/shspcrash>

⁴ DOTD Safety Segment Shapefile shared 05/20/23

⁵ RPC Shapefile OnStreetWorking_2023 accessed 12/21/23,

⁶ RPC Shapefile OffStreetWorking accessed 12/21/23

⁷ <https://carts.lsu.edu/datareports/report/shspvulnerableusers>

⁸ Image taken from: 2017 Louisiana SHSP

⁹ Image taken from: https://cdn.continental.com/fileadmin/_processed_/2/4/csm_lane_20departure_20warning_26414aa70e.jpg