

PARISH-WIDE POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the improvements identified and shown in the proposed pedestrian and bicycle network developed for the Parish, policies, regulations, and programming can also improve Parish citizens' ability to use non-motorized means of travel in St. Tammany. This section will identify and describe policy and program recommendations to be pursued suggested actions that could be taken to achieve the goals of the St. Tammany Parish Comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In tandem with program and infrastructure recommendations, pedestrian and bicycle friendly policies can improve non-motorized travelers' safety, improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and enhance multi-modal accommodations in Parish ordinances and codes.

A summary of recommended policies for the St. Tammany Parish is included below:

Complete Streets Policy

As part of this Comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, a model Complete Streets Policy was developed based upon local, state and national examples. It was developed with the idea that the Policy would be approved and adopted by the Parish, not only to govern how the Parish government itself would work towards a complete streets system as new Parish roadway infrastructure is added or existing Parish roadway infrastructure is improved, but also how private development would be governed in terms of including complete streets amenities during new commercial construction or redevelopment.

Maintain the Parish's Incentive Program for Sidewalks in New Residential Subdivisions.

Traditionally, unincorporated St. Tammany Parish has never required the inclusion of sidewalks as a part street construction in new residential subdivisions, and even today, most subdivisions do not have sidewalks. Early in this plan process, there was some discussion about proposing a requirement to include sidewalks in new residential subdivisions. However, Parish officials noted that rather than seeking a requirement, they had recently enacted an *incentive program*, which they shared has been very successful and which they are comfortable with. In lieu of a sidewalk requirement for residential subdivisions, this incentive program for sidewalks should be maintained.

Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Between Adjacent Neighborhoods and Subdivisions

Many neighborhoods and subdivisions in unincorporated St. Tammany Parish are one-way in (and out) developments with no connectivity between adjoining subdivisions or neighborhoods. Most of these subdivisions are located on heavily traveled thoroughfares and collector roads

with higher traffic speeds, and in many cases are located on state or even federal highways. Most of these roadways cannot safely handle pedestrian and bicycle movements in their current incarnations. Discussions held during public outreach (public meetings, stakeholder meetings) revealed that residents and citizens are generally opposed to the idea of *vehicular* connectivity (roadway connections) between adjoining neighborhoods due to traffic and safety concerns but feel that there may be support for *pedestrian* and *bicycle* connectivity. The Parish may consider an ordinance or policy to require direct pedestrian/bicycle connections in newly platted neighborhoods or at least create an incentive program (similar to its sidewalk incentive program) to encourage such connectivity and provide a more walkable and bicycle friendly Parish.

Maintain Existing and Future Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Maintenance is a key issue that is too easily overlooked. Over time, pavement cracks, bicycle lane stripes wear away, signage can get damaged or knocked down, and sidewalks and paths can crumble or get overgrown. Comments received from the public and stakeholders showed that maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities was important to them—as an example, recreational bicyclists noted that they would love to use the Parish highways’ paved shoulders more often as bicycle routes, but they are often not kept clean and debris-free. Actions should be considered to address maintenance and upkeep for the Parish’s sidewalks, bike lanes, sidepaths, shared use paths and paved shoulders. This may include such items as development of an operations and maintenance plan that addresses priorities for the Parish’s bike/ped facilities, conducting regular asset management condition inventories of bike/ped facilities, and ensuring that maintenance and upkeep is properly budgeted on a yearly basis, including special set-asides for major maintenance items.

Establish Wayfinding Standards

The Parish should consider establishing Parish-wide wayfinding standards to foster consistent placement, use, and design of wayfinding signage (including nearby destinations, directional, and kiosk signage) along pedestrian and bicycle routes. Wayfinding standards can be applied to create a comprehensive multi-modal wayfinding system throughout the Parish.

Establish a Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Parish should consider establishing a Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee to oversee and guide the implementation of pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure, programs, and policies as outlined in this *St. Tammany Comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*. The Committee would assist the Parish Council, the Parish President, and the Parish Planning Commission in implementing and evaluating the policy and program recommendations in the plan. The Committee (along with Parish staff) should also be involved in the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian program website to inform the public of their efforts and help to track progress on the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan’s implementation.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Pedestrian and bicycle programs can encourage and strengthen culture for walking and biking within a community. Investments in these programs, when coupled with infrastructure improvements and policy measure, frequently lead to an increase in non-motorized travel among residents and visitors. Some suggested multi-modal programs and initiatives are provided below.

Educational Programs

In south Louisiana, several organizations have offered and continue to offer educational programs to promote bicycle safety and encourage cycling. These include *Bike Easy*, the *Bike Law Louisiana*, the *LSU AgCenter* and the *Louisiana Highway Safety Commission*,

- *Bike Easy* is an organization whose goal is 'Making bicycling easy, safe, and fun for everyone in Greater New Orleans'. Focusing on education, advocacy and community, they provide a variety of programs, including adult courses like "Smart Biking" and "Adult Learn to Ride," as well as youth programs and events such as community bike rides.
- *Bike Law Louisiana* is a network of independent lawyers and law firms who share a common approach to the law and to helping cyclists. They also provide speakers to talk to groups and clubs about Louisiana bicycling laws.
- The *LSU AgCenter*, under their program *Healthy Communities Bike Safety Partnership: Let's Ride!* has partnered with *Bike Easy* and 4-H agents to teach youth biking skills (including riding safely on the street in their neighborhoods) in nearby locations such as Jefferson Parish. The *LSU AgCenter* also holds a yearly *Louisiana Rural Complete Streets Summit* to promote safe and active ways to get to everyday activities, such as walking or biking to the supermarket or bank.
- The *Louisiana Highway Safety Commission* promotes bicycle and pedestrian safety through various initiatives and events.

Encouragement Programs

Walking Map / Mobile App

Walking network maps and mobile apps are developed to guide pedestrians along preferred routes with existing sidewalks, sidepaths, and greenways. Maps and mobile apps are also helpful resources that assist new residents and visitors to safely navigate the transportation network.

Bike to Work Day

Bike to Work Day is an annual event celebrated in various cities across the United States, including New Orleans and Baton Rouge. It encourages commuters to ride their bicycles to work instead of driving. This initiative aims to raise awareness about the benefits of cycling, such as reducing traffic congestion and lowering carbon emissions. Bike to Work Day is usually held in the spring; this year it was promoted statewide by the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and held on Friday May 16th.

Walk to Work Day

Walk to Work Day is an annual, national event that promotes walking as an option for commuting to work. Walk to Work Day is usually held the first Friday of every April. Although Walk to Work Day is a serious event which promotes health and well-being as well as environmental issues, it can also be a fun annual event with breakfast gatherings, group walks, etc. For many communities, these events lead to an increase in walking for transportation and recreation.

Walk and Bike to School Day

Walk and Bike to School Day is a national event usually held on the first Wednesday in October. The event is intended to encourage walking and biking to school throughout the year as well as promoting safe routes to school. These events can lead to more walking throughout the school year, sometimes because the event draws attention to safety concerns that need to be addressed or because children and families get inspired to walk for the school commute more often.

Evaluation Programs

311 Service / See-Click-Fix

311 service is a governmental program that allows citizens to report maintenance issues, such as street debris in bike lanes, potholes, damaged sidewalks, or malfunctioning traffic signals. Similarly, See-Click-Fix is an online platform and mobile app that allows residents to report maintenance issues via interactive map to precisely pinpoint and describe the issue. Local governments can partner with See-Click-Fix as their local 311 provider.

Facility Inventory & Maintenance Program

Facility inventory and maintenance programs are tools for communities to maintain up-to-date lists and maps of active transportation facilities such as sidewalks, sidepaths, and greenways. This can serve as a guide for residents and visitors seeking to walk in the community. A facility

inventory can also help staff identify and prioritize segments of pedestrian infrastructure in need of maintenance and rehabilitation.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Programs

Bicycle and pedestrian count programs provide non-motorized travel information for sidewalks and shared use paths. Count programs can help local jurisdictions to understand existing bicycle and pedestrian traffic and plan for future non-motorized infrastructure needs. Agencies who show straightforward evidence of use are more likely to receive funding for projects.

Louisiana has multiple pedestrian and bicycle count programs aimed at collecting data to inform transportation planning and safety improvements:

- The *Pedestrian and Bicyclists Count: Developing a Statewide Multimodal Count Program* project, funded by the Louisiana Transportation Research Center (LTRC), aims to establish a consistent statewide data collection system for non-motorized transportation. This program uses automated and manual counts to understand the patterns and behaviors of pedestrians and cyclists. The goal is to improve transportation planning by providing data on infrastructure usage and safety.
- The LTRC conducts research on pedestrian and bicycle data collection and analysis. They have developed algorithms and techniques for automated pedestrian and cyclist counting using video surveillance. The LTRC also works with local and regional stakeholders to expand the capacity for multimodal data collection statewide.
- LADOTD also collects traffic data, including pedestrian and bicycle counts, for various planning purposes. The Louisiana DOTD's Traffic Monitoring Unit coordinates efforts to collect traffic data, including pedestrian and bicycle counts. This data is used for the general administration of highway programs, as well as for historical traffic data analysis.
- The *Pedestrian Bicycle Count Program (PBRI)*, a project of the University of New Orleans and the Regional Planning Commission, collects data on pedestrian and bicycle volumes in New Orleans and the surrounding region. PBRI provides data for advocates, planners, engineers, and elected officials.

Other Programs

Safe Routes to School

The Louisiana Department of Transportation (LADOTD) operates a Safe Routes to School Program, whose goal is to improve the health of kids and the community by making walking and bicycling to school safer, easier, and more enjoyable. The program facilitates the planning, development and implementation of programs and activities to improve safety near schools and increase walking and biking rates to school.

Path to Zero - NORPC Safety Action Plan

The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program (SS4A) to support regional and local efforts to achieve the goal of zero roadway deaths, with an extra focus on bicycle and pedestrian movements. The *NORPC Path to Zero Safety Action Plan* was made possible by an SS4A Planning Grant. It covered St. John the Baptist, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany Parishes, and was completed in December 2024. With this plan in place, St. Tammany Parish can seek further funding opportunities to implement the strategies and projects that are outlined in Chapter 5 of that report— either by pursuing an SS4A Implementation Grant, or by using traditional funding programs.

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