

### 3. Public Involvement

Public involvement is an integral component of the statewide transportation planning process. The Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan team engaged stakeholders in a variety of forums to understand the needs and issues of Louisiana’s transportation users, as well as those of the managers and operators of the State’s transportation system. The Plan team engaged a wide range of interested parties, provided input for shaping the Plan’s elements, and provided information on the Plan’s progress. This section briefly describes the outreach conducted as part of the Plan.

#### 3.1 Highlights

##### Planning Process

- Public involvement is an integral component of the statewide transportation planning process.

##### Stakeholder Engagement

- Activities engaged a wide range of interested parties, including local, regional, and statewide transportation stakeholders.

##### Variety of Input Formats

- Input was sought in a variety of formats, including surveys, visioning sessions, advisory council meetings, interviews, Plan committee meetings, the Plan website, and formal public review and comment process.

#### 3.2 Public Involvement Plan

Early on in the Plan’s development, the Plan team outlined key public involvement activities. Public involvement was woven throughout the technical process to ensure that the Plan reflects the needs of those that live, work, do business, and visit Louisiana. Public involvement can take many forms, but it has distinct purposes, regardless of the type:



- Inform – activities that make information available to the public, stakeholders, and interested parties
- Receive Input – activities that obtain specific input for the Plan’s development
- Validation – activities that provide information to validate findings or recommendations

The principal components of the Plan’s outreach were:

- Website
- Initial interviews with key stakeholders on the Policy Committee and Executive Advisory Council

- Questionnaire to the Legislature
- Public opinion telephone survey
- Indian tribe consultation

As the Plan progressed, activities switched focus from receiving input to incorporating that input in the Plan’s analysis and sharing information about the Plan’s progress with interested parties. The venues for these updates included advisory council meetings and the Plan web site. In the last stages of the Plan’s development, the DOTD held Policy Committee meetings and made the Draft Plan available for public review, to validate and refine the Plan’s findings and recommendations. An overview of public involvement activities conducted is included in **Table 3-1**.

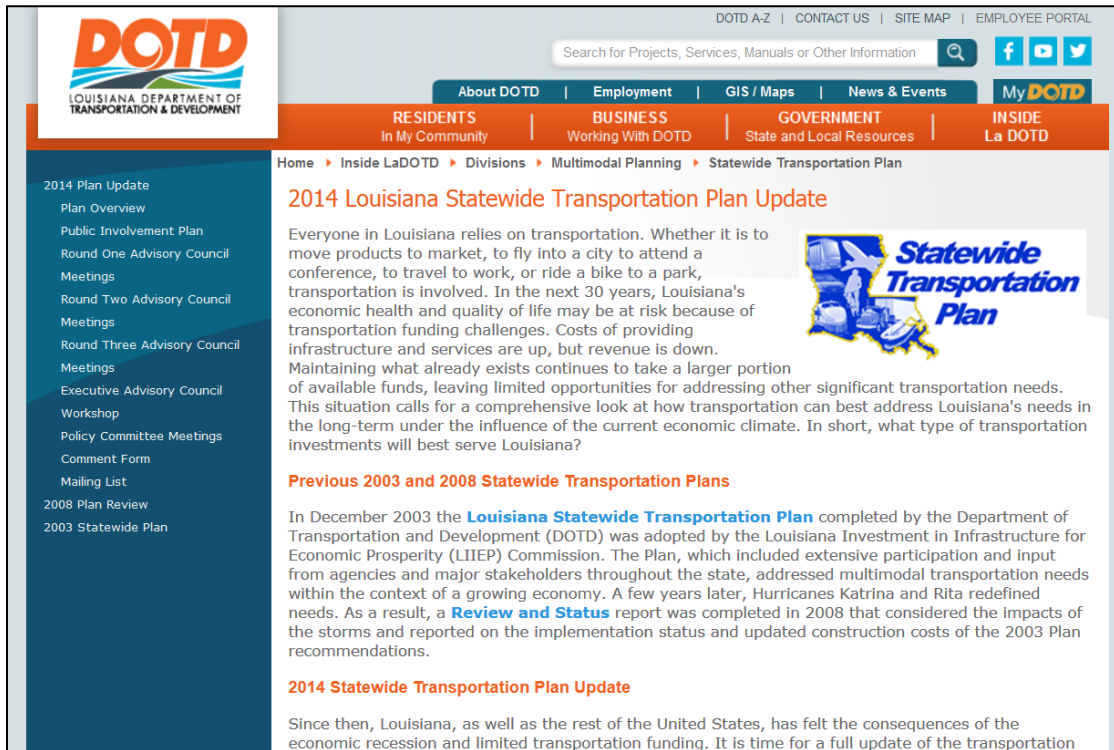
**Table 3-1: Overview of Public Involvement Activities**

Activity	Purpose	Timeframe
Project Website Established	Inform/Receive Input	March 2012
DOTD Executive Staff Interviews	Receive Input	April 2012
Legislative Questionnaire	Receive Input	August 2012
Visioning Workshop	Receive Input	November 2012
Household Telephone Survey	Receive Input	February 2013
Indian Tribe Consultation	Receive Input	June 2013
Round 1 Advisory Council Meetings	Inform/Receive Input	March 2013
Megaproject Advocate Presentations	Receive Input	July 2013
Round 2 Advisory Council Meetings	Inform/Receive Input	October 2013
Round 3 Advisory Council Meetings	Receive Input/Validate Recommendations	January 2014
Executive Advisory Council Workshop	Validate Recommendations	March 2014
Policy Committee Meeting #1	Validate Recommendations	March 2014
Policy Committee Meeting #2	Validate Recommendations	April 2014
Policy Committee Meeting #3	Validate Recommendations	May 2014
Policy Committee Meeting #4	Validate Recommendations	July 2014
Policy Committee Meeting #5	Validate Recommendations/Approve release of Draft Plan	June 2015
Draft Plan for Public Review	Validate/Receive comment	September 2015
Policy Committee Meeting #6	Adopt Plan	November 2015

### 3.3 Project Website

The DOTD’s website includes a section dedicated to the Plan. The website gives an overview of the Plan’s development and includes summaries of the outreach activities. The website also includes links to previous statewide transportation plans. The draft Plan was made available for public comment via the website, and in public libraries. It can be accessed at the following address: [www.dotd.la.gov/study](http://www.dotd.la.gov/study).

Figure 3-1: Statewide Transportation Plan Website



### 3.4 DOTD Executive Staff Interviews

The Plan team interviewed members of DOTD’s executive staff early in the development of the Plan. DOTD executives provided input on current infrastructure needs, obstacles to meeting needs, and future trends affecting the demand for transportation. Their responses guided the discussion of key issues to address in the Plan and produced key discussion points to highlight in the public outreach sessions. The top transportation priorities for Louisiana, according to the DOTD executives interviewed, are to:

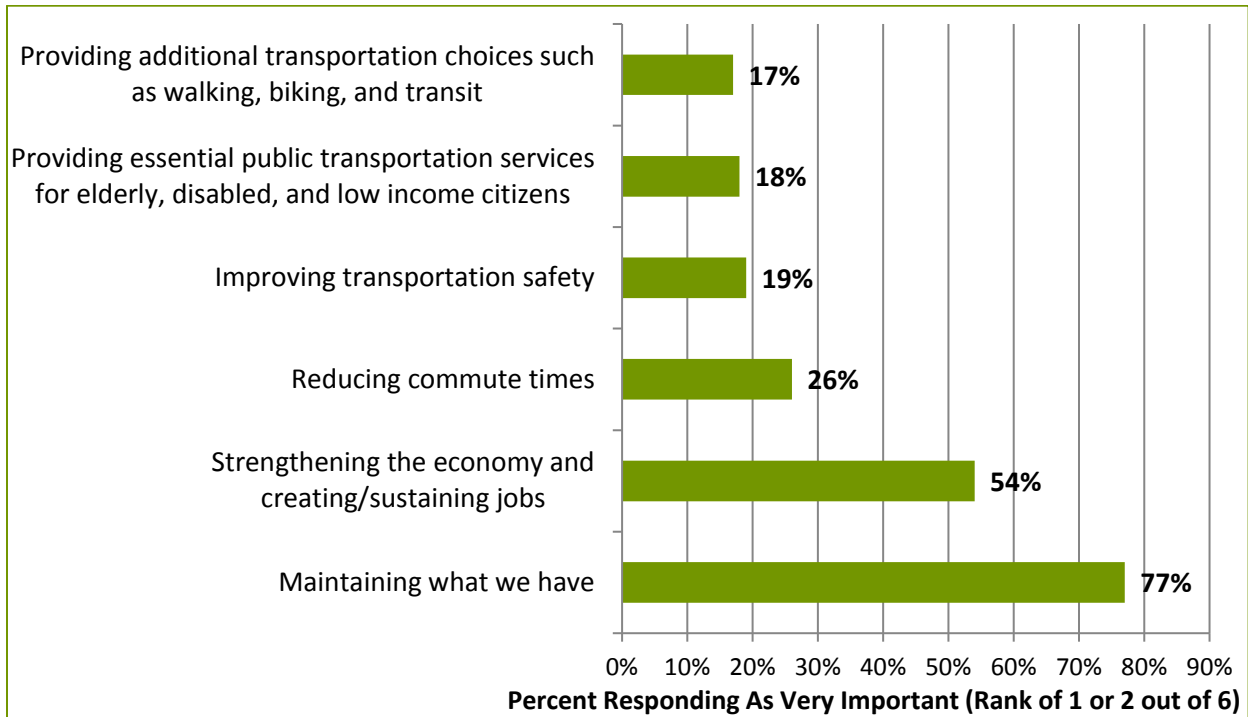
- Develop a robust asset management program
- Identify and address bottlenecks on every mode
- Focus on how the transportation system may address economic opportunities
- Address DOTD’s objectives and strategic goals such as system preservation and safety
- Incorporate other modes (transit, rail)
- Concentrate on achievable projects

### 3.5 Legislative Questionnaire

Louisiana legislators provided feedback on transportation in Louisiana through a legislative questionnaire (see example in **Figure 3-2**). The questionnaire – consisting of eight questions and conducted electronically via an online survey – asked legislators for opinions regarding transportation priorities and funding. Approximately 33 percent of the state legislators responded to the questionnaire; their responses informed the development of financial scenarios and funding options for transportation investments. A summary of the legislative questionnaire is included in **Appendix A**.

**Figure 3-2: Example Question and Responses from Legislative Questionnaire**

**Q3. On what do you believe the state should focus existing transportation funding? (Please rank 1 through 6 in order of importance with 1 being the most important.)**



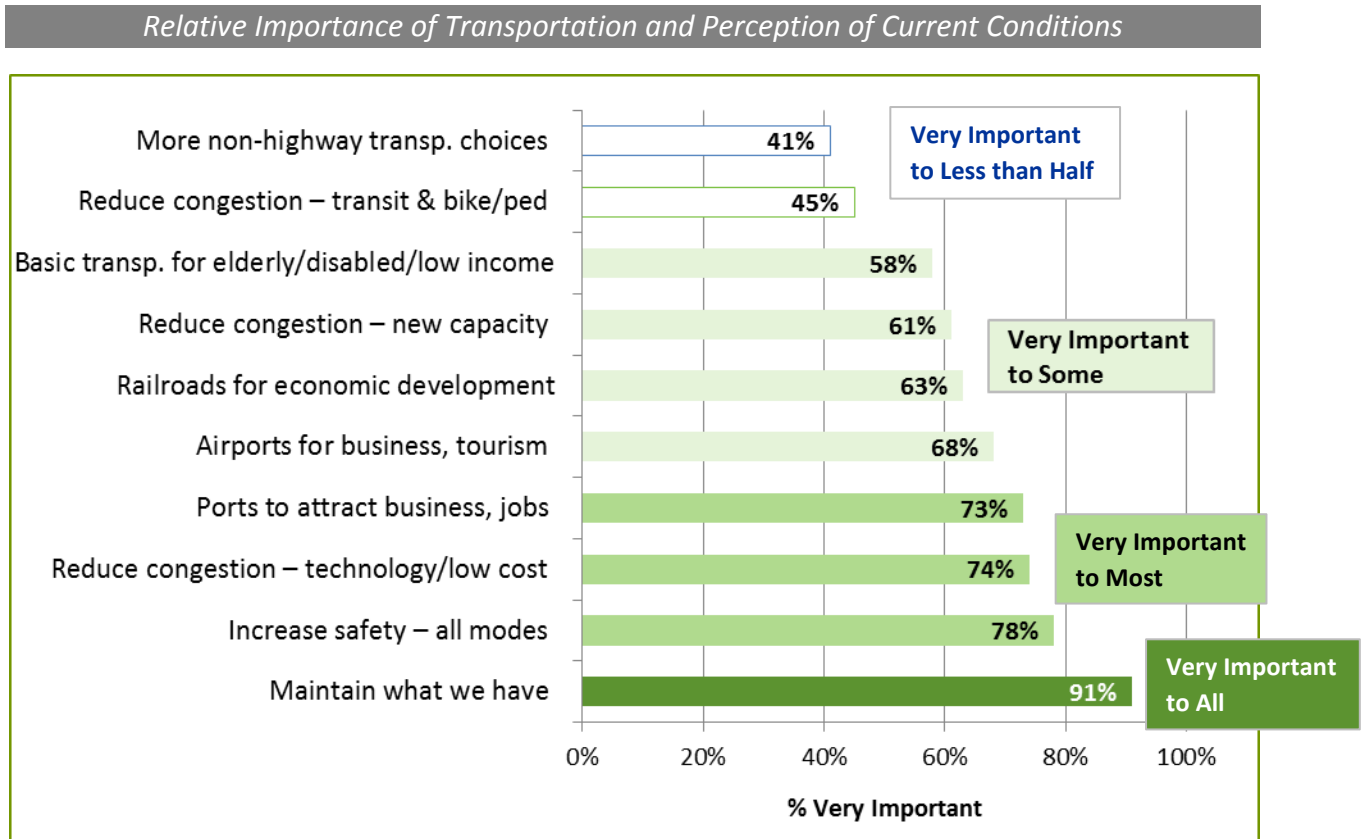
### 3.6 Public Telephone Survey

In early 2013, the Plan team completed a telephone household survey about issues germane to the recommendations of the Plan. The survey questions were based, in part, on the information the team gathered from the initial DOTD interviews and the legislative questionnaire. The survey asked questions about:

- The public's overall vision and values for the future of transportation in Louisiana
- The willingness to pay for transportation improvements through a variety of funding sources
- The current condition of the transportation system and the overall satisfaction with various transportation modes
- Future transportation spending priorities

The survey gathered responses from 1,013 Louisiana residents throughout the state. The public telephone survey summary is included in **Appendix B** (see example in **Figure 3-3**).

**Figure 3-3: Example Question and Results from Telephone Survey**



### 3.7 Native American Tribe Consultation

In the summer of 2013, DOTD initiated Plan coordination with the State’s Native American tribes. DOTD mailed letters to Louisiana’s 27 federally and state recognized tribes explaining the Plan’s purpose. The letters included an overview of the Plan, and requested tribal recommendations for transportation improvement projects, as well as input on the preliminary vision, goals, objectives, and performance measures. A summary of the Native American tribe consultation is included in **Appendix C**.

### 3.8 Visioning Workshop

Regional and statewide transportation stakeholders participated in a visioning workshop to shape the Plan’s vision, goals, and objectives. The invited participants included representatives from the DOTD, LED, FHWA, state MPOs, chairs of the Senate and House transportation committees, and Executive Advisory Council. The focus of the vision discussion was on what growth and development scenarios make sense for Louisiana in the future. The visioning workshop resulted in a refined vision statement, goals, and objectives. The summary of the visioning workshop is included in **Appendix D**.

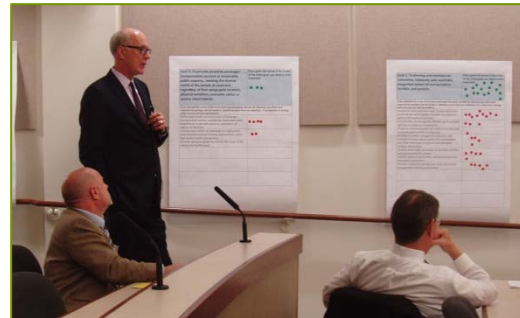


### 3.9 Advisory Councils and Policy Committee

As in the 2003 Plan, advisory councils were utilized as independent bodies responsible for identifying needs/issues and proposed recommendations related to their assigned transportation mode/element. Their roles included:

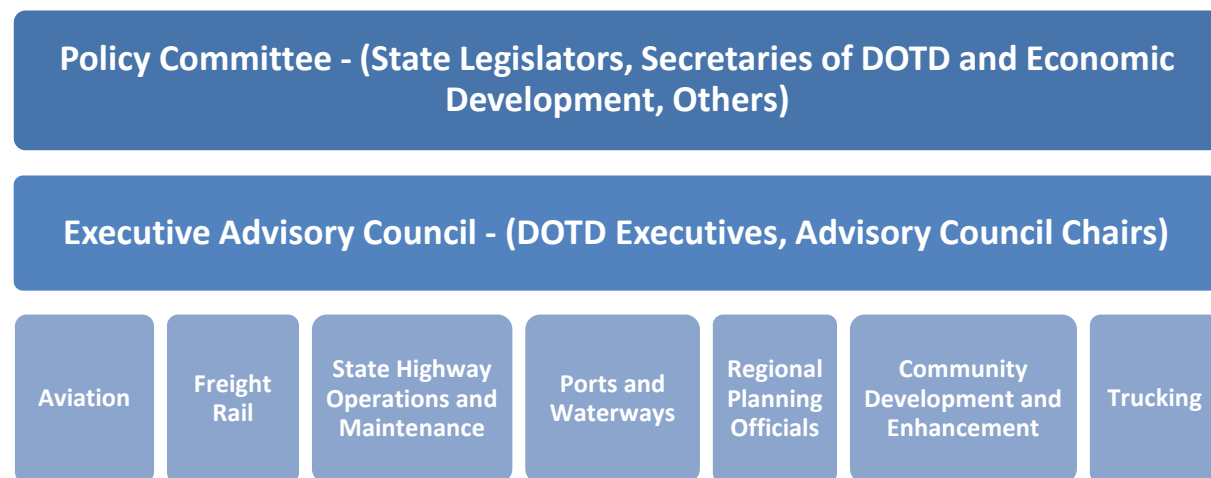
- Review the existing Plan and recent activity (including needs assessments and poll results)
- Discuss issues (capital, regulatory, policy, operational) related to the Plan
- Provide input regarding transportation improvement project recommendations, policies, and programs for all transportation modes to be considered for approval by the Policy Committee

The eight advisory councils established for the Plan met three times during the course of the project. Several of the councils focused on issues and needs for specific modes of travel, while others discussed broader topics, such as the connection between land use and transportation. The topic areas for the councils were: aviation, freight rail, state highway operations and maintenance, ports and waterways, community development and enhancement, regional planning



officials, and trucking. The eighth council, the Executive Advisory Council, included the chairs from the other seven advisory councils and executive DOTD staff. The Executive Advisory Council served a facilitation role between the individual advisory councils and the Policy Committee. **Figure 3-4** illustrates the hierarchy of the Plan approval. The membership of each advisory council is included in the *Acknowledgement* section at the beginning of this document.

**Figure 3-4: Statewide Transportation Plan Approval Hierarchy**



The Policy Committee was the ultimate decision-making body for the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan. The Committee’s duties included establishing priorities among transportation-related economic development projects and/or policies. The Committee’s role also included advising other members of the legislature, local elected officials, public and private agencies, companies, groups,

and individuals on transportation issues pertaining to policies, regulations, programs, projects, and funding. The Policy Committee included the following members:

- State Senator John A. Alario, President of the Senate
- State Senator Robert Adley, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
- State Senator Mike Walsworth
- State Representative Charles E. “Chuck” Kleckley, Speaker of the House
- State Representative Karen Gaudet St. Germain, Chair, House Transportation Committee
- State Representative Stephen E. Pugh
- Sherri H. LeBas, PE, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (Chair)
- Steven Grissom, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Economic Development (replaced Stephen Moret)
- Robert T. Scott, President, Public Affairs Research Council

### 3.10 Advocate Megaproject Presentations

A series of project advocate presentation meetings was also a significant source of input for the Plan. DOTD invited various groups, commissions, task forces, and governmental entities to make presentations to the RPO Advisory Council on major transportation improvement projects that they were looking to the State to support and include as high-priority projects in the Plan. The project advocates, who made their presentations over a 6-day period in July 2013,



described the location and function of the potential investments, as well as their purpose and need, benefits/impacts, implementation costs, importance to the state, potential funding sources, and other reasons why the project should be considered. The Plan team used the information presented at the advocate meetings in the evaluations and prioritization of megaprojects. The megaprojects are further described in **Chapter 7**.

### 3.11 Plan Development and Approval

The advisory councils were the most critical source of review and input during the development for the Plan. Members reviewed and commented on all major components of the Plan at key times during its development. The first series of advisory council meetings provided feedback on transportation issues and Louisiana’s transportation vision, goals, and objectives. The second series of meetings reviewed modal needs assessments, megaprojects, and policy recommendations. The third series of meetings discussed the transportation funding gap, revenue scenarios, prioritization of recommendations, and potential funding sources.



The seven modal advisory councils submitted their recommendations to the Executive Advisory Council for their final input in March 2014. The Executive Advisory Council then submitted the draft vision, goals, objectives, megaprojects, budget allocations, and recommendations to the Policy Committee for

final approval. Meeting summaries for the advisory council meetings are available on DOTD’s website at: [www.dotd.la.gov/study](http://www.dotd.la.gov/study).

The Policy Committee met five times at the Louisiana State Capitol building in Baton Rouge to discuss the components of the Draft Plan. Public input was received at these meetings, and the meetings were live-streamed through the legislature’s website. The timeline of each advisory council and Policy Committee meeting is shown in **Figure 3-5**. Meeting materials are included in **Appendix E**. Meeting summaries are available on the Plan website as noted above.

The Policy Committee approved the Draft Plan for public review on June 12, 2015, and it was made available for public review in September 2015. The Draft Plan was available on the DOTD’s website, at all public libraries across the State, and at each DOTD District location. The public had a minimum of 45 days to comment on the draft document. Comments were presented to the Policy Committee with recommendations on how they should be addressed. The Policy Committee then approved final revisions and adopted the Plan on November 19, 2015.

**Figure 3-5: Advisory Council and Policy Committee Meetings Topics**

