



LOUISIANA RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM PLAN

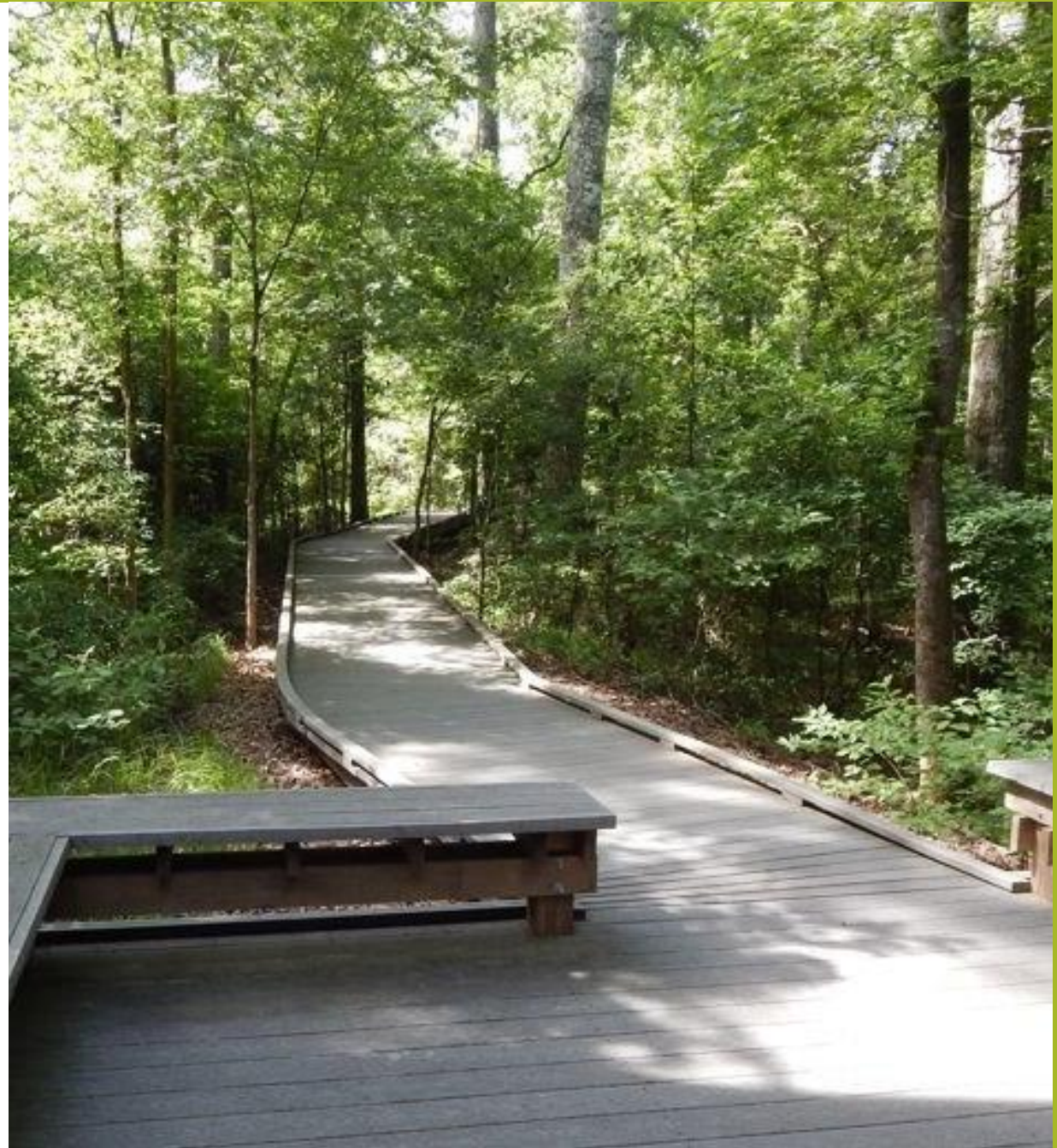
Overview of Findings and Recommendations

University of New Orleans Transportation Institute

August 8, 2019

Overview

- Purpose
- Methodology
- Program Review
- Research Findings
- Spatial Analysis
- Trail User and Stakeholder Surveys
- Goals, Objectives, and Strategies
- Implementation Recommendations



LRTP Plan Background

- Louisiana Recreational Trails Program operational since 1993, building trails for all kinds of users throughout the state
- Many successful projects, identified as critical component of statewide recreation in SCORP, but program lacked clear stakeholder-driven guidance to support future implementation
- **Project Objectives:**
 - To improve understanding of local, regional, and statewide trails priorities
 - To recommend actions to address needs, enhance trails facilities, and develop cohesive trails networks
 - To guide future federal funding investments and identify new resources/opportunities
 - To support trail advocacy, management, and promotion statewide

Project Scope & Methodology

- Review of current SCORP, LRTP implementation and projects to-date (1993 – 2018)
- Review of national best practices, trails research, leveraging opportunities, complementary plans
- Stakeholder outreach via two online surveys: 1) trails planners/managers/stakeholders, 2) trails users
- Spatial analysis and mapping; equity analysis
- Development of goals, objectives, and strategies to balance needs of trail users, protect and preserve natural resources, identify priorities for existing and new trails, and meet present and anticipated needs across the state
- Plan intended to serve as a resource for LRTP, local and state agency partners, advocates, and all who support high-quality trails



PROGRAM REVIEW

Louisiana RTP Context and Implementation

Louisiana SCORP

- Louisiana SCORP (2014-2019) identified trails as “top priority,” particularly those connecting residential areas with outdoor recreation facilities and natural resources
- Public access to water also prioritized (e.g. water trails)
- Did not include trails facilities map, but identified need for better information about trails locations – estimated that 79% of population live within 5 miles of a trail
- Called for specific trails user survey, connectivity analysis, development of advocate database, workshops and technical assistance, etc



2014-2019 LOUISIANA STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism

State and Local Planning Context

- No previous statewide trails plan
- [DOTD Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#)
- Numerous local and regional bicycle and/or pedestrian plans, including several in progress: most identify trails as key axes for active transportation networks, most highlight LRTP as critical funding opportunity
- Other relevant planning documents/processes:
 - Corridor/project plans (e.g. Lafourche Parish Multiuse Path Master Plan;
 - [Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries WMA Master Plan](#)
- No plan documents focusing specifically on motorized trails identified!

National Best Practices

- Key themes:
 - **Accessibility** – for all ages and abilities
 - **Active transportation** – Recreational trails: not just for recreation anymore!
 - **Health** – physical and mental health, especially where chronic disease and obesity prevalent
 - **Connectivity** – focus on trails networks, connections to public destinations
 - **Environment** – habitat preservation, climate adaptation, environmental mitigation
 - **Economic value** – connections to jobs, trail-related jobs, livability benefits, tourism
 - **Engagement** – public participation and partnership (e.g. “friends” groups); equity focus,
 - **Data and information** – detailed, public datasets, “one stop shop” resources

Trails and Coastal Restoration & Planning

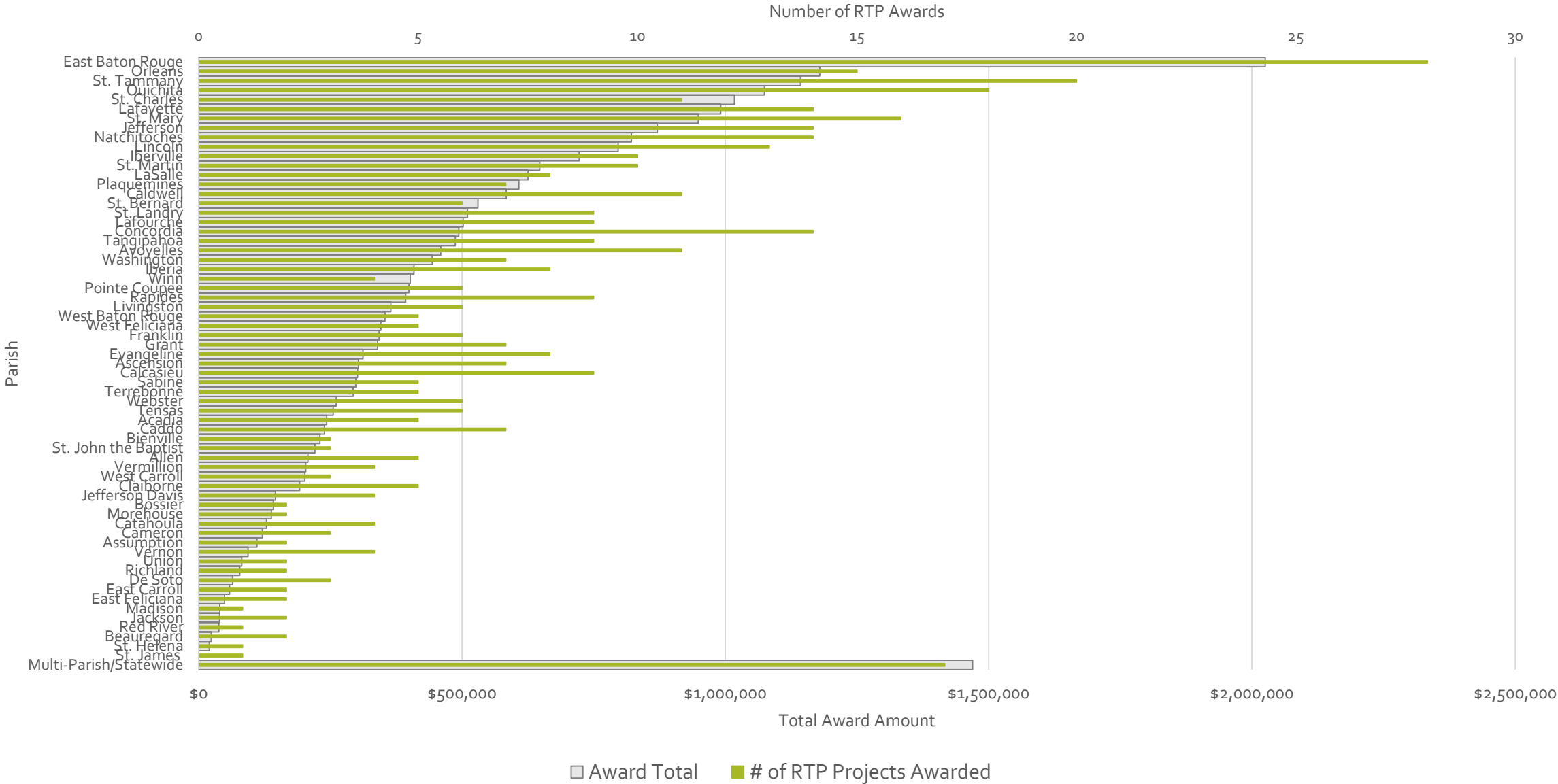
- How can we leverage public investments to achieve multiple goals?
- Opportunities exist to integrate recreational trails with coastal and protection assets + opportunities to view trails projects as mitigation assets, increase stewardship
- Project level AND systemic coordination needed – communicate goals and strategies, review plans and designs for co-benefit potential
- Variety of federal programs/funds which may support trails-related projects; state programs can specifically highlight funding eligibility of public access enhancements
- Key challenges: coordinating funding/project delivery timelines, planning “silos”



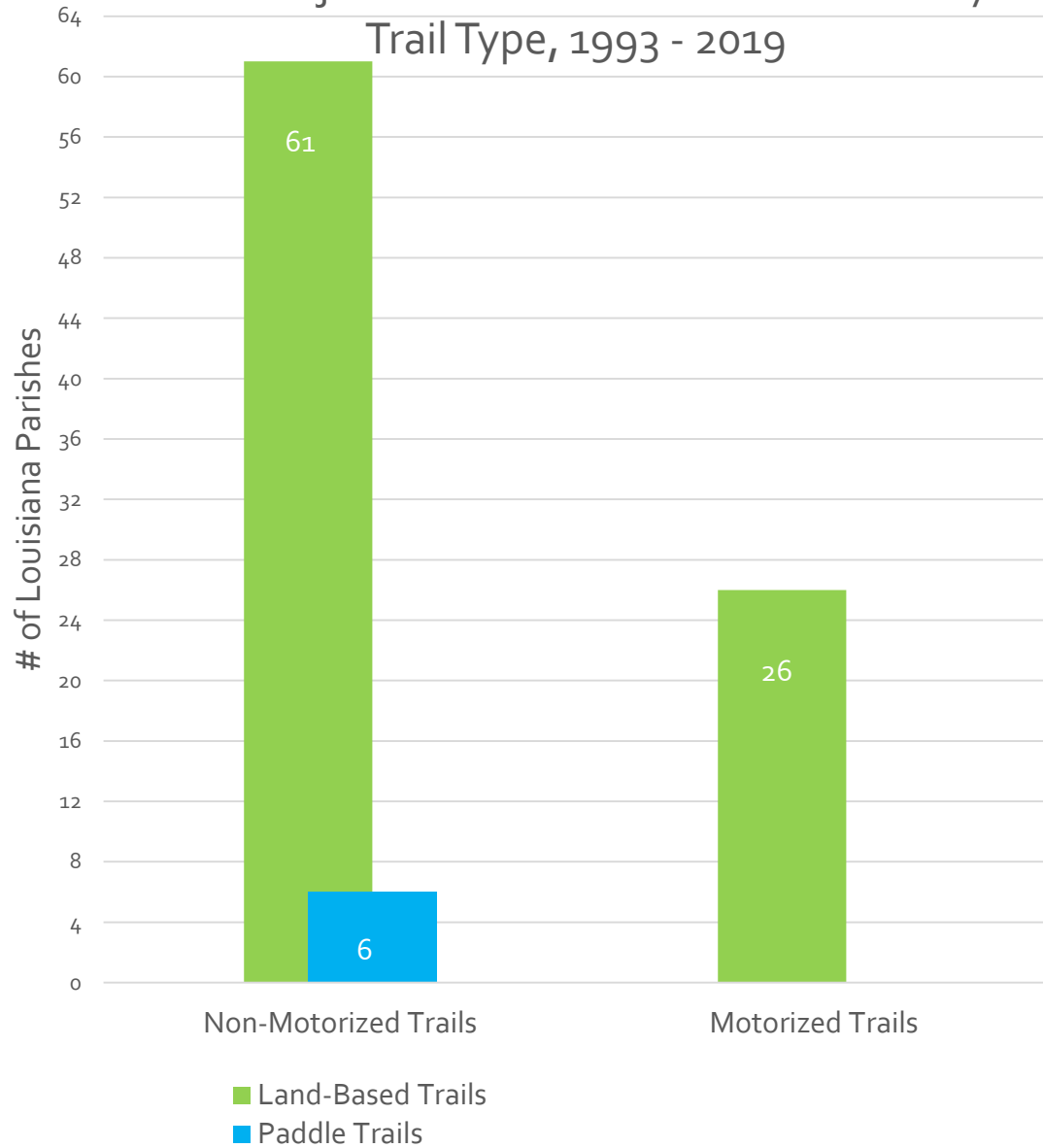
Project Inventory

- \$27M in grant funds awarded for 450+ projects
- Grants awarded in all 64 parishes, + multiparish and statewide projects
- Evaluated distribution of trails across parishes, planning regions, trail types, lead applicant type, relative population, etc
- Findings:
 - non-motorized trails distributed widely; motorized trails clustered in select regions
 - Relatively few water trails projects to date → growth opportunity
 - Distribution of funds aligned with regional populations; less investment per capita in urbanized areas; Lake Charles region underrepresented (may need additional outreach and technical assistance to encourage participation)

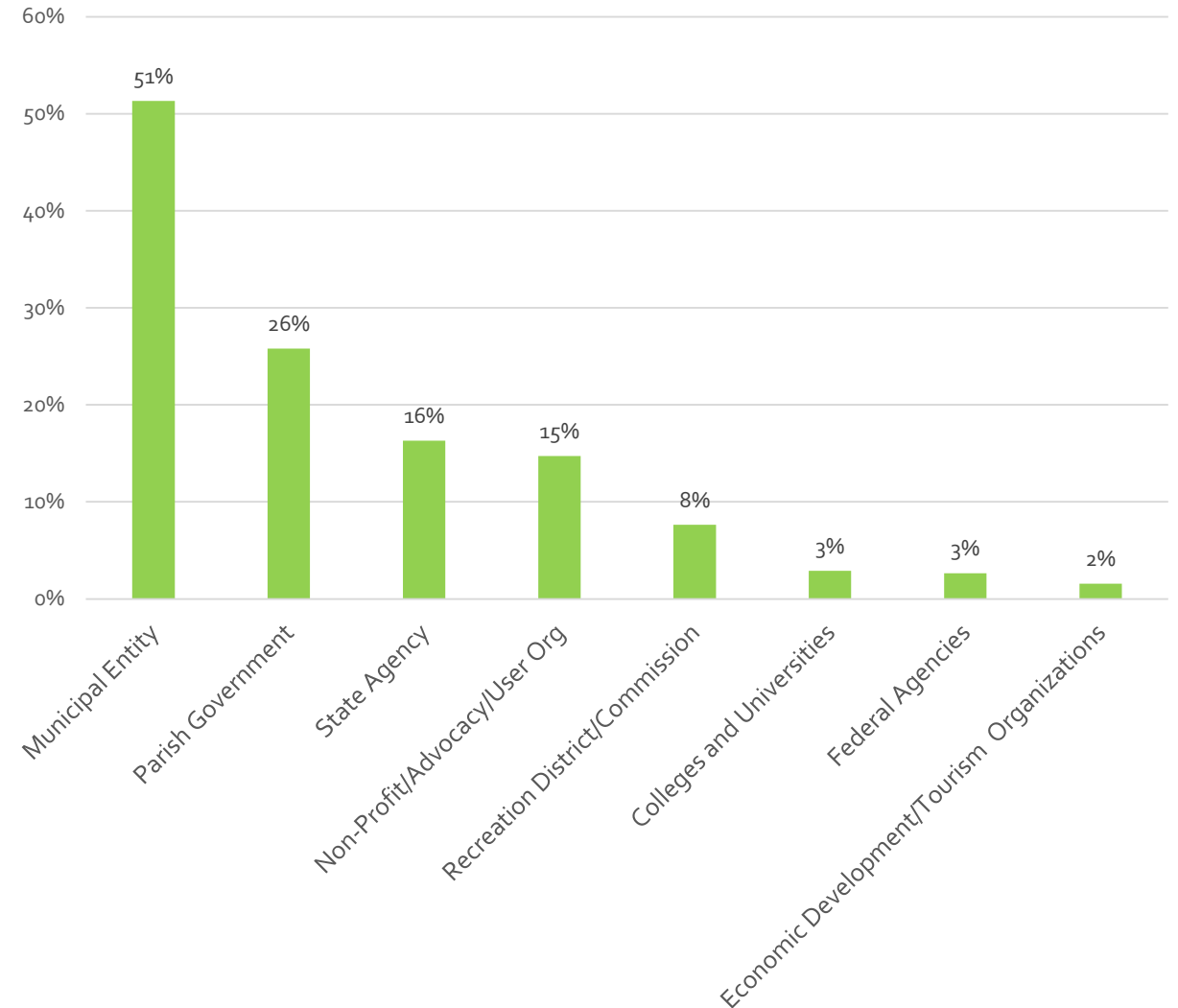
Distribution Louisiana RTP Awards, 1993 - 2019, by Parish



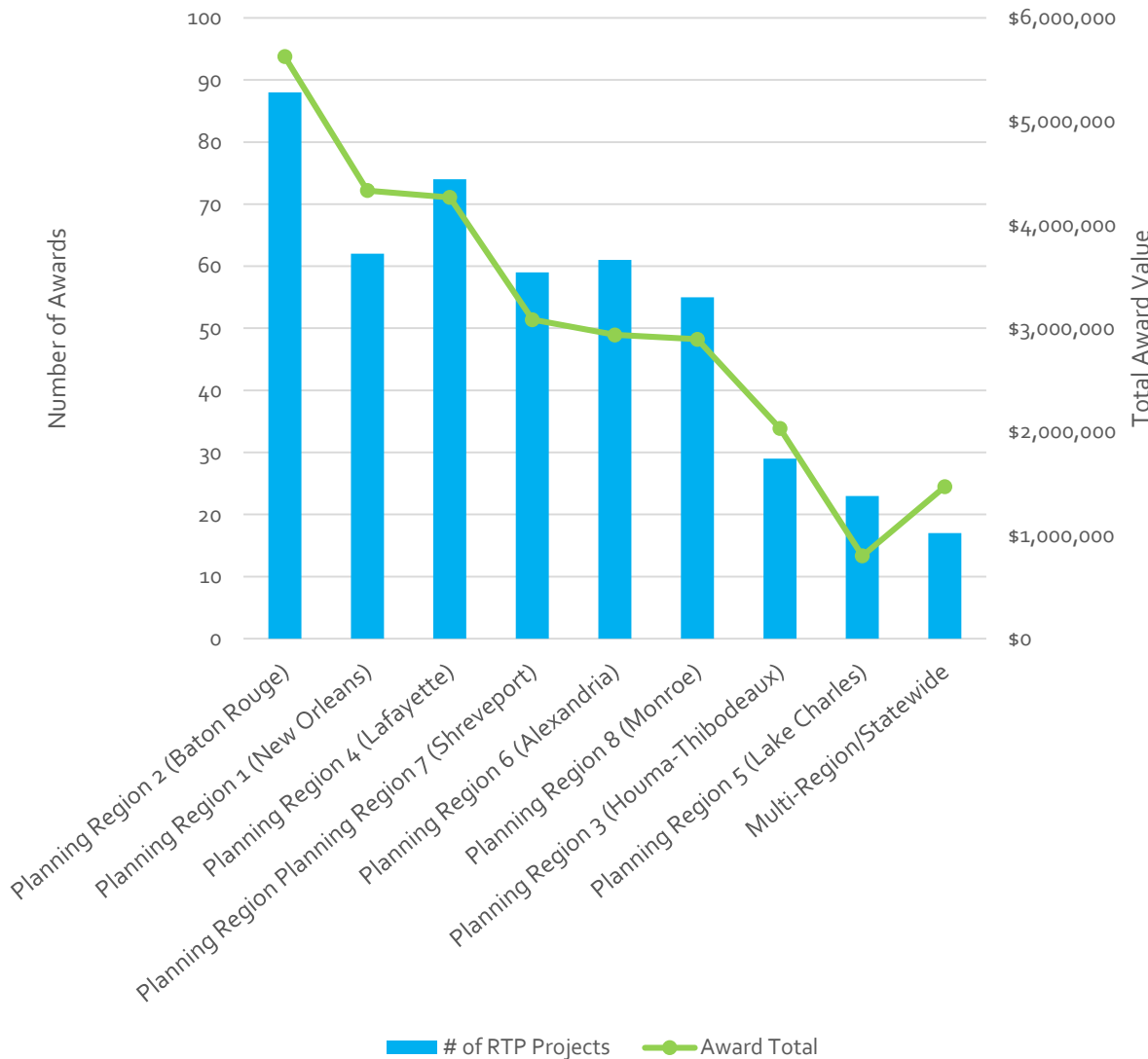
RTP Project Distribution Across Parishes by Trail Type, 1993 - 2019



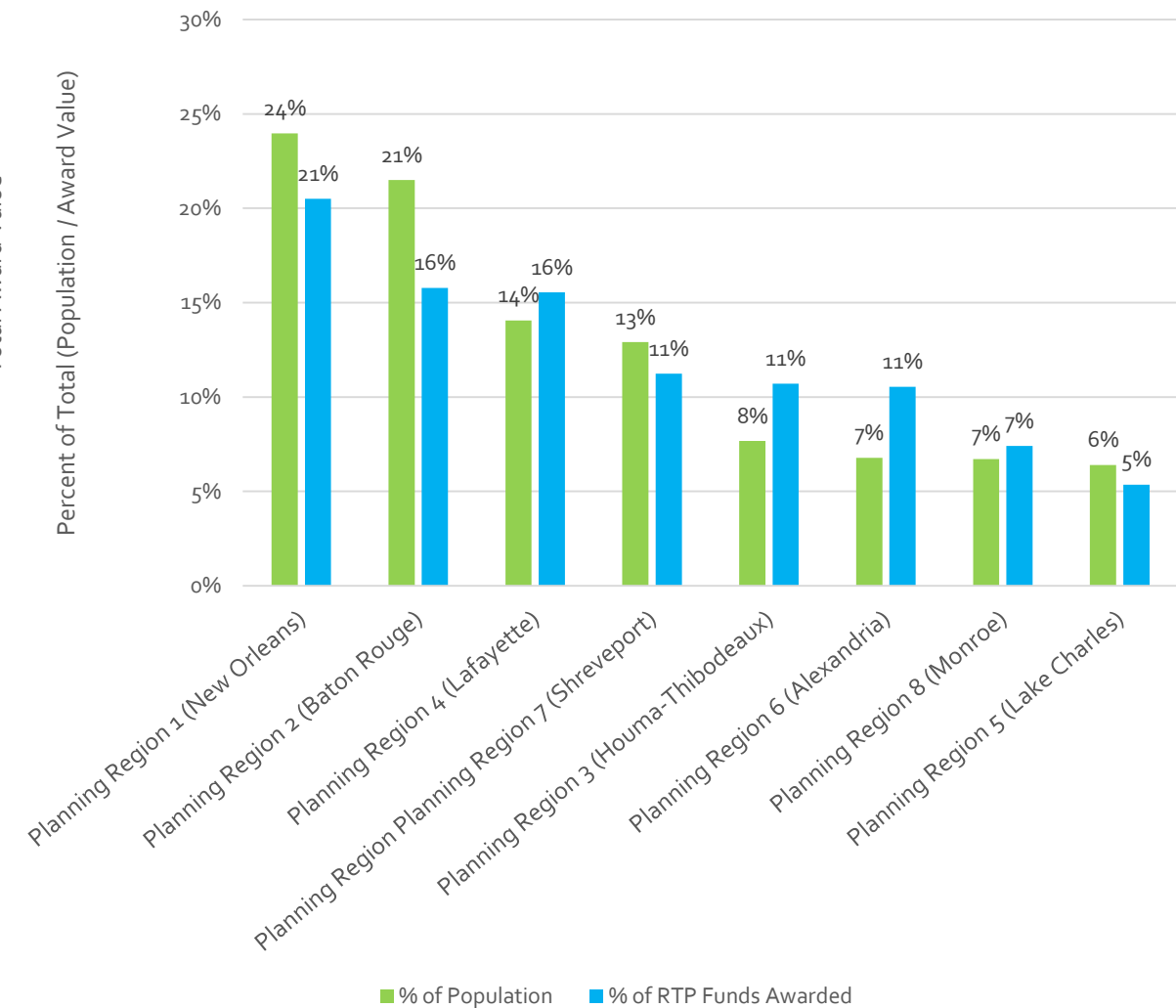
Distribution of RTP Awards by Primary Applicant Organization Type, 1993-2019



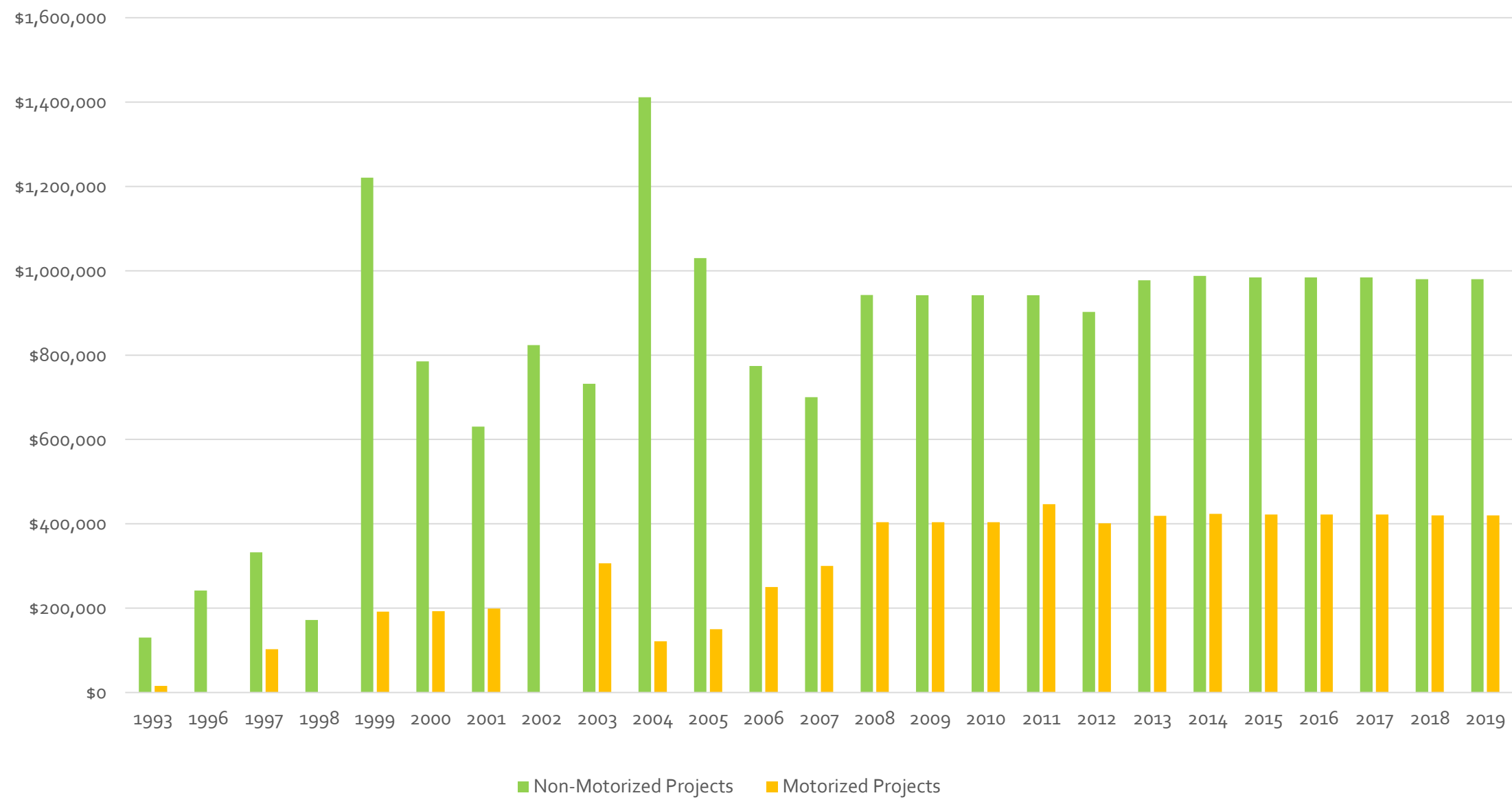
Louisiana RTP Projects by Planning Region



RTP Award Distribution by Region, Relative to Population



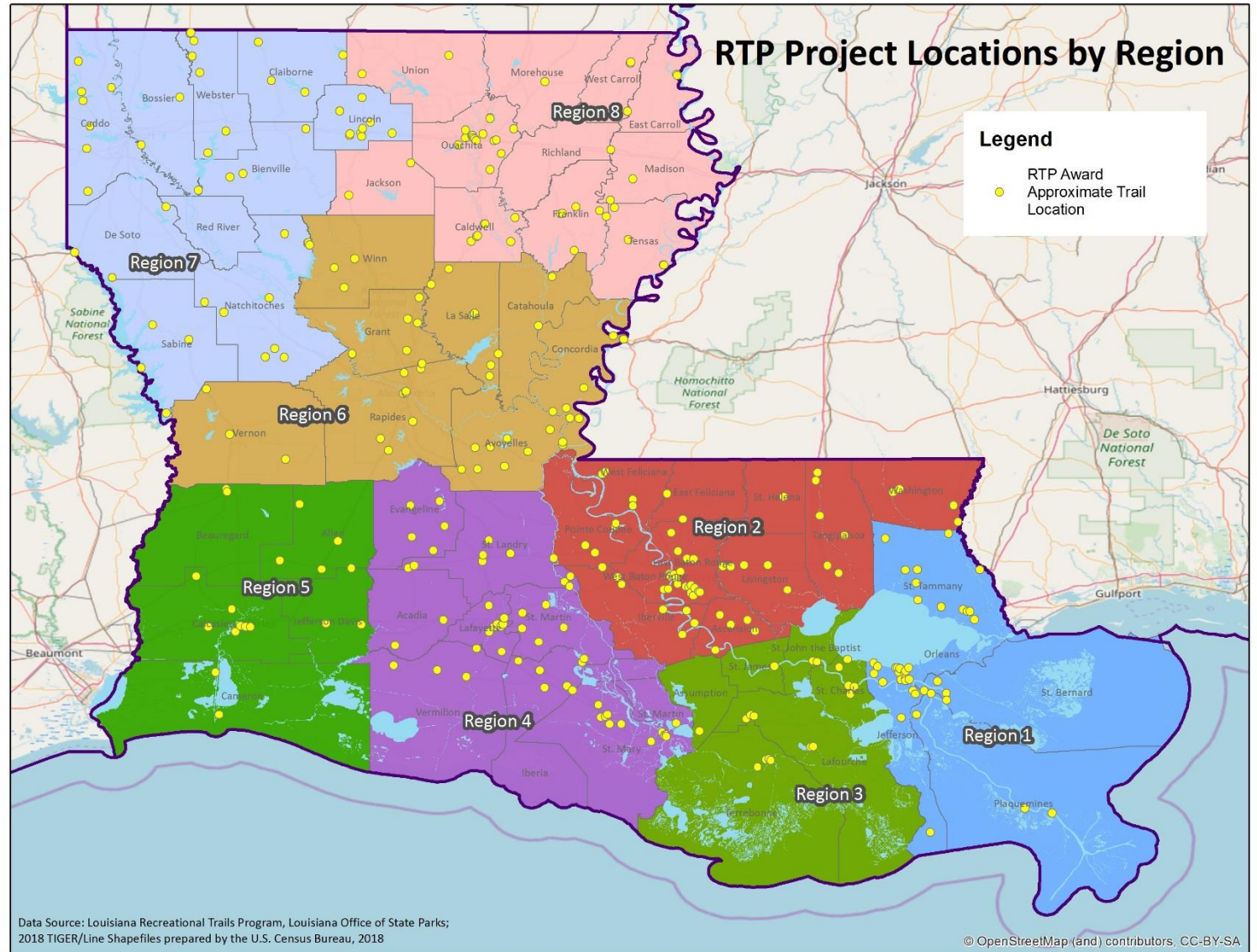
RTP Award Distribution by Trail Use Type, 1993 - 2019



Trails Access & Equity Analysis

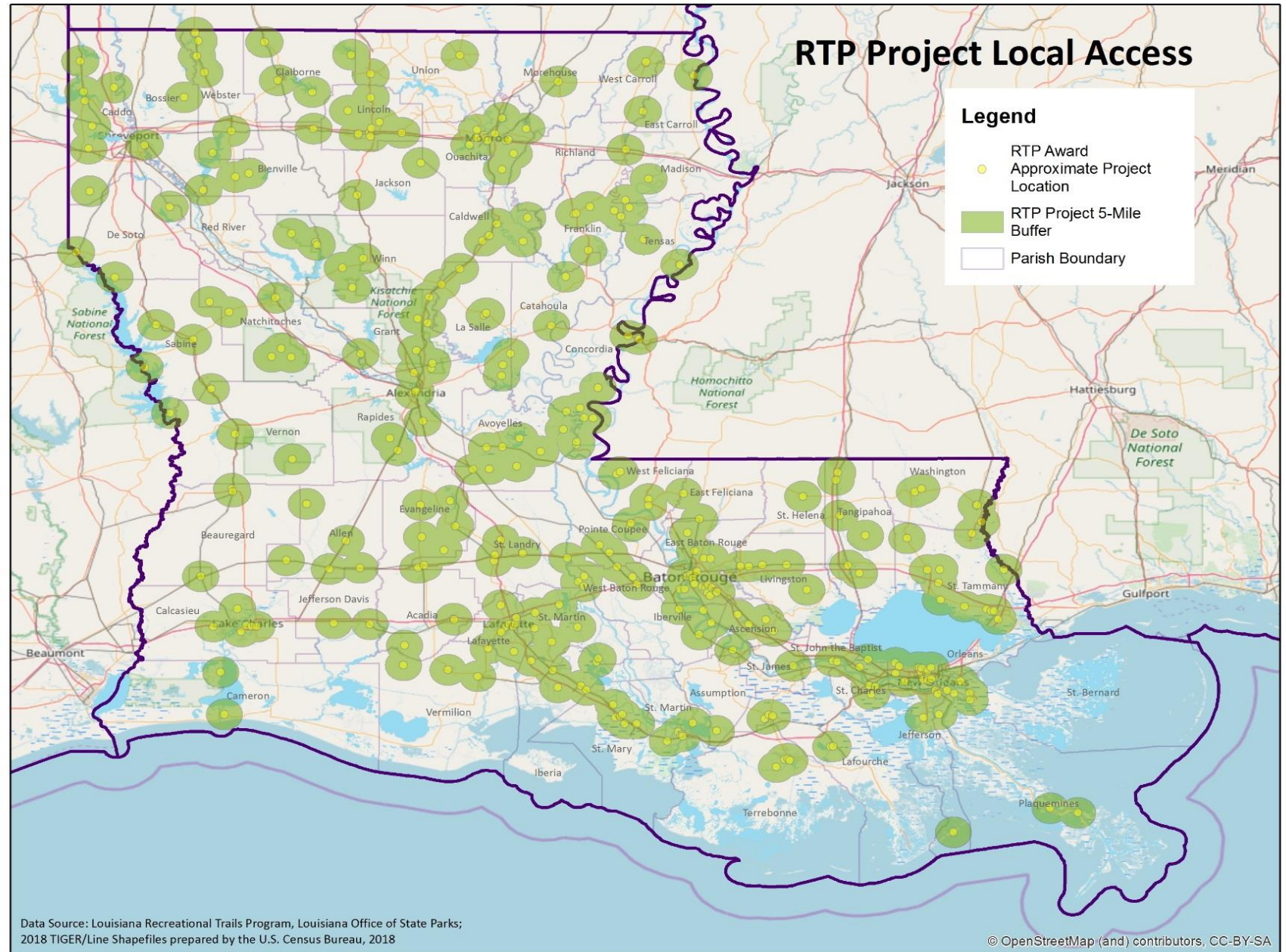
- Where are Louisiana's LRTP-supported trails?
- Who has access?
- Where should future outreach and/or investments be targeted?
- Analysis is preliminary: No statewide trails inventory exists; first phase maps trailhead/trail access point for 421 LRTP projects
- 5-mile buffers for immediate trail catchment area + American Community Survey Data (census tract level) to estimate # and demographics of populations with nearby trails; life expectancy, obesity, and physical inactivity
- Additional analysis needed! Including non-LRTP trails

	% of Population within 5 Miles of...			
Region	Any RTP Project/Trail	RTP Non-Motorized Land-Based Trail	RTP Motorized Trail	RTP Non-Motorized Water Trail
Statewide	74.4%	72.4%	3.8%	1.9%
1	88.5%	88.3%	3.9%	0.0%
2	76.6%	75.5%	1.5%	0.0%
3	76.1%	75.5%	6.3%	0.0%
4	96.2%	92.6%	0.2%	3.9%
5	62.5%	62.5%	0.0%	9.4%
6	33.8%	29.6%	9.4%	0.0%
7	49.1%	47.2%	2.4%	0.0%
8	58.0%	52.1%	8.4%	11.9%



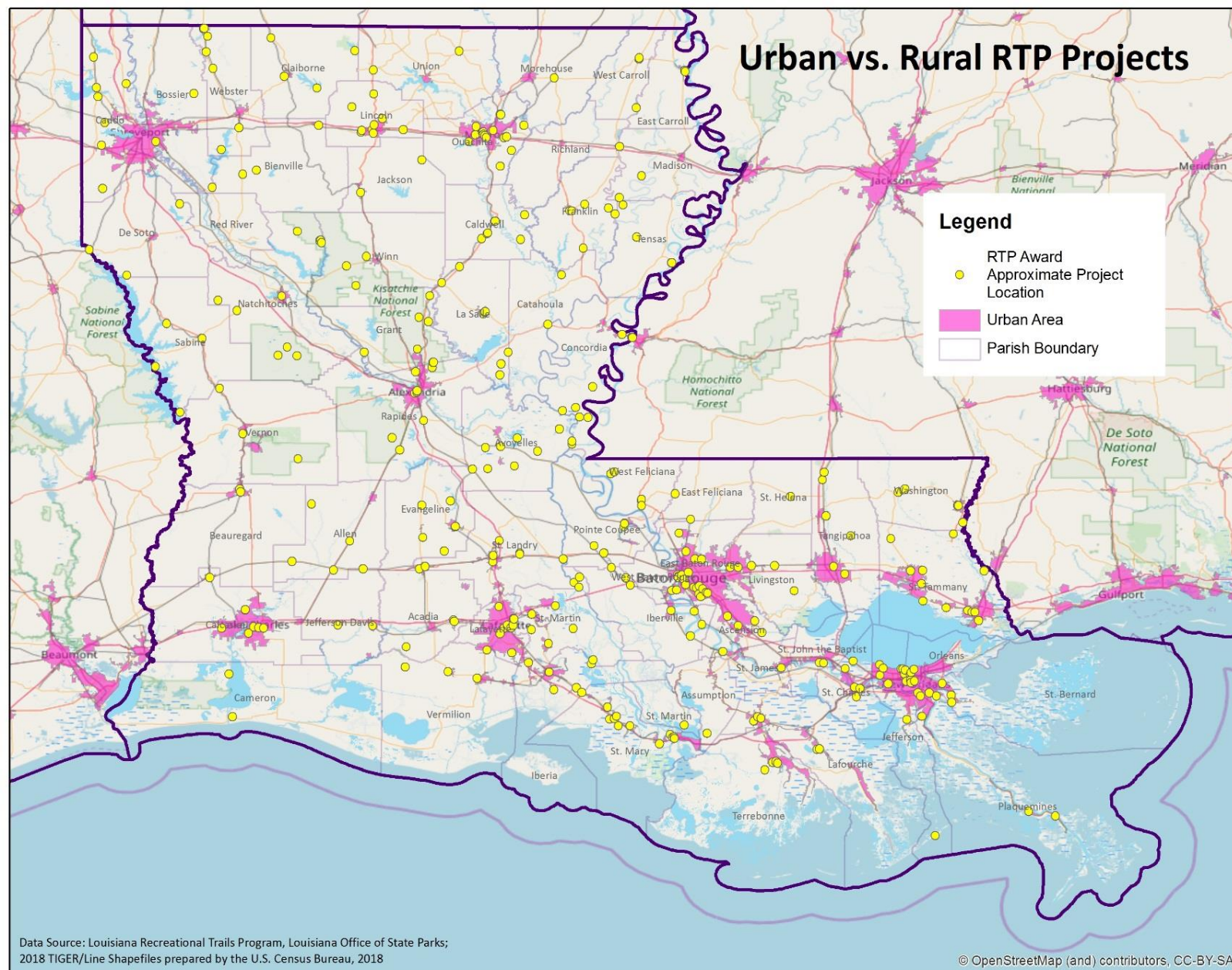
Key finding: Access

- 74.4% of population lives within 5 miles of one or more LRTP projects (comparable to 79% estimate from SCORP, which considers non-LRTP trails)



Key finding: Access

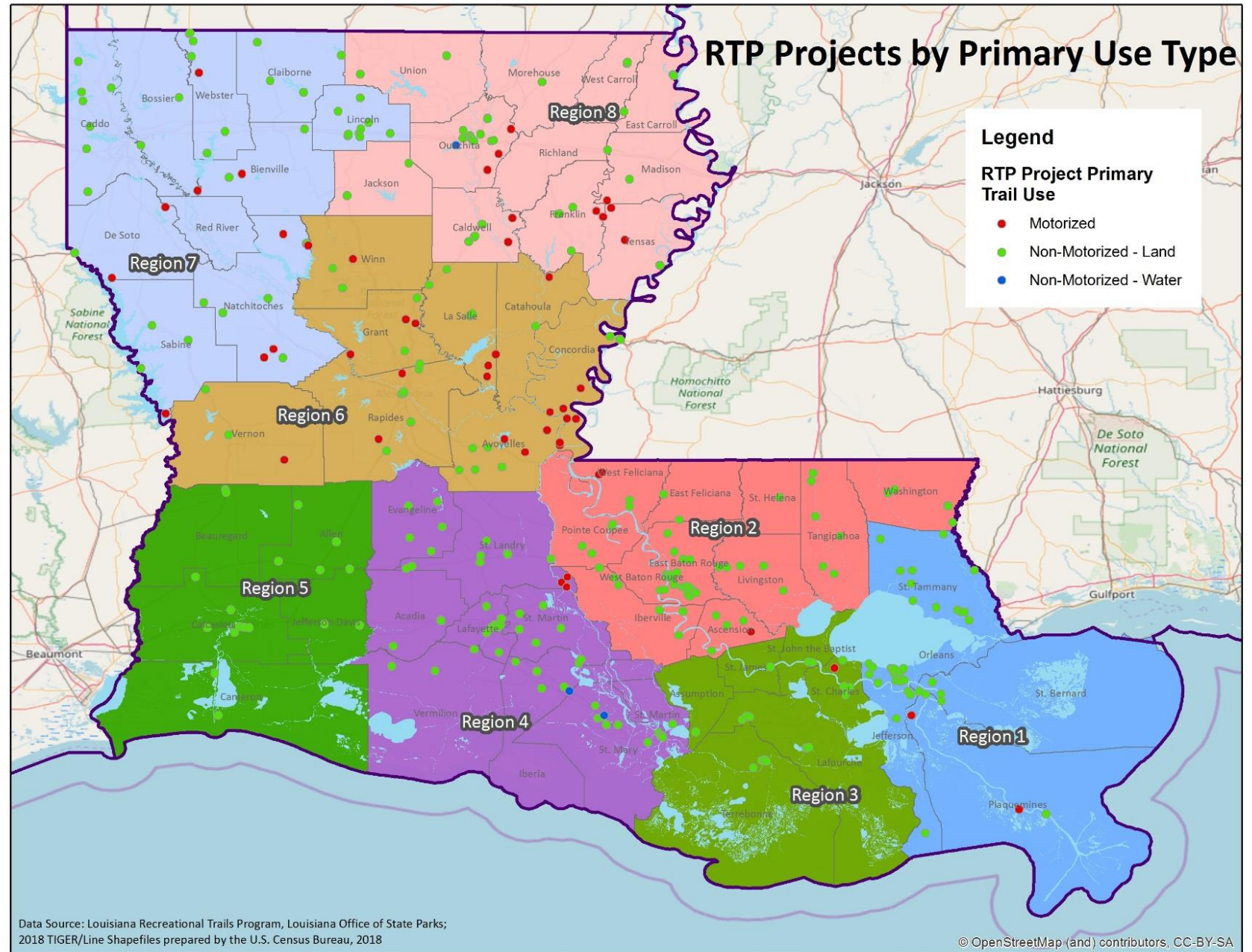
- 44.2% of LRTP projects are within urbanized areas, while 73% of state population is



Key findings:

Trail Type

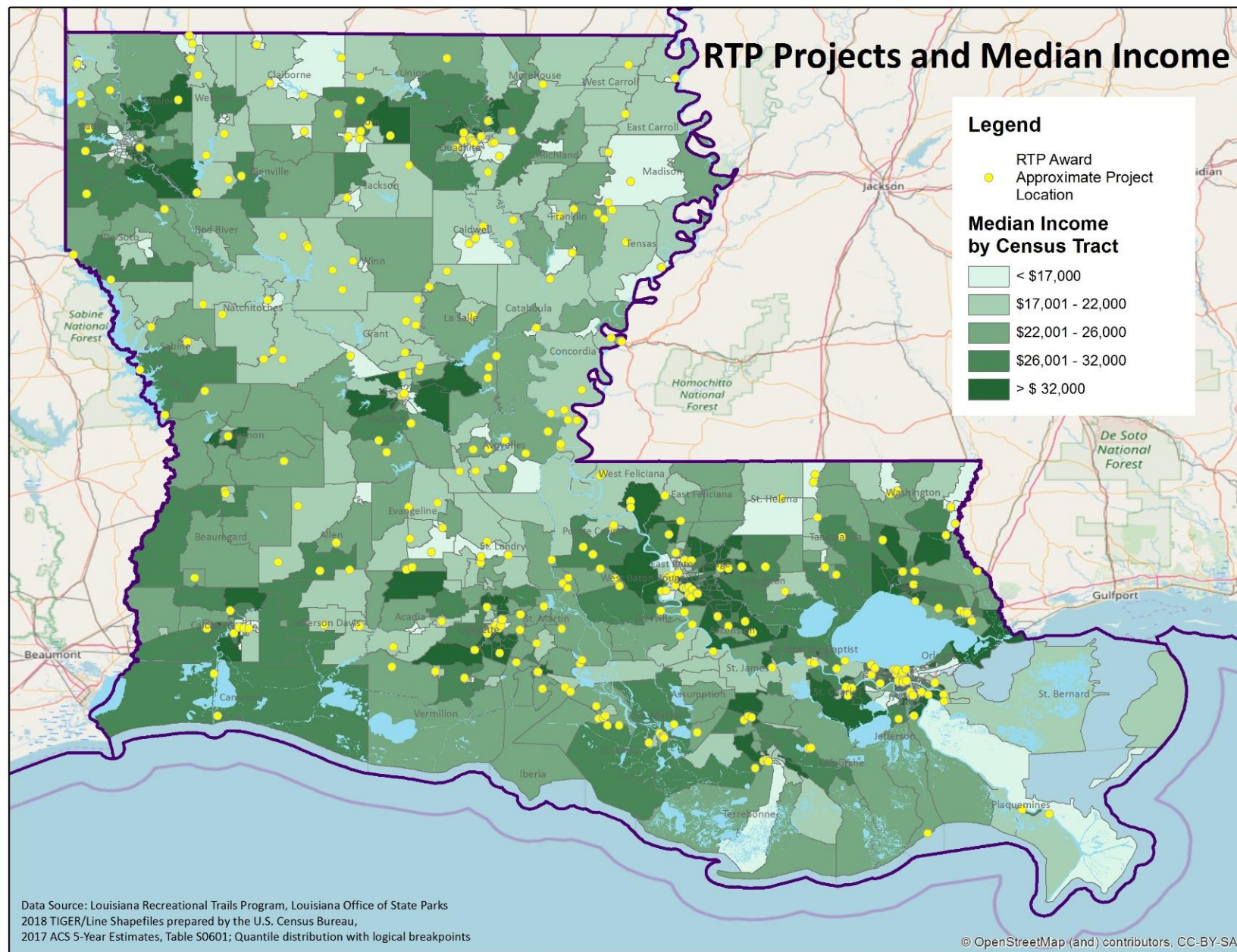
- Motorized trails more frequent in Central and Northern Louisiana; highest density of non-motorized trails in New Orleans and Baton Rouge
- Motorized trails much more likely to be >5 miles from population centers
- LRTP paddle trails limited



Key finding: Income

- 68% of projects in areas with below median income

Median Individual Income	
	Percent of RTP Projects
Less than \$17,000	16.2%
\$17,001 - 22,000	30.3%
\$22,001 - 26,000	23.5%
\$26,001 - 32,000	17.9%
Greater than \$32,000	12.1%
% below Statewide Median Income of \$25,086	68.5%

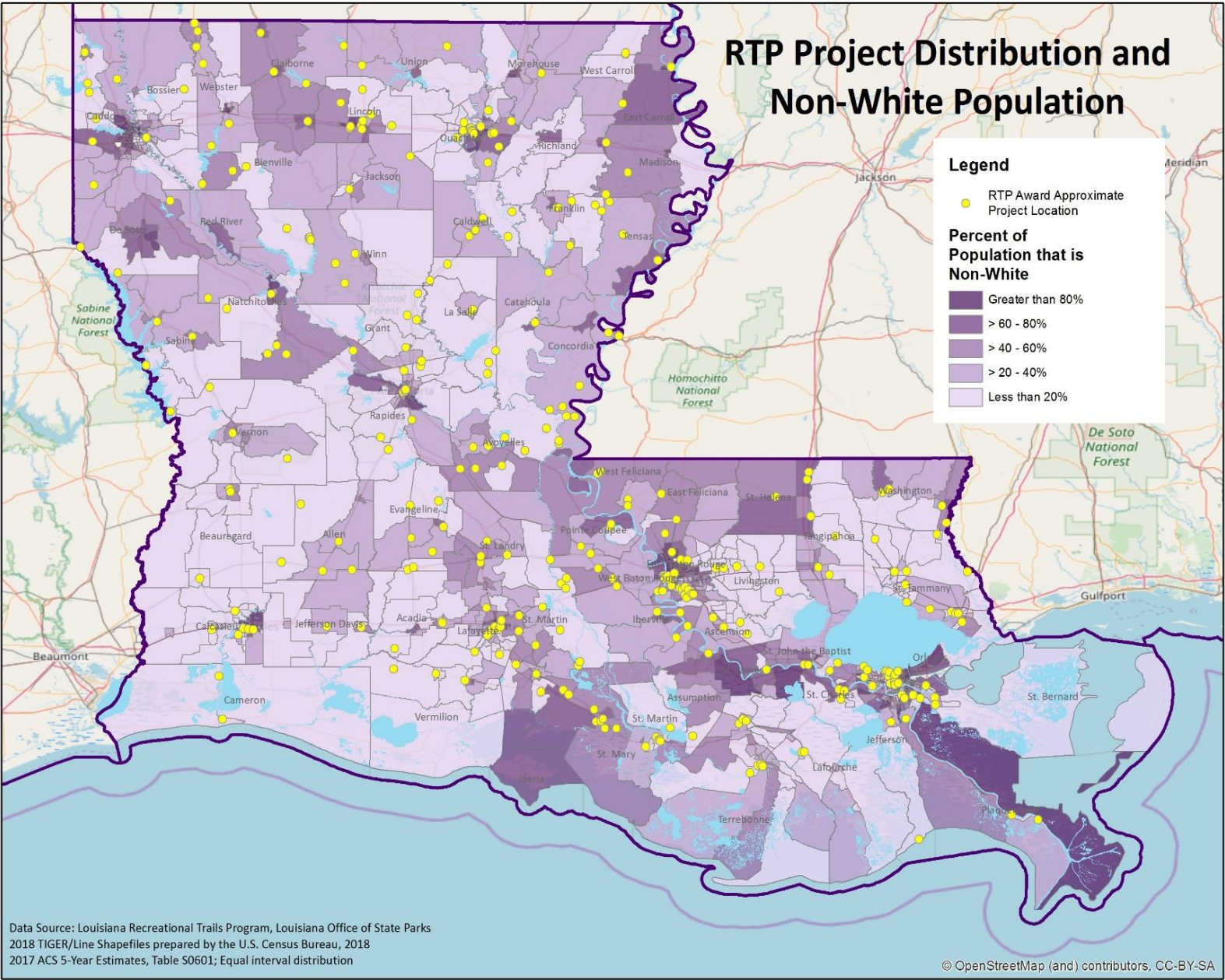


Key finding:

Race

- Fewer trails in communities of color (note: urban trails underestimated)

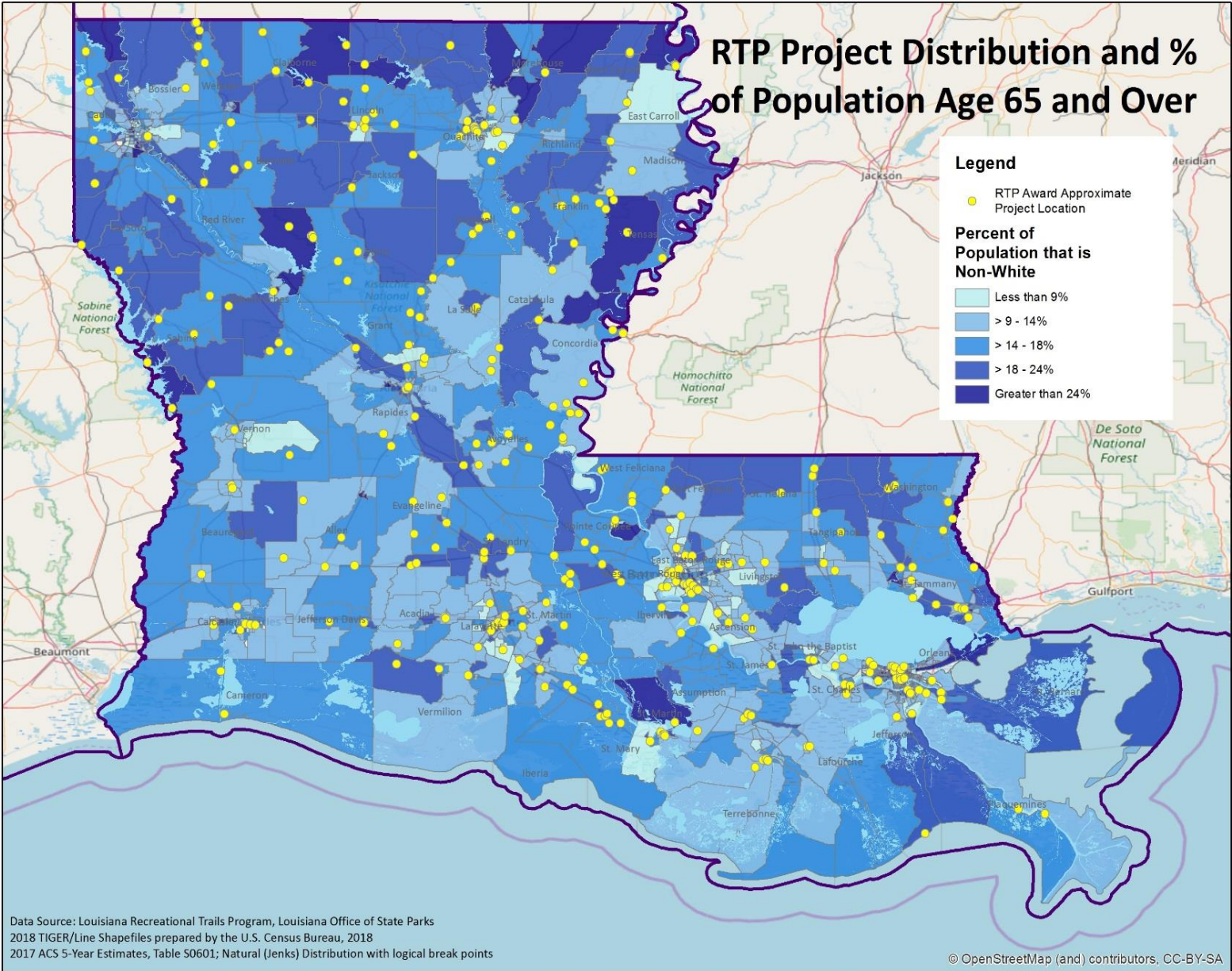
Non-White Population		
	RTP Projects	Louisiana Census Tracts
Greater than 80%	3.3%	16.9%
> 60 - 80%	10.0%	11.7%
> 40 - 60%	16.4%	15.3%
> 20 - 40%	31.2%	26.1%
Less than 20%	39.0%	30.1%
% with non-white population greater than Statewide Overall average of 37.6%	34.5%	46.6%



Key finding: Age

- LRTP effectively serving aging populations (majority of projects in areas with higher 65+ population)

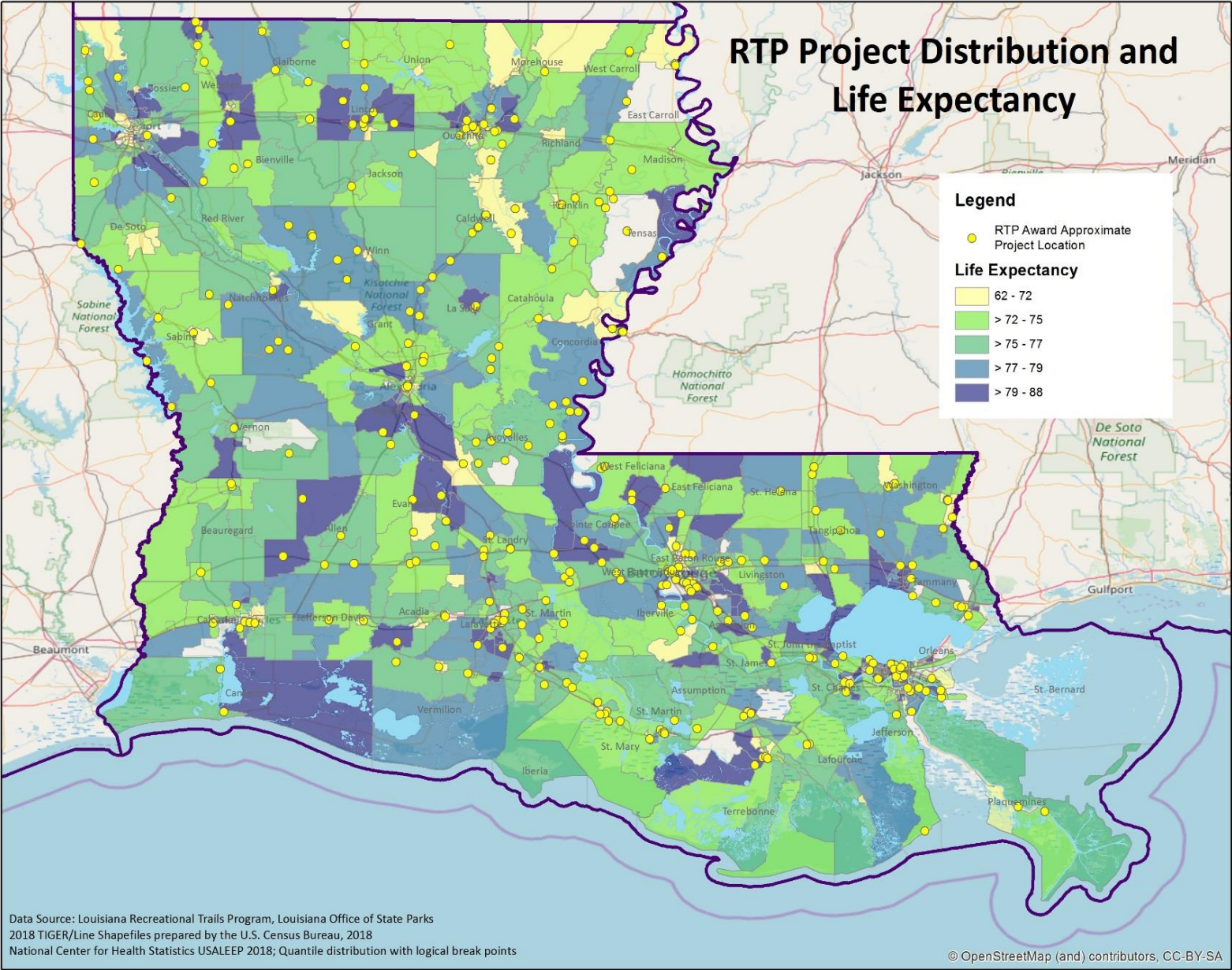
Population 65 and Over	RTP Projects	Louisiana Census Tracts
Less than 9%	7.9%	11.7%
> 9 - 14%	32.9%	35.3%
> 14 - 18%	39.0%	30.5%
> 18 - 24%	14.3%	18.0%
Greater than 24%	6.0%	4.4%
% with 65+ population greater than Statewide overall average of 14%	73.2%	53.0%



Key finding: Health

- Prioritize trails in low life-expectancy communities

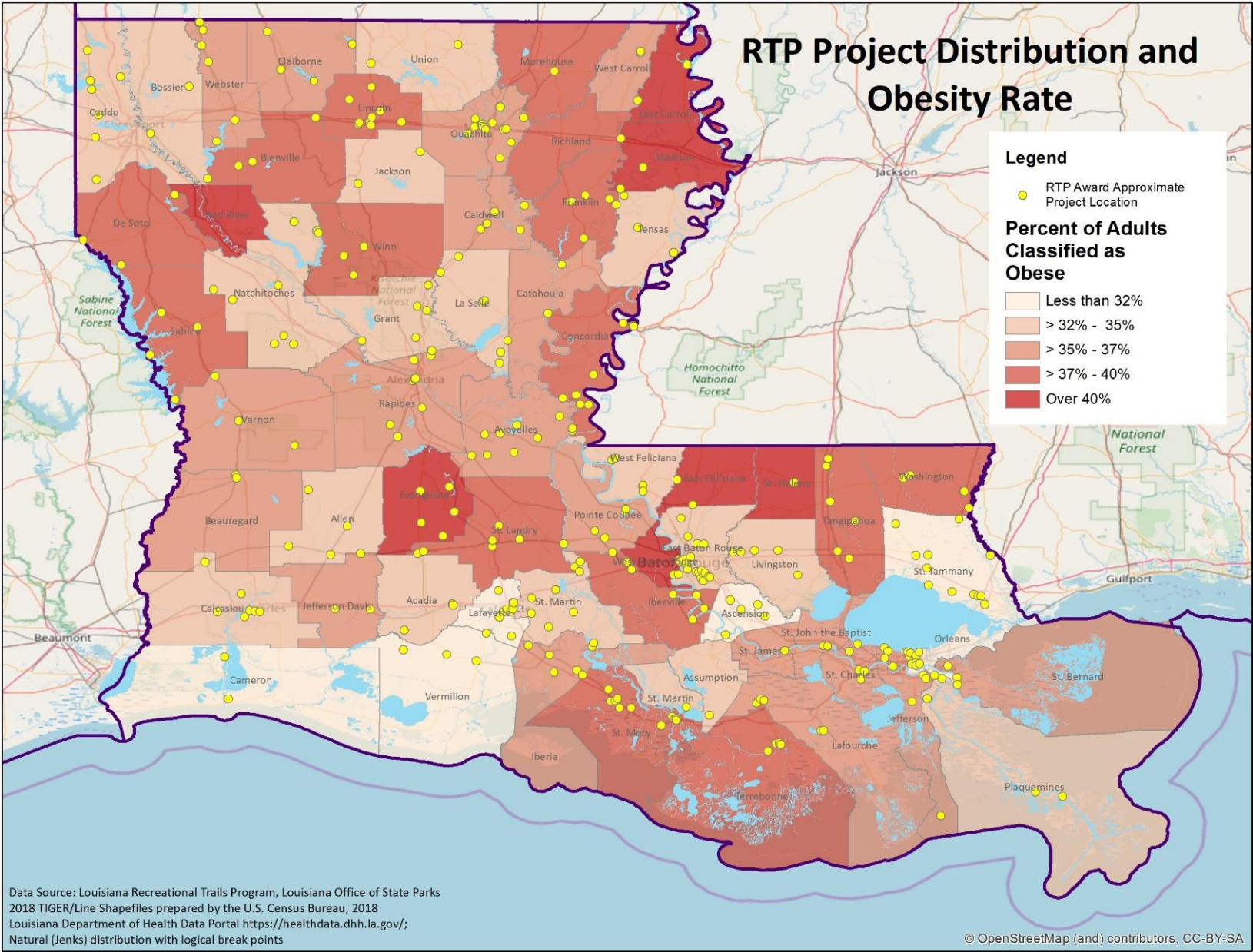
Life Expectancy		
	RTP Project Tracts	Louisiana Census Tracts
62 - 72	11.6%	17.6%
72 - 75	29.1%	24.0%
75 - 77	24.3%	21.5%
77 - 79	21.3%	14.1%
79+	13.7%	15.4%
Median Life Expectancy	75.8	75.5



Key finding: Health

- Fewer trails in parishes with highest obesity rates

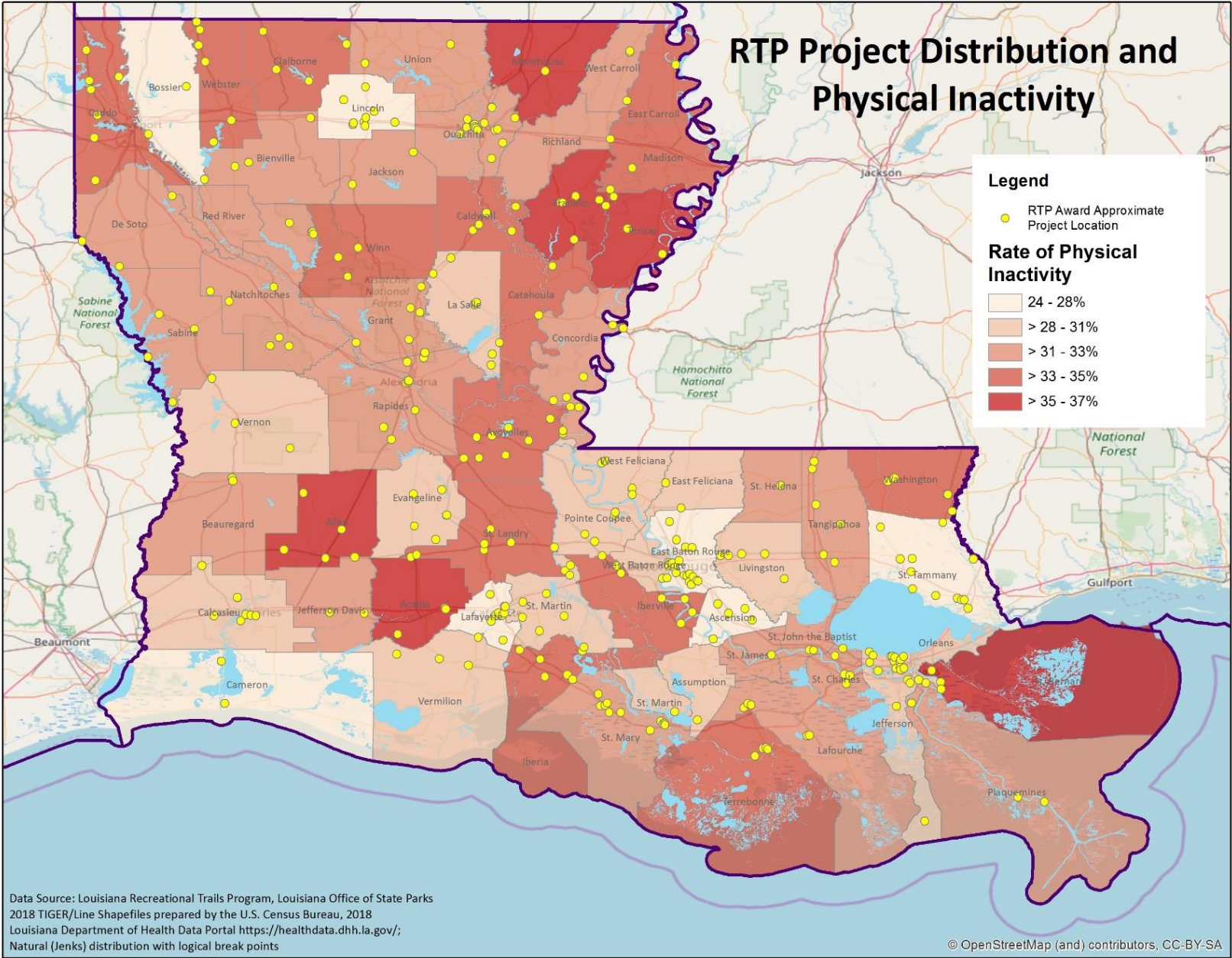
Obesity Rate	RTP Projects	Louisiana Parishes
Less than 32%	13.1%	9.4%
32 - 35%	27.6%	26.6%
35 - 37%	30.4%	29.7%
37 - 40%	23.8%	23.4%
Over 40%	5.2%	10.9%
% below statewide Obesity rate of 34.5%	34.2%	28.1%



Key finding: Health

- Correlation exists between more trails and more activity

Physical Inactivity Rate	RTP Projects	Louisiana Parishes
24 - 28%	17.8%	10.9%
28 - 31%	22.3%	21.9%
31 - 33%	32.8%	35.9%
33 - 35%	21.4%	21.9%
35 - 37%	5.7%	9.4%
% below statewide physical inactivity rate of 31.8%	52.7%	48.4%



Program Review Conclusions

Successes

- Major phased linear trails
- Local fitness trails
- Motorized trails in WMAs
- 73%+ of residents within 5 miles of trail
- Investments in lower income, aging communities

Opportunities

- Paddle trails and water assets
- Urban transportation/corridor projects
- Network/destination connectivity!
- Latent demand for trails in north, central, and west Louisiana
- Investments in communities of color and areas with poor health outcomes

TRAILS USER AND STAKEHOLDER NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Part 1: Stakeholder and Trails Operator Survey

- Distributed digitally to 200+ contacts
 - Identified list of stakeholders associated with or likely to be involved with any LRTP projects awarded 1993 – 2017
 - Parks and recreation, public works, and planning depts;
 - Non-profit, advocacy, economic development, and educational institutions
 - Open link: shareable to colleagues, other interested parties
- 26 surveys fully or substantially completed from all 8 planning regions, variety of stakeholder types
- Primarily represents interests relating to non-motorized trails
- Asked to identify priorities in region across several categories and evaluate program implementation to-date

Top Priorities



- Crime/personal security on trails
- Protecting natural features/habitat
- Routine Trail Maintenance
- Enforcement of trail rules
- Improving trail safety (i.e. from traffic)
- Trail info online (information about getting to the trail, etc.)
- Litter abatement/trash can availability
- More trails connecting communities and places
- Promoting trail-related tourism
- Promoting users' ability to experience the natural environment

Stakeholder & Trails Operator Trails Priorities (All)



Regional Priorities

1 - New Orleans

- Routine Trails Maintenance
- Improving trails safety (i.e. from traffic)
- More trails connecting communities and places

2 - Baton Rouge

- Litter/trash can availability
- Availability of drinking water
- Restroom facilities at trailheads
- Availability of lighting after dark on trails or at trailhead

3- Houma/Thibodeaux

- Protecting natural features/habitat
- Routine Trails Maintenance
- Trailhead amenities at launch facilities

4- Acadiana

- Protecting natural features/habitat
- Routine Trails Maintenance
- Reducing Trails Closures

5- Lake Charles

- Routine Trails Maintenance
- Reducing Trails Closures
- Security of parking areas
- Enforcement of trails rules
- Parking space at trailheads
- Crime/personal security on trails
- Information at trail head (site maps, wayfinding, trail details, wildlife info, level of difficulty etc.)
- Promoting trails-related tourism
- More trails for persons with disabilities
- More motorized trails

6- Alexandria

- Enforcement of trails rules
- Protecting natural features/habitat
- Trails info online

7 - Shreveport

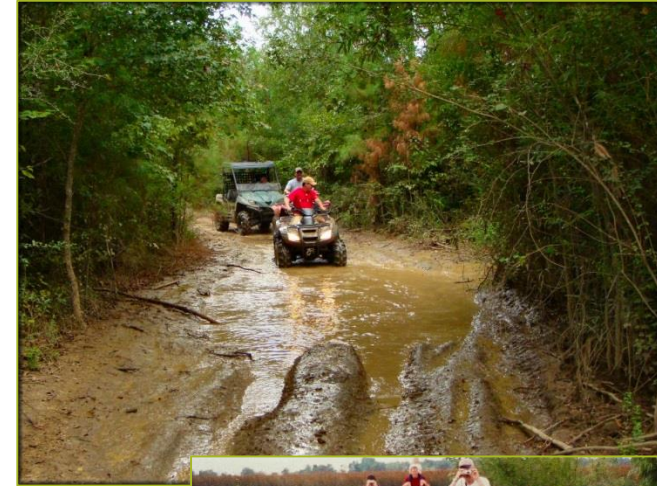
- Protecting natural features/habitat
- Enforcement of trails rules
- Trails info online

8- Monroe

- Promoting trails-related tourism
- Crime/personal security on trails
- Trails info online
- More trails connecting communities and places
- Security of parking areas

Top Three Trail Funding Priorities - Trail Operators/Stakeholders

Rank	Funding Need
Motorized Trails	
1	Maintaining existing trails in good condition
2	Reduce natural resource damage near trails
3	More enforcement of rules/regulations in trail areas
Non-Motorized Trails	
1	Routine maintenance of trails
2	Connect trails into local pedestrian and bicycle networks
3	Connect trails into larger trail systems
Paddle Trails	
1	Public access to the water
2	Parking
3	Non-motorized boat launch facilities



Priority Trail Activities:

Statewide:

- Walking/Hiking
- Bicycling (hard-surface)
- Running

South East/South Central LA:

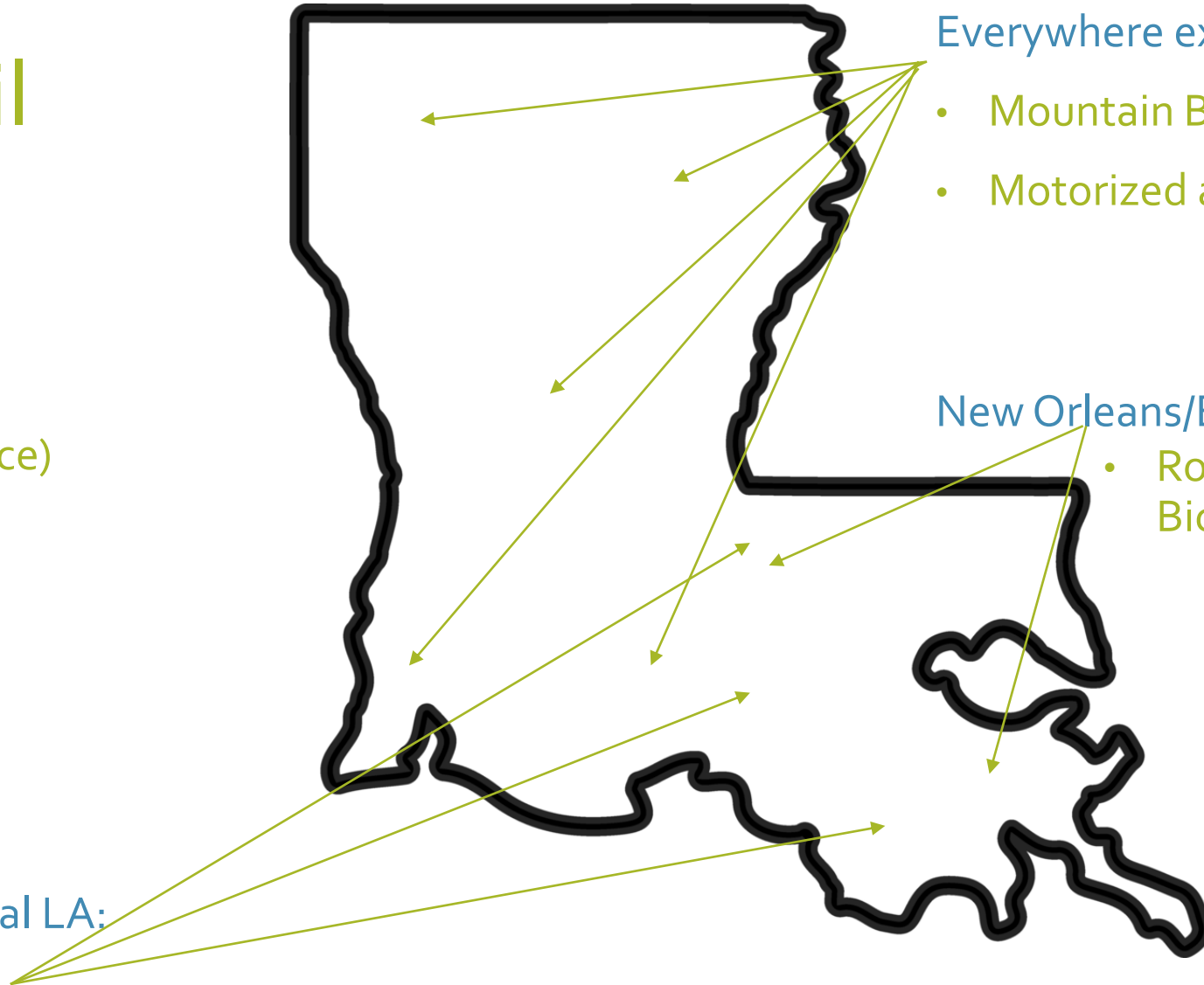
- Paddle Trails

Everywhere except Southeast LA:

- Mountain Bicycling
- Motorized activities

New Orleans/Baton Rouge area:

- Road/Hard Surface Bicycling



LRTP Program Effectiveness:

- 90% of respondents satisfied with staff, application process, program overall

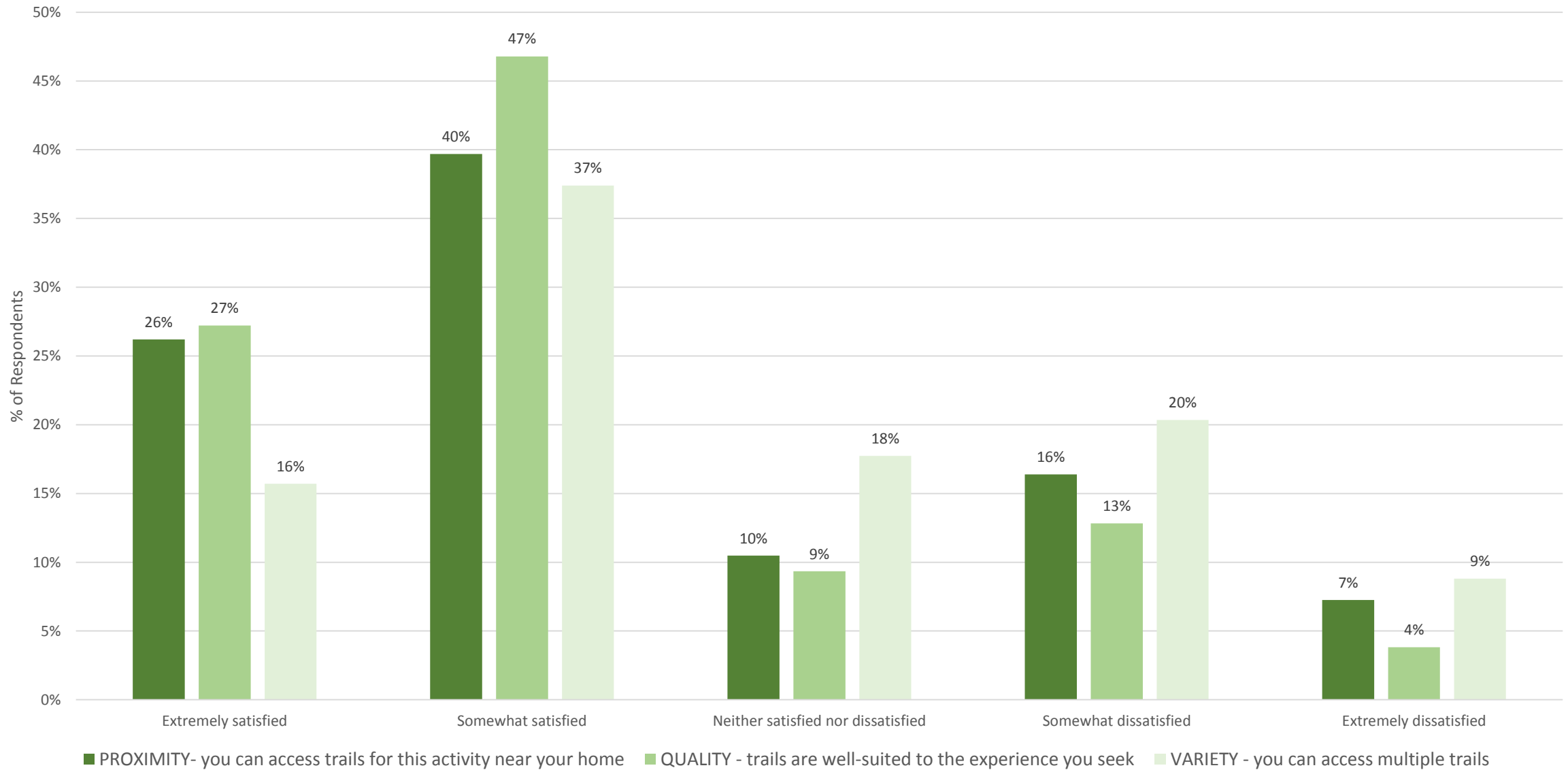
Key issues:

- Access - through infrastructure, outreach, policy
- Maintenance – major and minor
- Safety – of facilities, at intersections, and from crime
- Capacity – for planning, design, operations
- Data and evaluation – need more! Public and project-specific
- Coordination – interagency challenges, land acquisition
- Leadership – need clear vision, political leadership

Part 2: Public/Trails User Survey

- Distributed to trails operators/stakeholders, interest groups; requested to pass along to constituents via social media, newsletters, etc
- Over 1200 responses initiated, 956 substantively completed
- Responses represent 51 parishes, all planning regions
- Half of respondents were frequent trails users; median 25 days of trails use in last year
- Walkers, hikers, bicyclists, runners, kayakers, motorbikers, birdwatchers, photographers, scouts, scientists
- Motorized trail users (~15% of respondents) and equestrian users (1%) underrepresented

Trails User Satisfaction

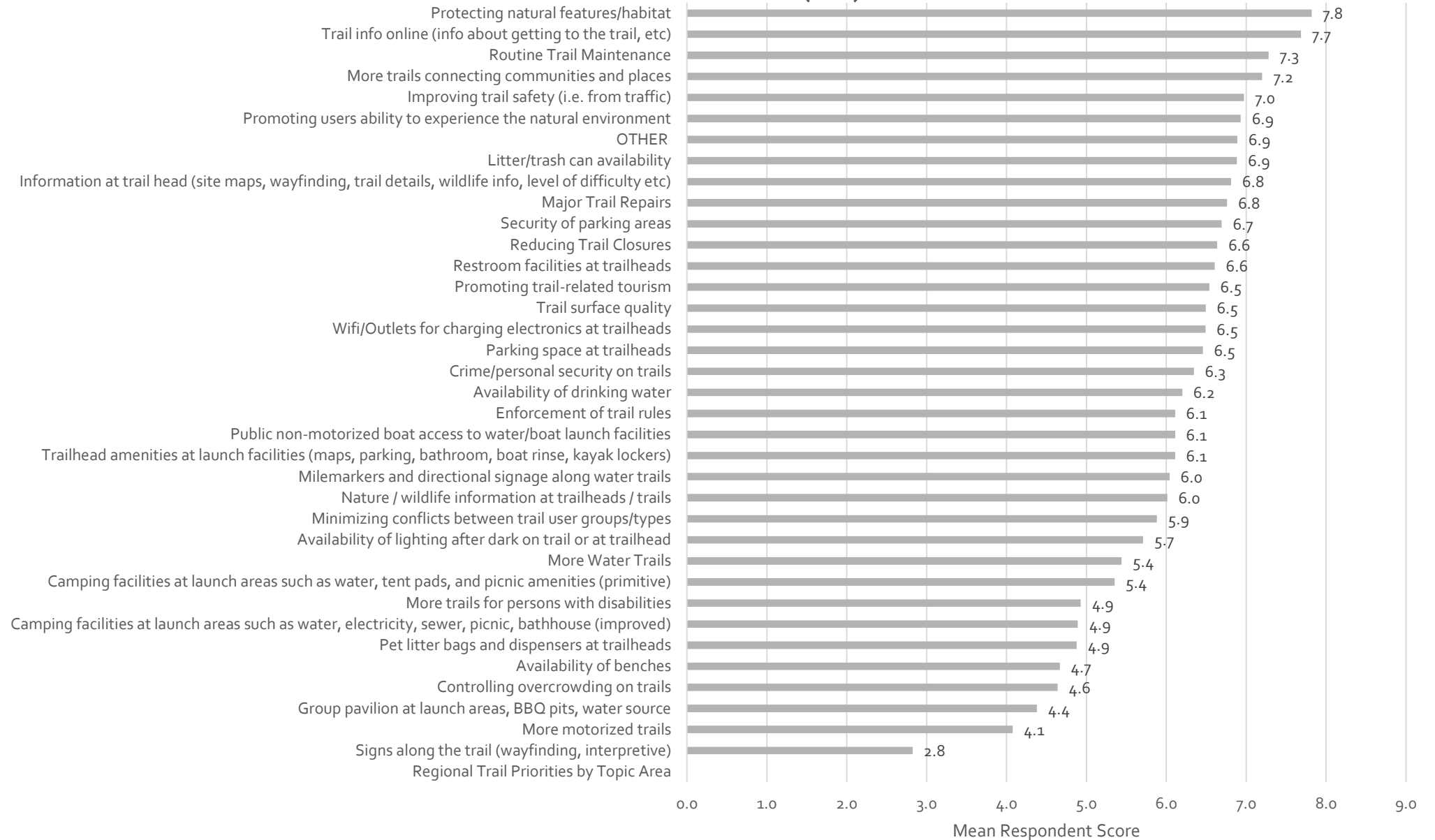


Top Priorities:



- Protecting natural features and habitat
- Provision of trails information online
- Routine trails maintenance
- More trails connecting communities and places
- Improving trail safety (i.e. from traffic)
- Promoting users' ability to experience the natural environment
- Litter/trash can availability
- Information at trail heads (maps, wayfinding, trail details, wildlife info, level of difficulty, etc.)
- Major trails repairs
- Parking lot security

Statewide Trails User Priorities (All)



Regional Priorities

1 - New Orleans

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online

2 - Baton Rouge

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online
- Trails connecting communities and places
- Improving trails safety

3- Houma/Thibodeaux

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online
- Reducing trails closures
- More motorized trails

4- Acadiana

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online

5- Lake Charles

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online
- Trails connecting communities and places
- Litter/trash can availability

6- Alexandria

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online

7 - Shreveport

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online
- Routine trails maintenance
- Reducing trails closures

8 - Monroe

- Protection of natural resources and habitat
- Provision of improved information about trails online
- Information at trailhead
- Promoting trails-related tourism

Top Three Trails Funding Priorities - Trails Users

Rank	Funding Need
Motorized Trails	
1	Maintaining existing trails in good condition
2	More single track off-road motorcycle trails
3	Reduce natural resource damage near trails
Non-Motorized Trails	
1	More trails, generally
2	Routine maintenance of trails
3	Connect trails into local pedestrian and bicycle networks
Paddle Trails	
1	Public access to the water
2	Non-motorized boat launch facilities
3	Designated trails with wayfinding/signage



Priority Trail Activities:

Statewide:

- Walking/Hiking
- Bicycling (hard-surface)
- Running
- Paddle trails
- Long-Distance hiking
- Motorized activities

Central LA:

- Backpacking

South East/Central LA:

- Paddle Trails

Everywhere except Southeast LA:

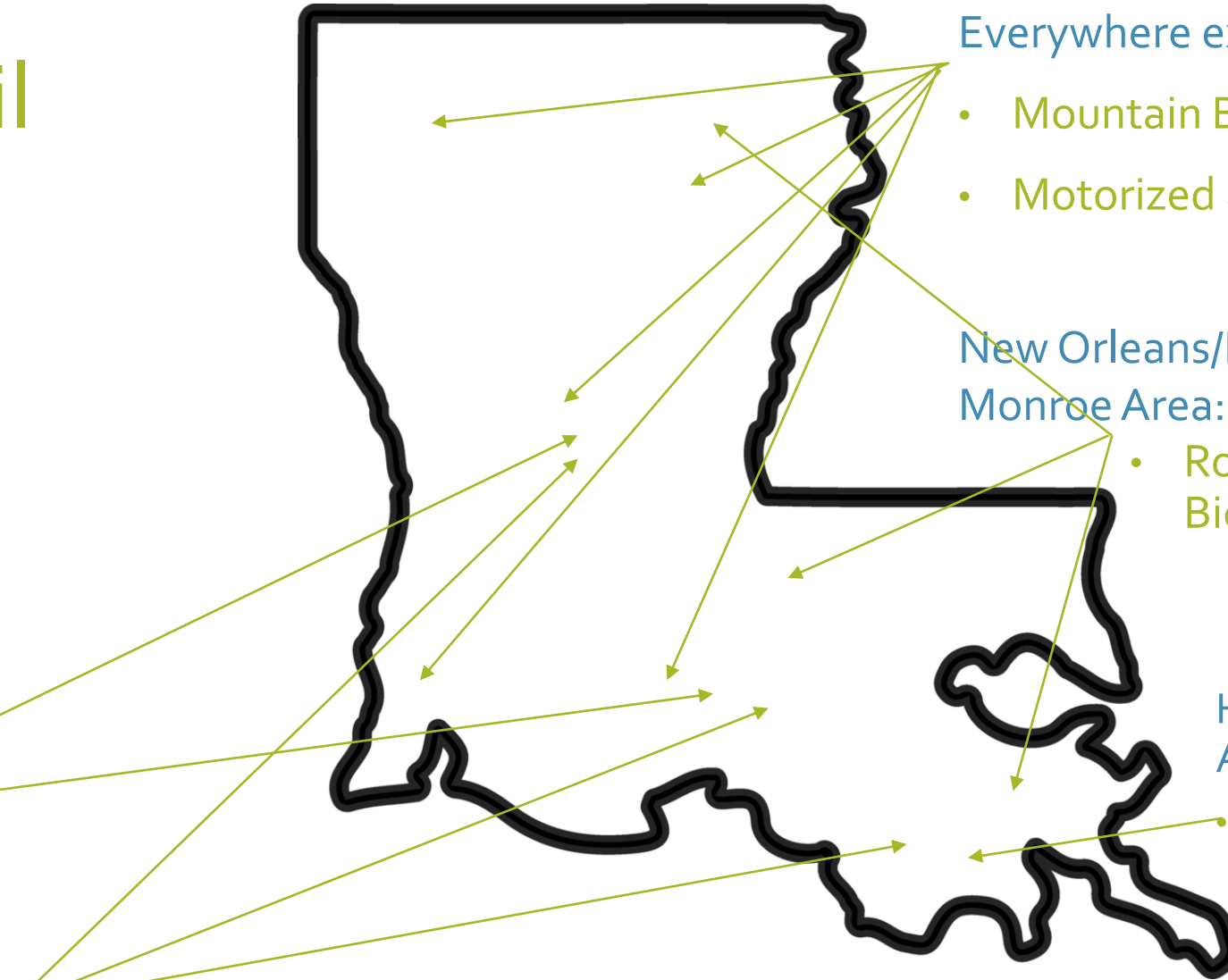
- Mountain Bicycling
- Motorized activities

New Orleans/Baton Rouge area & Monroe Area:

- Road/Hard Surface Bicycling

Houma/Thibodeaux Area:

- Motorized activities



Overall Program Successes

- Major regional trail projects & expansions (LA Trail, MRT, Lafitte Greenway, Bayou Teche Paddle Trail)
- Successful partnerships between state and local agencies, local community partners
- Successful integration of trail linkages (e.g., shared use paths) on bridges, chokepoints
- Improved/expanded motorized trails in WMAs
- Perceived community health benefits
- Relatively smooth project delivery compared to other state funding programs
- Leveraging of LRTP funds to access additional funding
- Increasing community support for trails
- Proactive investments that reduce long-term maintenance costs
- Effective support for proposal development and holistic application assessment criteria

Barriers and Opportunities

- Trail maintenance issues – routine and major disruptions; lack of operations funds
- Land acquisition – need help identifying land/corridors and navigating property issues
- Local community opposition – need more outreach, education, support for expanding trails awareness
- Local capacity and matching funds – for developing plans & proposals as well as skilled contractors; need education and training, assistance developing match and operating funds
- Concerns about trail user safety – all kinds! ATVs, roadway conflicts, crime
- Interagency coordination – especially working with levee districts, Army Corps, National Forest Service, etc
- Data and post-project evaluation – need more feedback data, public info to effectively promote and evaluate
- Trails info and marketing – need to better publicize existing and potential trails, reach new audiences
- Vision and funding – need a future trails map, clear goals, more funding (federal, state, local), political leadership, effective advocacy

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense pine forest. The path is light brown and leads into the distance, flanked by tall, thin pine trees with green needles. The ground is covered in dry pine needles and some small shrubs. The sky is visible through the canopy in the distance.

LRTP STRATEGIC PLAN

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Leadership

Strive to provide excellence in leadership and guidance in promoting the development of trails and trails-related programs with local, regional, and private or non-profit partners statewide

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Be accessible and transparent in program administration and implementation		
Continue to work with local, regional, state and federal agencies, non-profit and for-profit organizations to coordinate and improve trails in Louisiana	Number of external entities engaged with LRTP Advisory Committee and grant projects	Ongoing
Publish regular reports on grant administration, program accomplishments, and progress on strategic goals	Brief (2-page) annual program update	Annual
Communicate expectations for grant-funded projects at all phases, from application to post-completion assessment	Updated LRTP applicant guide	Ongoing
Periodically review grant application and award criteria to ensure selection process remains inclusive, fair, and open, and to respond to stakeholder feedback and identified statewide needs	Diversity of grant recipients; Awardee satisfaction with grant administration and project delivery	Annual

Goal 1: Leadership

Strive to provide excellence in leadership and guidance in promoting the development of trails and trails-related programs with local, regional, and private or non-profit partners statewide

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 2: Provide technical resources and support to all Louisiana communities		
Provide guidance and technical assistance, especially for small and rural jurisdictions, in trails planning, design, construction, and maintenance of all types of trails	Technical assistance planning kits; participation in local planning meetings (where feasible) or distribution of information about benefits of and opportunities for trails	1-2 years
Provide best practice resources to public and private OHV facility operators in trail construction focused on environmental protection	Distribution of information about recommended construction and design practices to engineers and managers involved in trail construction and operation	1-2 years
Encourage and guide the development of local trails and/or pedestrian and bicycle plans and support trail-related planning processes	Number of trails plans (or related, including pedestrian and/or bicycle plans)	3-5 years

Goal 1: Leadership

Strive to provide excellence in leadership and guidance in promoting the development of trails and trails-related programs with local, regional, and private or non-profit partners statewide

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Encourage public/private partnerships for trails projects		
Facilitate connections among public and private sector stakeholders (governmental entities, landowners, recreational user groups, etc.) involved in trails planning, development, management, and maintenance	Number of public-private partnership projects	Ongoing
Coordinate communication across jurisdictional boundaries by connecting stakeholders to one another	Number of multi-parish/multi-region projects	Ongoing
Support state land management agencies in communicating protocols and recommendations for ensure effective management and limited access interruption to grant recipients	Disseminate protocols and best practices for land management developed/updated by involved agencies	1-2 years

Goal 1: Leadership

Strive to provide excellence in leadership and guidance in promoting the development of trails and trails-related programs with local, regional, and private or non-profit partners statewide

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 4: Encourage and guide incorporation of trails facilities into other types of infrastructure projects, e.g. levees, drainage, coastal protection		
Working with DOTD and other relevant agencies, provide input in and disseminate general standards and design templates or guidelines for various types of trails and contexts	Publication of facility specifications and standards	1-2 years
Review laws, policies, and practices that directly or indirectly impact trails development and, if necessary advocate for changes to facilitate improved coordination	Number of Legislative, policy, or procedural changes identified and addressed	1-2 years
Advocate for inclusion of trails in land use and transportation planning efforts and encourage co-location of trails within existing and future utility easement, rail, roadway, and levee corridors as appropriate	New trails opportunities identified in adopted plans	Ongoing

Goal 2: Trails Network Development

Develop safe, equitable, accessible networks of motorized and non-motorized trails that connect to one another and/or to, through, and among neighboring communities.

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Prioritize the expansion of the statewide trails network		
Continue to fund a diverse and balanced range of trail infrastructure projects that includes new facilities, phased expansions, and rehabilitation efforts	Number and mileage of trails, by type	Ongoing
In partnership with local advocates and agencies, work toward the development of a visionary system map of statewide motorized and, non-motorized trails, including paddle trails	Future trails map	1-2 years
In recognition of the unique needs and characteristics (e.g., tourism potential, environmental context and sensitivities) of paddle trails, identify best practice criteria for developing paddle trails and review LRTP application to ensure that strong proposals for water-based trails are encouraged	Develop and disseminate best practices for water-based trails	1-2 years
Expand the number of areas available for legal OHV, bicycle, and equestrian use through continued outreach to and communication with land owners and support of legislative efforts to increase funding and/or address other barriers to development	Number and mileage of trails, by type	Ongoing
Protect access to trails and leverage land conservancy resources by supporting (through educational materials, technical assistance, and stakeholder coordination) local efforts to acquire land for public access, in accordance with Louisiana's Uniform Code	Acreage of open space/ROW acquired or preserved by partner entities	Ongoing

Goal 2: Trails Network Development

Develop safe, equitable, accessible networks of motorized and non-motorized trails that connect to one another and/or to, through, and among neighboring communities.

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 2: Prioritize Increasing Trails Network Connectivity		
Prioritize trails development that supports active lifestyles by connecting people to employment, schools, and other destinations	Number and mileage of trails that connect to on-street active transportation facilities and/or destinations, by type	Ongoing
Prioritize trails development that connects parks and open spaces/natural areas to residential areas and to one another	Number and mileage of trails that connect to parks and open spaces/natural areas	Ongoing
Provide information to project sponsors about trails planning to encourage local plan development and regional coordination	Number of trails plans (or related, including pedestrian and/or bicycle plans)	Ongoing
Establish criteria to help identify priority trails network corridors that cross jurisdictional boundaries and/or form key regional trails	Future trails map	1-2 years
Identify key network gaps and chokepoints where strategic investments will yield significant network effects and utilize the trails grant process to prioritize and address these gaps	List of priority gaps/connection opportunities	1-2 years

Goal 2: Trails Network Development

Develop safe, equitable, accessible networks of motorized and non-motorized trails that connect to one another and/or to, through, and among neighboring communities.

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Prioritize the Expansion of access to trails for users of all ages and abilities		
Promote the expansion of the number of access points for existing trails (e.g. trailheads, boat launches)	Number of trailheads/boat launches	Ongoing
Identify (in terms of geography and demographic characteristics) populations who lack convenient access to a variety of trail types and prioritize building new trails in locations that serve these communities	Number of population within 5 miles of a trails facility (Current SCORP identifies current benchmark of 79%)	3-5 years
Prioritize accessibility of trails for persons with disabilities, children, and older adults	Guidance for accessible trails; % of trails that are ADA accessible	3-5 years
Promote trails that are safe and inclusive for all current and potential future users	User survey	3-5 years
Evaluate opportunities to expand trails access for emerging or growing user groups (e.g. stand-up paddling, BMX, urban cycling)	Research memo documenting needs	1-2 years

Goal 2: Trails Network Development

Develop safe, equitable, accessible networks of motorized and non-motorized trails that connect to one another and/or to, through, and among neighboring communities.

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 4: Enhance Trails User Experience		
Support local efforts to enhance trails experience with trailhead and trailside amenities/support facilities where lacking	Inventory of enhancements to signage, potable water, restrooms, parking, etc.	Ongoing
Support the development of local inventories of maintenance needs and provide guidance to address critical deficiencies by seeking out grants, partnerships, and volunteers	Inventory of maintenance needs	1-2 years
In partnership with involved state and local agencies (e.g. LDOTD), support communication of design guidelines for standardized signs and symbols for use on Louisiana trails	Compile FHWA, DOTD, and AASHTO guidance pertaining trails and disseminate	1-2 years
Encourage interpretive signage to denote natural, historical, and cultural features of trails	Number of enhancements installed	Ongoing
Provide guidance on improving litter management through facility improvement (i.e. trash cans) and management (e.g. clean up day events)	Number of enhancements installed; participation in events	Ongoing

Goal 3: Trails Management and Operations

Continue to advocate for high-quality trails systems that balance and meet the needs of all trails users

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Improve trails safety		
Evaluate issues pertaining to crime and personal safety on trails and trails support facilities (e.g. parking lots) identify countermeasures to increase perceived and actual security for users	Number of incidents; user survey	1-2 years
Support programs intended to promote safe trails use (e.g. OHV safety training and resources, water safety)	Number of incidents; new resources developed	Ongoing
Support the prompt repair and rehabilitation of damaged trails	Number of rehabilitation projects	Ongoing
Continue to support safe, practical connections through and between communities within multi-modal transportation systems, following a context-sensitive "Complete Streets" approach	Number and mileage of "complete streets" on-street projects or intersection improvements	Ongoing
Support implementation of safety features on new and existing trails (e.g. warning signage, crossing signals, emergency response infrastructure, lighting)	Number of enhancements installed	Ongoing

Goal 3: Trails Management and Operations

Continue to advocate for high-quality trails systems that balance and meet the needs of all trails users

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 2: Encourage the expansion of multi-use trails and dedicated-purpose that balance the needs of various user groups and modes		
Work to identify and resolve conflicts between land/property owners and trails users & advocates	Documentation of issues addressed	Ongoing
Disseminate information about best practices for building and managing trails of different types and in varying contexts to highlight user needs for trail experiences in urban, rural, and natural areas	Publication of facility specifications and standards	1-2 years
Promote multiple-use management of motorized trails to maintain safety, protect natural resources, and meet needs of all trails users, including existing or potential non-motorized users (e.g., upgrading trails to safely serve UTV users; facilitating safe hiking on OHV trails)	New resources developed and disseminated	1-2 years
Anticipate the needs of emerging user groups and new forms of recreation or transportation (e.g. e-bikes, scooters) that will attract new users and present new challengers for managers	Research memo documenting needs	1-2 years
Prioritize funding of projects that serve multiple user groups	Number of multi-use projects	Ongoing
Prioritize funding of projects that proactively address safety	Amount allocated to safety enhancements	Ongoing

Goal 3: Trails Management and Operations

Continue to advocate for high-quality trails systems that balance and meet the needs of all trails users

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Work collaboratively to address trail-related challenges, problems, and needs		
In partnership with LRTP Advisory Committee, convene motorized trail managers and motorsport user group leaders to focus on OHV-trails issues and advance dialogue and solutions for user conflicts on motorized trails	Document detailing meeting outcomes and next steps	1-2 years
In partnership with LRTP Advisory Committee, review existing Louisiana code and evaluate whether legislative action (local and/or statewide) or policy clarification is needed to regulate trail use	Memo outlining any legislative or policy needs	1-2 years
In partnership with LRTP Advisory Committee and/or trail advocacy groups, develop and distribute educational materials about appropriate trail use, environmental stewardship, and trail etiquette	New resources developed and disseminated	1-2 years
In partnership with LRTP Advisory Committee, investigate causes for trail interruptions and closures and potential threats to existing trails, and identify potential remedial or preventive actions to preserve access and safety	Memo documenting identified issues	1-2 years
Work with recreation managers (e.g. WMA rangers and NWR rangers) to improve data and information about trails on state and federal lands, priorities for maintenance or construction, etc.	New inputs for trails database	Ongoing
Conduct periodic surveys and other data collection efforts to maintain up-to-date information about trail user trends and needs and integrate with SCORP public participation efforts	Updated SCORP	1-2 years

Goal 4: Trails Sustainability & Environmental Impacts

Emphasize sustainable trails that are designed and constructed with sustainability as the guiding principle, and serve as assets in efforts to protect sensitive species and habitat, and improve overall regional resilience

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Build durable, sustainable, and context-sensitive trails that support increased community resilience		
Communicate expectations for grant funded projects for sustainability and environmental protection	Updated LRTP applicant guide (Last updated 2018)	Ongoing
Promote the use of environmentally sustainable materials and construction methods	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	Ongoing
Emphasize responsible stewardship during all phases of trails development and use and prioritize trails development that is environmentally sustainable	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	Ongoing
Coordinate with partners and stakeholders to plan and construct trails so as to minimize repair and maintenance costs from reasonably anticipated events such as flooding	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	Ongoing
Identify opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure elements (e.g. permeable pavement, bioswales, etc.) into trail design and recognize these in project selection	Number of green infrastructure elements completed	Ongoing
Identify opportunities to integrate trails projects into efforts to mitigate impacts of coastal erosion, flooding, and other climate issues	Number of coordinated multi-sector projects	Ongoing
Promote funding opportunities for conservation projects that may be used in coordination with trails projects	Number of coordinated multi-sector projects	Ongoing

Goal 4: Trails Sustainability & Environmental Impacts

Emphasize sustainable trails that are designed and constructed with sustainability as the guiding principle, and serve as assets in efforts to protect sensitive species and habitat, and improve overall regional resilience

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 2: Support wildlife and habitat protection		
Evaluate processes for assessing wildlife impacts and mitigation needs to identify whether current biological and environmental reviews are effectively protecting habitats, for both federal and non-federal lands	Memo outlining policy/regulatory needs	1-2 years
Prioritize projects that directly support the preservation of natural lands and open spaces	Updated LRTP applicant guide	Ongoing
Identify and promote opportunities (e.g. best practices) to coordinate habitat conservation (e.g. through land acquisition) and trails development	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	Ongoing
Promote the conservation or restoration of native plants along trails corridors, and the removal of invasive species	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	Ongoing

Goal 4: Trails Sustainability & Environmental Impacts

Emphasize sustainable trails that are designed and constructed with sustainability as the guiding principle, and serve as assets in efforts to protect sensitive species and habitat, and improve overall regional resilience

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Promote trails as environmental education tools		
Identify educational priorities pertaining to environmental stewardship on and around Louisiana trails (including water resource issues) and develop and distribute relevant educational materials and media	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	Ongoing
Identify needs specific to groups interested in conservation (e.g. hunting, fishing, birdwatching, etc.) and harness their support in advocating for trails	Number of partner organizations engaged in trails projects/programming	Ongoing
Highlight and promote local and agency successes in conserving natural and cultural resources through trails projects	Develop and disseminate annual 2-page program report/update	Annual

Goal 5: Trails Promotion and Public Information

Coordinate the dissemination and publication of conveniently accessible information about trails facilities and opportunities to enhance trail experiences, encourage new users to experience the state's landscapes in a variety of ways, and support trails advocacy

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Create centralized repository of accurate, up-to-date trails information		
Update LRTP website with research, reports, and information about trails planning and funding processes and best practices	Updated and expanded website content	1-2 years
Connect trails users to information about trails conditions, including information about closures, etc.	Centralized trails information web page	1-2 years
Provide a platform for user-generated data collection and input/reporting	Centralized trails information web page	1-2 years
Objective 2: Develop a statewide trails inventory and map		
Continue to update and refine LRTP project map, and integrate non-LRTP trails into spatial database	Centralized trail information web page	1-2 years
Publish interactive trails map online and link to relevant information	Centralized trail information web page	1-2 years

Goal 5: Trails Promotion and Public Information

Coordinate the dissemination and publication of conveniently accessible information about trails facilities and opportunities to enhance trail experiences, encourage new users to experience the state's landscapes in a variety of ways, and support trails advocacy

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Promote Louisiana Trails to residents and visitors		
Develop and update lists of current and potential trails stakeholders, including government contacts, tourism agencies, business organizations, foundations, trails user groups, etc.	Updated database	Ongoing
In partnership with Advisory Committee and/or stakeholder groups, develop and promote a brief annual trails update to increase public awareness and for distribution to LA legislature	Brief annual program update	Annual
Develop unified messaging and branding for Louisiana Recreational Trails Program	Louisiana Trails branding suite (logo, messaging, etc.)	1-2 years
Produce brochures and publications local communities can utilize to promote Louisiana trails and share with tourism boards, chambers of commerce, etc.	Media resources developed and disseminated	1-2 years
Reach out to under-served groups and regions to understand barriers to trails use and needs and preferences of current and potential user groups	User survey; new groups and communities engaged	Ongoing

Goal 6: Trails Advocacy and Collaboration

Develop and encourage coordination and collaboration among trails and environmental advocates, educators, non-profits, and others to promote resource protection, education, and trails use opportunities

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Build volunteer capacity to support trails projects and management		
Encourage trails managers to track and publicize the value added to trail networks by volunteers to encourage participation	Documentation of volunteer time and impact	Ongoing
Help promote and coordinate events to promote and celebrate trails (e.g. by sharing with database of contacts, encouraging elected official and media participation in events and volunteer opportunities)	Email/press releases, number of events held	Ongoing
Objective 2: Empower youth to become trails and resource advocates		
Support expansion of programs and communication with Louisiana youth about trails recreation and conservation and identify opportunities for schools and youth-serving organizations to include trails activities into curricula or programming	Number of programs/students engaged	Ongoing
Encourage submission of youth service and conservation corps projects to LRTP by qualified groups	Number of projects funded	Ongoing
Engage youth in marketing efforts around trails, e.g. developing "benefits of trails," blog, and social media content	Number of programs/students engaged	Ongoing

Goal 6: Trails Advocacy and Collaboration

Develop and encourage coordination and collaboration among trails and environmental advocates, educators, non-profits, and others to promote resource protection, education, and trails use opportunities

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Promote awareness of the benefits of trails		
Publicize the successes of the LRTP and promote the benefits of trails recreation for health, local economies, quality of life, and the environment	Brief annual program update	Annual
Promote trails-related training and employment opportunities	Distribution to trails stakeholder database	Ongoing
Promote findings pertaining to economic activity resulting from recreational trails (e.g. property values, tourism, etc) especially for rural communities	Brief annual program update	Annual

Goal 7: Funding

Maintain adequate, stable funding for the planning, development, and management of trails and trails-related facilities to meet present and future demand

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Disseminate funding information and resources for trails stakeholders		
Advocate for stable long-term state and federal funding for acquisition, development, maintenance, and operations of trail facilities	\$ allocated to LRTP, trails-related road projects	Ongoing
Provide guidance for funding land acquisition efforts and public private partnerships	Updated and expanded website content	1-2 years
Objective 2: Encourage local initiatives for trails funding		
Develop and maintain a "menu" of potential non-LRTP grant opportunities and funding sources or mechanisms local communities may seek to protect and grow trails networks and address maintenance backlogs	Updated and expanded website content	1-2 years
Identify current policies and regulations around registration fees (for OHVs) and other forms of user-based revenue (all users) and identify opportunities for creating dedicated revenue streams for infrastructure, enforcement, education, and encouragement	Research memo documenting needs	1-2 years
Investigate options for local and user-funded trails support and discuss and propose ideas to supplement LRTP funds for trails projects	Research memo documenting needs	1-2 years

Goal 7: Funding

Maintain adequate, stable funding for the planning, development, and management of trails and trails-related facilities to meet present and future demand

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Encourage new trails partners to get involved in all phases of project development		
Conduct outreach to foundations, businesses, developers, utility companies, transit agencies, health industries, etc.	Number of external entities engaged with LRTP Advisory Committee and grant projects	Ongoing
Advocate for inclusion of trails in utility right-of-way improvements, road projects, bridge projects, road or rail abandonment processes, levee upgrades, etc.	Number of multi-sector partnership projects	Ongoing

Goal 8: Research and Data

Promote ongoing research that documents trails use, environmental impacts, and trails-based recreational trends, issues, and needs

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 1: Anticipate and inform SCORP process to incorporate trails needs		
Conduct additional research into future trails demand, network gaps, and trails use patterns	User survey; trails database analysis	1-2 years
Recommend additional data collection to be conducted as part of next SCORP update that will support trails development	User survey; trails database analysis	1-2 years
Incorporate all SCORP GIS files for LWCF projects, paddle routes, trails and trailheads for integration into trails inventory and map	Updated spatial database	1-2 years

Goal 8: Research and Data

Promote ongoing research that documents trails use, environmental impacts, and trails-based recreational trends, issues, and needs

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 2: Develop a statewide trails inventory and map		
Continue to develop a regional and statewide inventory of existing, planned, and envisioned trails	Centralized trails information web page	1-2 years
Compile local trails data from municipalities, parishes, and other land managers into one inclusive database and map	Centralized trails information web page	1-2 years
Evaluate trails map to identify where connections can be made to leverage investments	Centralized trails information web page	1-2 years
Publish the inventory for use by professionals as well as citizens and trail users	Centralized trails information web page	1-2 years
Develop a database of state, municipal, and private open space to evaluate potential connections	Updated spatial database	3-5 years

Goal 8: Research and Data

Promote ongoing research that documents trails use, environmental impacts, and trails-based recreational trends, issues, and needs

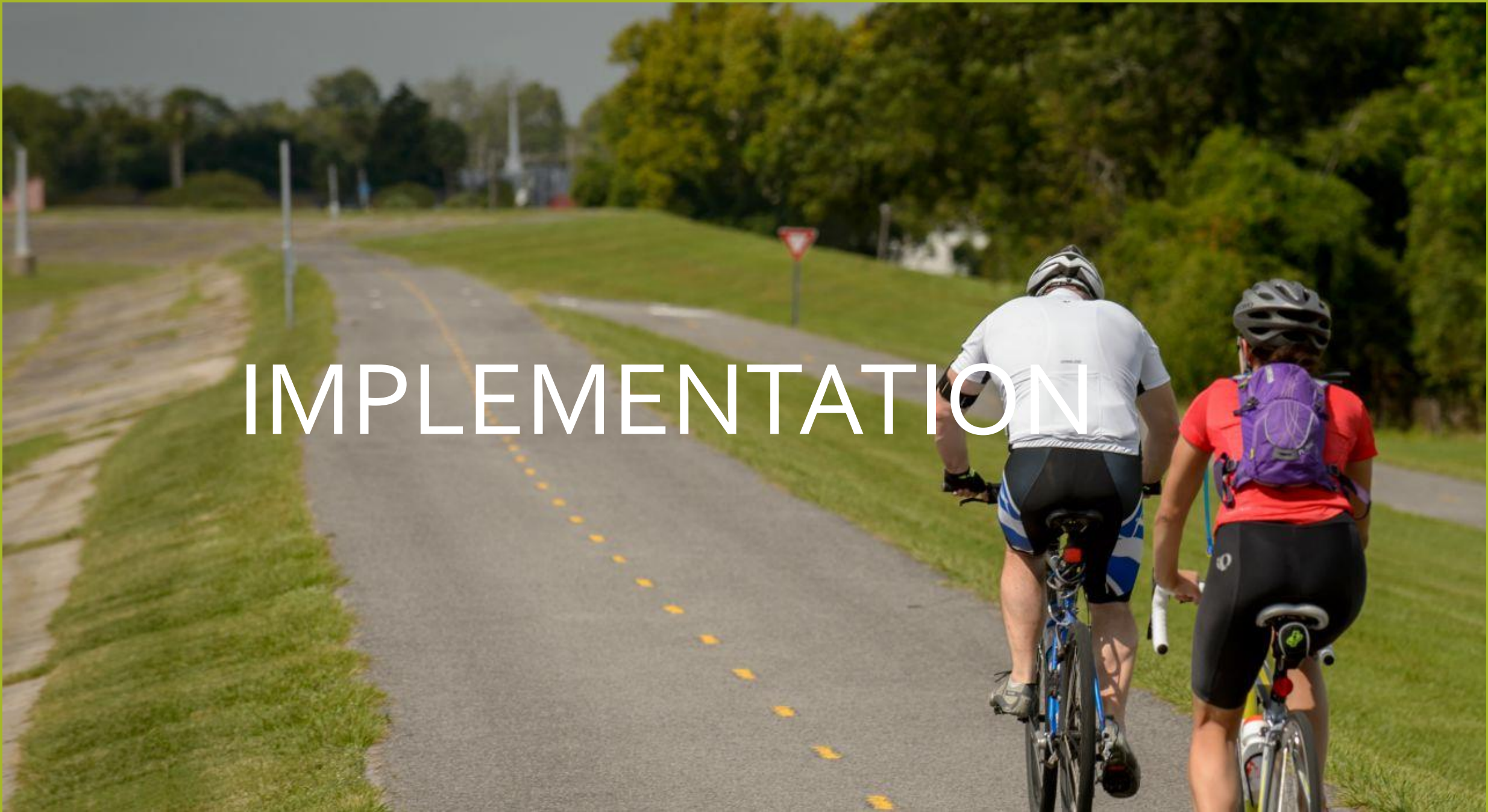
Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 3: Conduct Trails impact research and intervention		
Collect data around trails-related economic and/or health impacts associated with trails use by residents and visitors	Impact Assessment Report	3-5 years
Work with EDOs to identify areas of economic distress and target trails-oriented tourism and revitalization efforts	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	3-5 years
Contract with a university to evaluate safety factors and issues related to crime on trails and evaluate overall impacts	Trail Safety Evaluation	3-5 years
Research how to most effectively expand access to and use of trails for underserved communities (communities of color, low-income, people with disability) etc.	Resources/recommendations developed and disseminated	1-2 years
Monitor and evaluate success of recent trails projects to inform future projects and publicize outcomes	Post-Completion Assessment Updates	Ongoing

Goal 8: Research and Data

Promote ongoing research that documents trails use, environmental impacts, and trails-based recreational trends, issues, and needs

Strategy or Action	Output/Performance Measure	Timeline
Objective 4: Expand user data collection		
Work with trails managers and other entities to develop protocols for recording trails data (counts, visitor logs, etc.) in a standardized format	Trail Use and Users report	1-2 years
Seek and support additional data sources from local agencies, national organizations, universities, etc.	Trail Use and Users report	3-5 years
Investigate opportunities to fund data collection from those who directly benefit from trail development (e.g. developers)	Trail Use and Users report	3-5 years

IMPLEMENTATION



Recommended Near-Term Actions

Year 1

- Convene LRTP Advisory Committee to discuss and revise program plan
- Prepare recommendations for trails-related data/planning needs for consideration in upcoming SCORP update
- Continue efforts to complete and enhance statewide trails database and map
- Define resource needs for plan implementation and identify key partners and task leads
- Begin publishing brief (i.e. 2-page) annual reports summarizing LRTP implementation progress, success stories, etc for distribution to trails stakeholders and the Louisiana legislature
- Develop and initiate enhanced tracking of project implementation and outcomes (i.e. expand trails database to automatically include data points for new and recently completed projects)
- Establish, where possible, initial benchmarks for performance measures outlined

Year 2

- Review LRTP application and develop enhanced LRTP applicant guide
- Develop online central trails information web page
- Convene technical committee to define and develop facility standards/best practice guidance
- Define strategy for statewide trails system vision development (i.e., development of an aspirational state trails map)
- Conduct follow-up outreach and research to grantees and communities to define priority connections, maintenance needs, new uses and users, etc.
- Begin to develop and disseminate outreach, education, and promotional materials around trails

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