

# Rural Public Engagement Strategies

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[LSUAgCenter.com](http://LSUAgCenter.com)

# LSU AgCenter Overview



THE LSU AGCENTER DELIVERS  
RESEARCH-BASED OUTREACH TO  
IMPROVE LIVES AND  
COMMUNITIES.



PROGRAMS: AGRICULTURE &  
NATURAL RESOURCES (ANR), 4-H  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, NUTRITION  
& COMMUNITY HEALTH (NCH)



AGENTS ARE TRUSTED AND DEEPLY  
ROOTED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES



STRONG EMPHASIS ON PUBLIC  
TRUST AND FOLLOW-THROUGH



## Why It Matters for Transportation



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Rural Louisiana faces unique challenges in transportation planning.

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Regional planning organizations often lack state funding for rural areas

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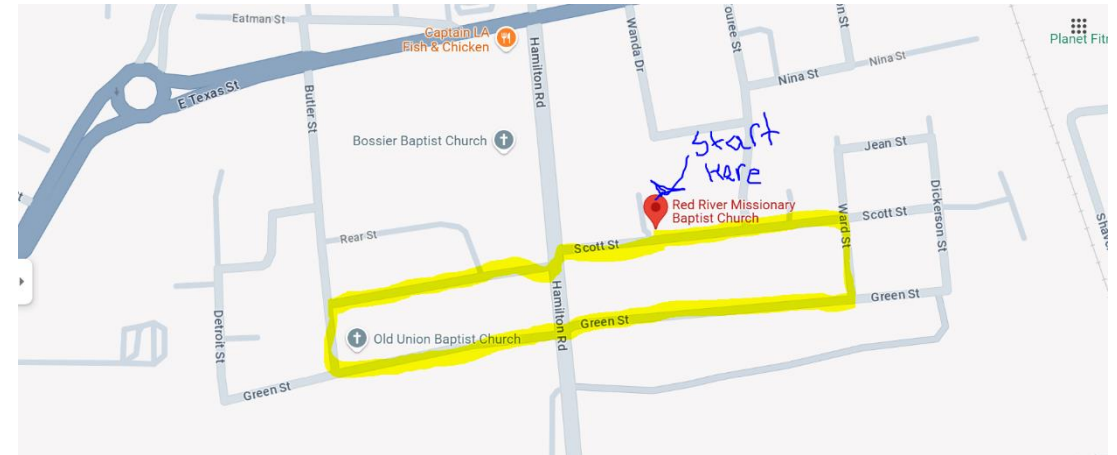
LSU AgCenter bridges the gap through community engagement

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Supports walkability, safety, and inclusive planning

## Walk Audits in Action

- Walk audits are community-led assessments of walkability and safety.
- Involve local government, nonprofits, DOTD, and residents
- Tools: printed maps, clipboards, pens, safety vests, police support
- Low-cost and high-impact community engagement



### WALK AUDIT MAP TOOL





INSERT  
MAP  
HERE

As you walk along the route, note positive and negative features by writing a number at the location on the map. Write a brief description of your observation in the notes section below on the line that corresponds with the number on the map.

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#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

<b>Sidewalks and Bike Lanes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is a sidewalk present? Is it wide enough?</li><li>• Is the sidewalk cracked, broken, or incomplete?</li><li>• Are there trip hazards or accessibility issues?</li><li>• Are there bike lanes?</li><li>• Would children be safe biking?</li><li>• Is it easy and safe to cross the street?</li></ul>	<b>School Zone</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are students walking or biking separated from car/bus drop offs?</li><li>• Are there safe street/driveway crossings when approaching the school entrance?</li><li>• Are there continuous sidewalks/bike paths from approaches to school entrance?</li></ul>
<b>Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does walking feel safe from cars?</li><li>• Does it feel safe from crime and violence?</li><li>• Is traffic too fast?</li><li>• Is it well lit?</li></ul>	<b>Neighborhood</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are buildings well maintained?</li><li>• Are there vacant buildings?</li><li>• Are other people out and about?</li><li>• Are there playgrounds or parks?</li><li>• Are parks safe and maintained?</li></ul>



Adapted from Columbus Public Health's Neighborhood Walk Audit Tool



LSUAgCenter.com

## Youth Engagement Example



High school students participated in walk audits and shared real-life experiences.



Students explained why they walk in unsafe areas



Town council and DOTD used student input to shape plans



Youth voices led to actionable changes in infrastructure



## Public Engagement Strategies

- LSU AgCenter uses diverse strategies to engage the public.
- Events: festivals, Relay for Life, sports games
- Channels: ANR, 4-H, NCH
- Inclusive approach builds trust and accessibility



## Participation Example



Public meetings over virtual meetings



Concerned parents, FD+PD, Public Works/Streets, DOTD



Valued input from a variety of sources



Collected voice to address issues



## Benefits of Partnering with LSU AgCenter

LSU AgCenter offers cost-effective, community-driven solutions.

## Local trust and credibility

## Strong partnerships with DOTD, nonprofits, and planning commissions

## Effective outreach and follow-through





## National Success Stories

- Other states have implemented similar successful initiatives.
- Ohio (CORPO): Mid-Ohio RPC increased rural planning capacity
- Pennsylvania (SAP&DC): Outreach toolkit for rural engagement
- Louisiana: 13 rural municipalities received TAP grants through LSU AgCenter collaboration



## Closing Thoughts

- LSU AgCenter is a valuable partner in rural transportation planning.
- Community-first approach builds sustainable, walkable futures
- Collaboration leads to real change
- Let's continue to share and learn from each other

