

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

How the DOTD saw increased public involvement with Masterworks Community Engagement

CASE STUDY

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (Louisiana DOTD) is a state agency responsible for planning, designing, building, and sustaining a safe and reliable multimodal transportation and infrastructure system that enhances mobility and economic opportunity. Louisiana DOTD operates with an annual budget of about \$2.3 billion, where the Planning Division assumes the crucial role of determining which transportation investments best meet the long-term needs of Louisianans. In line with its modernization efforts, the DOTD has implemented Masterworks Community Engagement, an online platform for gathering public feedback, to boost participation and streamline outreach efforts.

Customer challenges

Louisiana DOTD's extensive yearly planning process involves preparing the Highway Priority Program. This program lists projects for the upcoming fiscal year based on expected legislative funding and includes initiatives that are in different planning stages. Both state and federal rules mandate public feedback on these programs.

Louisiana DOTD primarily gathered feedback through annual public hearings in each of the nine DOTD Highway Districts. However, they faced multiple challenges:

- Not always getting enough feedback from constituents
- Tendency to skew toward the loudest voices in the community
- Each comment from public hearings, emails, or phone calls had to be carefully transcribed, manually sorted, and then analyzed
- Not enough equitable participation from the community
- A lack of awareness of the feedback process among constituents



Oversees maintenance of public transportation, roadways, bridges, canals, select levees, floodplain management, port facilities, commercial vehicles, and aviation

Operates with an annual budget of about **\$2.3 billion**

Employs **5000+ people**

Runs operations through **nine district offices** across the state

Responsible for **major metropolitan areas** including New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Shreveport

Aurigo at the Louisiana DOTD

In 2022, Louisiana DOTD began updating their Statewide Transportation Planning Public Involvement Process procedures in coordination with the FHWA. As part of this initiative, the Planning Department worked with Aurigo to implement Masterworks Community Engagement to streamline public involvement and gather more feedback. Aurigo's community engagement solution offered the Louisiana DOTD a way to increase participation than they could in the past, in addition to receiving comments from a diverse set of people thanks to the tool's ability to easily promote campaigns on social media.

To set up Masterworks Community Engagement for the 2023 Highway Priority Program, Louisiana DOTD imported the program's projects from a spreadsheet, previewed their campaign, and then promoted it on their website and social media channels. Constituents then navigated to the online portal with their smartphone or computer, reviewed the projects geo-located on a map, and entered their feedback.

DOTD staff were able to review public sentiment and understand potential issues quickly using Community Engagement's AI-based reporting and analysis. This allowed for a deeper understanding of opinions on individual projects and the program as a whole.

The DOTD also saved many hours of work sorting and collating the data. Most importantly, the agency saw an increase in the amount of feedback it received after implementing Masterworks Community Engagement.



What we're trying to do is increase the number of comments that we get and provide more opportunities for the public and elected officials to provide comments"

Rodney Mallet,

Press Secretary, State of Louisiana

