



Louisiana Wetland Education Center

The Louisiana Wetland Education Center is a Public Services/Education project located on the west bank of Jefferson Parish in the town of Jean Lafitte. LA SAFE has emphasized the value of educating our coastal population about current and future environmental conditions and the effects of flood risk. The Louisiana Wetlands Education Center will be an educational asset serving students and families in the region, with programming for all ages, including a research outpost and meeting location for agencies and institutions. The Center will promote preservation, conservation and adaptation related to wetland ecosystems, using its location in the Jean Lafitte area as an outdoor classroom. Future phases would include an expanded fishing village to teach visitors about coastal community traditions, a treetop ropes course, water taxis to Grand Isle, kayak and canoe rental and overnight cabins. The Center is complementary to the existing Jean Lafitte Fisheries Market and adjacent to the Auditorium, Nature Trail and Multi-Purpose Facility and Museum. Under this proposal, LA SAFE would provide funding toward the Center's construction.

During the first round of LA SAFE meetings, the project team hosted stakeholders of Jefferson Parish at the Alario Center in Westwego. At this meeting, residents expressed concern over the continued loss of land and wetlands as well as a lack of attractions and recreation in the parish. Meeting participants specifically mentioned challenges and opportunities relating to wetland loss, coastal education, ecotourism and recreation a combined 65 times. Residents also identified the parish's natural resources, traditions and cultures as major strengths. In the second round of meetings, residents again stressed the need for expanded recreational opportunities and placed additional emphasis on the need for more education about the region's environment and coastal issues, especially for children. Residents of Jean Lafitte were particularly keen on harnessing and further developing the natural resources of the area, recommending swamp tours, environmental curriculum and environmentally oriented attractions for visitors, among others. In the third round, meeting attendees identified education as the most important issue for the future of Jefferson Parish during the snap polling activity. Between rounds three and four in Jefferson Parish, the project team continued to work collaboratively with stakeholders of the parish as well as parish leadership to develop a project based on the ideas presented by residents in previous rounds. During this engagement process, Jean Lafitte Mayor, Timothy Kerner, brought forward the Louisiana Wetland Education Center, a project that fits squarely with the recreation and wetland education goals of parish residents. The Louisiana Wetland Education Center enjoys broad support from residents, who ranked it second in the fifth round preference polling.





Gretna Resilience District Kickstart

The Gretna Resilience District Kickstart is an ambitious Resilient Infrastructure and Community Nonstructural Mitigation/ Flood Risk Reduction project. Two major components of the district, Gretna City Park and the 25th Street Canal, are of interest to the LA SAFE team for potential investment. Improvements to the park include greater stormwater retention, enhanced entryways, pathways and signage, additional seating and pavilions, and the installation of a tiered dock that will connect visitors to the water. The canal improvements include green infrastructure features to increase storage capacity and improve conveyance of stormwater in an area with a high concentration of repetitively flooded homes and businesses. In addition, the canal enhancements include the creation of recreational amenities for biking, walking and interactive community spaces.

During the first round of LA SAFE meetings, the project team hosted stakeholders from Jefferson Parish at the Alario Center in Westwego. At this meeting, many attendees pointed out that the quality of drainage and stormwater management infrastructure in the parish needs improvement. Specifically, residents mentioned drainage, flooding and stormwater management as major concerns a combined 51 times in a meeting that was attended by approximately 57 people. Attendees expressed that there is a lack of recreational opportunity in the parish as well as a lack of connection to the natural environment; increases in greenspace and recreational opportunities were mentioned as priorities a combined 36 times. Attendees recognized the need and opportunity for multifunctional green spaces that both serve recreational purposes and drain and store water during storm events. In the second round of meetings, attendees again stressed the critical need for recreational space and improved stormwater detention capabilities. During round two, participants from the west bank directly referenced the area where the Gretna Resilience District Kickstart is proposed as an area where flooding is prevalent and repetitive flood loss properties are many. In meeting rounds three and four in Jefferson Parish, the project team continued to work collaboratively with residents as well as parish leadership to develop a project based on the ideas presented by residents in previous rounds. During rounds three and four, the often-flooded area in Gretna that was first mentioned by residents in round two was again brought up for discussion, this time by a partner at the parish level. The location is where the city has proposed implementing a resilience district modeled after the Gentilly Resilience District across the river in New Orleans. Through ongoing conversations with parish officials, residents and other stakeholders, the LA SAFE team identified the Gretna City Park and 25th Street Canal improvements as opportunities to help kickstart the parish's efforts with projects that closely align with residents' desire to see increased greenspace and stormwater management in a low risk area. The communities' support of this project was affirmed in person and online in the final round of meetings, when residents representing 20 different zip codes in Jefferson Parish collectively chose this project as their number one preference.

