UL-city project intended to make campus more bike-friendly

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New bike lanes have opened at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and students were taking full advantage of them Friday morning.

“The project is a great example of the partnership that exists between the university and the Lafayette community,” said Joey Pons, associate director of public safety and risk manager for UL.

“This is a win-win situation from the university perspective,” he said, adding that bike lanes will contribute to fewer cars on a campus that is shy of adequate parking space.

But if there were fewer cars on campus, some students noticed more traffic at St. Mary Boulevard and Johnston Street, where the bike lane tapers off at the campus’ edge.

Pons said that the university recognizes that these bike lanes, which span

See TRAFFIC, Page 5A.
Traffic
Continued from Page 1

A section of St. Mary Boulevard, have caused some congestion and confusion.

"I think a lot of that stems from (the fact that) this is uniquely new," Pons said.

Friends Jed Segura and Nicholas Kilchrist said they see benefits in having bike lanes but have noticed traffic issues since the lanes opened.

"I don’t really use them," said Segura, a senior mathematics major. "It makes the traffic a little bad."

"It’s not bad, bad, but it does create a little clogging," said Kilchrist, a sophomore finance major.

Sophomore architecture major Thaddeus Perkins said he also noticed traffic issues at the intersection of Johnston Street and St. Mary. He called the changes "decent" in reducing traffic issues.

"It's good for people who ride bikes and skateboards," Perkins said. "For those people who are trying to get off campus, it doesn't really work."

Pons said UL representatives have met with the city to help alleviate these traffic issues.

The bike lanes project is a joint effort involving UL and Lafayette Consolidated Government in which UL provided $70,000 from a self-assessed student fee and LCG designed and installed the lanes.

Most UL students, who Pons said were surveyed and asked the administration to make the campus more bike friendly, look upon these new bike lanes favorably.

"I think it’s a good start," said Chelsey Smith, a senior computer science major.

Pons said his department has launched an educational awareness campaign to give students and the community more information about the lanes.

They have also been using social media and the website bike.louisiana.edu to give safety tips.

"We’re getting a lot of hits on this site, and people are getting the message," Pons said.

Pons reminded student cyclists of safety tips such as wearing helmets and traveling the same direction as traffic. He reminded cyclists and motorists not to cross solid white lines. Students should not "jaywalk," he said.

"It’s important to recognize the inherent danger that exists with our crosswalks," Pons said.

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pg. 1, Sec B
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