

Our Lady of the Lake is planning an 'unprecedented' \$55M ER renovation

By Dillon Lowe



[Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center](#) is planning a sweeping \$55 million renovation of its emergency room, the busiest ER in Louisiana and the Capital Region's only Level I trauma center.

The project will see the ER undergo "a complete gut and a complete redo," according to Chuck Spicer, president of OLOL's Baton Rouge and Northshore markets. The goal is to boost capacity and transform what is currently a difficult-to-navigate labyrinth of hallways into a space that's more cohesive, functional and efficient.

Spicer calls OLOL's plan "unprecedented." That's because the ER will be rebuilt over multiple phases while still in operation, all without any disruption to care.

"I've built new hospitals and new ERs that were greenfield projects, but none had to be built while we were working in them," Spicer tells *Daily Report*. "That's really unique."

LOL has tapped global design firm [Perkins&Will](#) to lead the redesign. Construction is expected to commence this fall and wrap up in early 2028. A contractor has not yet been selected.

When all is said and done, the ER will be able to accommodate more than 100,000 visits per year, up from about 80,000 today. New patient rooms will be added for both high-acuity patients—those requiring specialized treatment and intensive monitoring—and patients with less severe conditions.

Then there's the functionality piece.

On an average day, the ER sees 230 patients and receives 90 ambulances, or about 40% of all ambulance traffic in the Capital Region. Patients check in at a rate of one every three and a half minutes during peak hours.

But the current layout—a maze of expansions built out over decades, some of which are no longer in use—can make managing that volume a daunting task.

"We have a lot of space that's been added on over time, and it's not functional space," says Dr. Mark Laperouse, the ER's medical director. Laperouse is working closely with Perkins&Will on the redesign.

The new layout will, as Laperouse puts it, "make functional sense." Patients will get where they need to go quicker than before, and parking and patient intake procedures will be reworked so patients arriving in ambulances and patients arriving in private vehicles no longer bottleneck in the same intake area.

Plans also call for adding natural light in the form of windows and skylights—something Laperouse says will aid employee mental well-being—as well as adding design elements that foster a sense of calm and reflect Louisiana's culture. LOL partnered with LSU's School of Interior Design on the latter.

According to Laperouse, the renovation is especially significant when one considers the ER's statewide scope.

"This is the busiest ER in the state, and it's the catchment area for all of Louisiana except for New Orleans and Shreveport," Laperouse says. "Not only do we take care of the sickest of Baton Rouge, but we also take care of the sickest of everyone else's ERs. We have to be running very smoothly, or else the rest of the state is at risk."

Spicer says the renovation is one of several capital projects that OLOL has in the works, though those other projects will be announced at a later date.

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