

Regional Planning Commission

Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes

May 2012



\$90 million Paths-to-Progress Transportation Improvement Program Announced

On April 2nd, 2012 the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), along with the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and City and Parish officials from Orleans and Jefferson parishes announced a new \$90 million transportation improvement program: Paths to Progress. This program will repair, restore and enhance more than 60 roadways throughout Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

Continuing the progress made through prior federal investment in the greater New Orleans region, Paths to Progress will rely on the coordinated efforts of DOTD, FHWA, RPC, the City of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish and the City of Kenner, for its success.

At a press conference announcing the program, DOTD Secretary Sherri LeBas was joined by federal and local transportation partners to celebrate the program's kickoff. Speakers included RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks, City of New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Jefferson Parish President John Young, City of Kenner Mayor Mike Yenni, Councilmember District C, Kristin Gisleson Palmer, and FHWA Project Delivery Team Leader Carl Highsmith.

The first roadway segments scheduled for construction include Mayo Road, Morrison Road, Hayne Boulevard, Alvar Street, Forstall Street, and Tupelo Street. DOTD accepted bids on these segments in mid-April and will hold community meetings to engage residents and businesses prior to construction.

Many of the roadways included were directly damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, while others were used as major haul routes for post-storm recovery operations. All of the roadways included in Paths to Progress will benefit residents and business owners in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. These roadways will also be beneficial for the many exciting events which bring tourists to the region, including Super Bowl XLVII at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

In This Issue

- 3 Community Partners
- 4 Smart Growth Series
- 5 LA-21 Widening
- 8 Port of New Orleans TIGER III Award
- 9 New Orleans Rail Gateway
- 10 Updated 2010 Urbanized Area
- 11 Bike Easy Workshop

"We are excited to further the progress that has already been made in Orleans and Jefferson parishes through the Paths to Progress Program.

Not only will the upcoming repairs create smoother and safer roadways for motorists, but a better quality of life for our citizens."

Sherri LeBas, DOTD Secretary

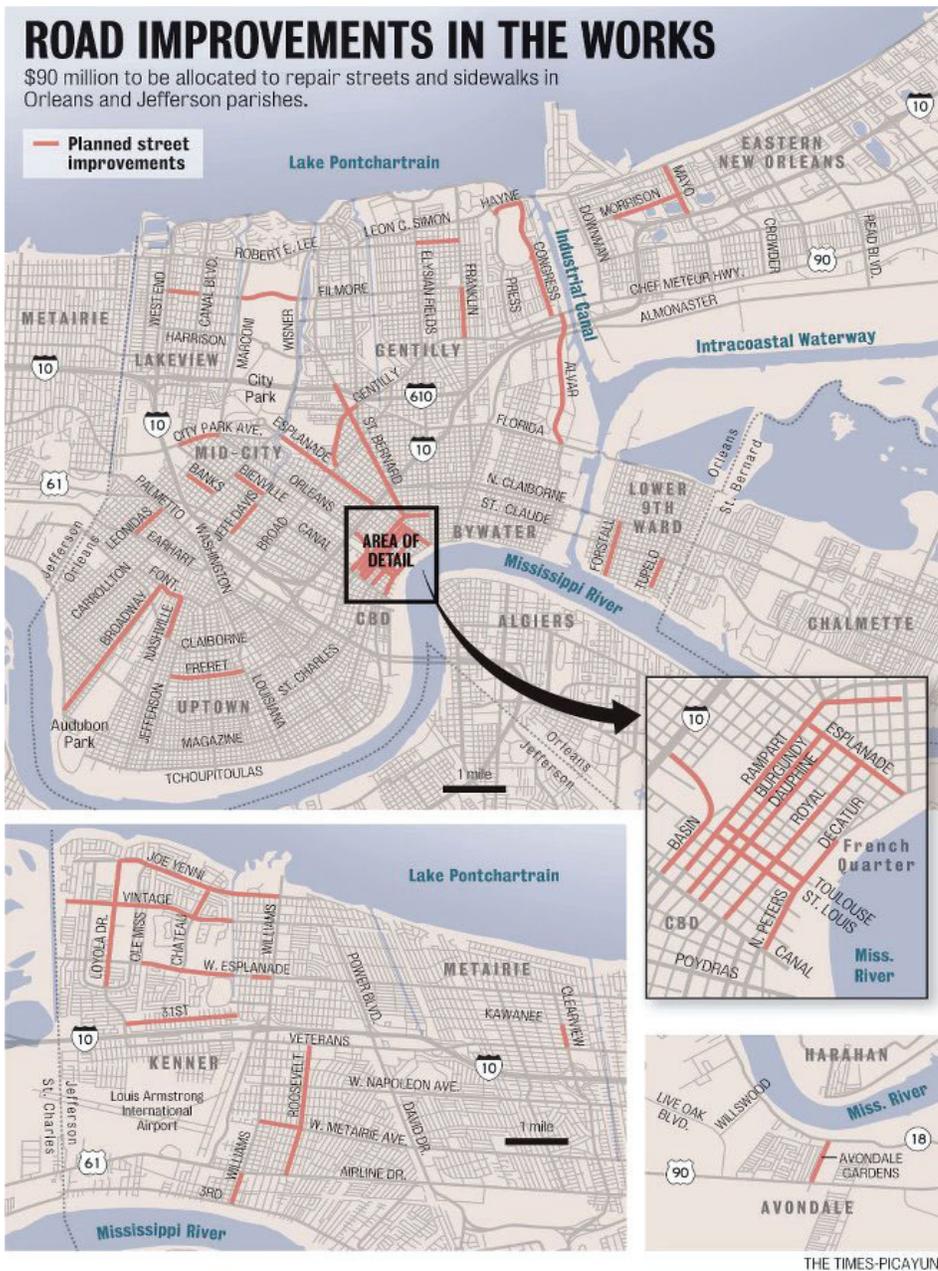


- continued from page 1

Repairs will include resurfacing, pavement patching, repairing curbs and installing ADA-compliant accessible ramps. FHWA Project Delivery Team Leader Carl Highsmith commended on the partnership's exemplary synergy and cooperation, "We are pleased to see the continuation of programs with the common goal of providing recovery to the New Orleans area. Paths to Progress is on a strong track to success, with much of that due to the cooperation and

partnership between local, state and federal agencies." Paths to Progress is a transportation improvement program to rehabilitate, restore and enhance more than 60 roadway segments in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. With a combined investment of over \$90 million, Paths to Progress is truly a collaborative effort between federal, state, regional, and local organizations.

"These improvements are a critical component in the continued development of Greater New Orleans into one of America's great cities" Walter Brooks, RPC Executive Director



For more information about Paths to Progress, please email Paths2Progress@gmail.com, call the information line at 1-800-574-7193, or follow the program online via Twitter at @Paths2Progress and Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/Paths2Progress>.

Community Partners Initiative Supports Public Safety

Public Safety is the buzz word when it comes to the Regional Planning Commission's (RPC) Community Partners Initiative. The initiative, a spinoff of the RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership, focuses on how businesses and other entities with electronic billboards can support public safety in southeast Louisiana.

The Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission was the first public-sector partner to take advantage of this initiative, and Eagan Insurance was the first business to lead the charge in the private sector.

According to Debbie Lopreore, Chief of Staff, Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission, the Community Partners play an invaluable role when it comes to alerting motorists of extended closures and-or detours due to construction and bridge repairs on the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway.

Debbie also noted that the Expressway Commission deeply appreciates this support from Eagan Insurance and the other partners – Advanced Building Products (Jefferson Hwy), Favrot-Shane Companies (I-10 Svc Rd), Louisiana Superdome, and Tastee Donuts (Clearview at W Metairie).

Lamar Advertising and CBS Signs have also offered their support of public safety via their electronic billboards.

From the standpoint of Eagan Insurance, Terry Lowe, Manager of Print/Media, notes that the Eagan family and its employees are excited to participate, especially as the first private sector partner, and that its customers believe Eagan plays a key role in public safety via messages on its electronic billboard.

This RPC initiative was originally conceived by Chris Laborde, Senior Transportation and Incident Management Planner at the commission. It is a voluntary community support program, whereby businesses and other entities with electronic billboards can support transportation and emergency management officials in getting important messages to drivers in southeast Louisiana.



Electronic billboard on a Greater New Orleans Expressway



Terry Lowe (L), Eagan Insurance, and Debbie Lopreore, Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission, review strategic location of electronic

The RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership continues to investigate ways to engage the public and private sectors, which add value to public safety, while addressing unique opportunities to reduce government costs.

The Community Partners Initiative addresses the following issues:

1. As an alternative to government spending, this initiative provides a (no cost) Public-Private Partnership, without capital or maintenance costs.
2. Offers a business or other community entity the opportunity to support public safety in the community.
3. Provides an effective means of alerting drivers to avoid impending incidents, thus reducing congestion and improving safety.
4. Provides drivers with advanced warning to decide on alternate route(s), saving time (and ultimately, money).
5. Improves the movement of commerce.
6. Demonstrates community support by the business/community entity (good corporate citizenship).

Smart Growth Speaker Series

This year, the Regional Planning Commission has partnered with the University of New Orleans Transportation Institute, Urban Land Institute of Louisiana, American Planning Association of Louisiana, and the Downtown Development District of New Orleans to host a Smart Growth Speaker Series focused on the issues facing transportation and land use decision-making. This speaker series has a two-pronged approach – the first being an educational presentation to the RPC board, and the second being a public symposium and/or workshop for practitioners.

The series kicked off with Dr. Donald Shoup, Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA, serving as keynote speaker to a crowd of approximately 150 people at the National WWII Museum. Shoup presented highlights from his book, *The High Cost of Free Parking*, which has influenced parking policies in a growing number of cities.



Professor Donald Shoup of UCLA

Best Development Practices was the topic of the Smart Growth Speaker Series second event. Dr. Reid Ewing, Professor of City and Metropolitan Planning at the University of Utah, provided the audience with key points and national examples of best development practices and Stephen Villavaso, FAICP brought these practices into the context of planning in Louisiana.

Next in the series Ellen Dunham-Jones, a professor of architecture and urban design at Georgia Tech and an award-winning architect, will show audiences how design of where we live impacts some of the most pressing issues of our time. Ms. Dunham-Jones is widely regarded as a leader in finding solutions for the aging suburbs, and will be speaking on Tuesday, July 10. For more information on the upcoming Smart Growth Speaker Series, please contact Meredith Soniat (msoniat@norpc.org or 504.483.8522).



“Parking! Can We Do Better for Our Communities and Our Businesses?” Symposium with Professor Don Shoup, March 13 at The National WWII Museum.

St. Tammany TIP Update - LA 21 Widening (Bootlegger to 11th Ave)

The RPC is working with DOTD in assisting with the widening of LA 21 in Covington. Working closely with the environmental sector DOTD and RPC held a public meeting April 4th from 6-8pm at the Covington Convention Center to update stakeholders on the status of the widening project and to inform them of noted changes that occurred between the initial study and the most recent study.

Changes made since the Environmental Assessment:

- Implementing an Access Management policy to improve traffic flow.
- More right-of-way in order to have sufficient slopes from the roadway.
- Higher bridge elevation required than originally anticipated.

Steps taken to minimize impacts:

- Reduced median width to 19 feet (from 24 feet).
- Used raised curbs and subsurface drainage for roadway drainage (a small ditch is still required to remove surface water from adjacent properties).
- Reduced ditch bottom widths and used steeper slopes (on ditches).
- Adjusted horizontal alignments when possible to avoid parking lots.
- Strategically placed bulb outs to avoid existing structures.

What is Access Management?

Access Management is the control of access connections on a roadway. Access connections include driveways, streets, and other means of connecting a roadway.

This project is anticipated to let for construction in FY 2014.

For more information please visit the DOTD website: www.dotd.la.gov



Bootlegger to 11th Ave.

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is a great place to meet and discuss the issues of our stakeholders and the communities we serve. Below are highlights from recent meetings.

Presenters February 14th RPC Meeting



Left to Right: Reuben Teague-Green Coast Enterprises, Beth Galante-Global Green, David Cody-Green Coast Enterprises

ADA Workshop: Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility



Left to Right: Chuong Pham-Jefferson Parish, Matt Zeringue-Jefferson Parish, Eddie Williams-St Tammany Parish, Martha Patterson-St Tammany Parish

March 13th RPC Commission Meeting



Left to Right: Captain Peter Gautier, Alisha Lake, and LCDR Lushan Hannah-United States Coast Guard

ues that face our region. We are continually working to build relationships with local
lighted some of the recent activities and projects at the RPC.

Jan 10 2012 RPC meeting



Left to Right: Jade Rung- MWH Americas Inc., Natalie Robotom- St John the Baptist Parish President, Randy Smith-Royal Engineers and Consultants, Laurence Lambert- ABMB Engineers, Inc.

Technical Advisory Committee



Left to Right: Debbie Lopreore and Carlton Dufrechou - Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission

ST. John the Baptist I-10 Access Meeting



Left to Right: Carl M. Highsmith and Robert V. Mahoney-FHWA LA Division

Port of New Orleans Awarded \$16.78M TIGER III Grant

Collaboration between the Port of New Orleans (PONO), Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), has resulted in a \$16,783,246 TIGER III grant award. Funds from the grant are part of the \$500 million Mississippi River Intermodal Terminal and Yard Improvements project. This portion of the project will rebuild a specialized rail yard at the Louisiana Avenue terminal along the Mississippi River.

TIGER III project components:

- 1) Construction of a new 12-acre freight rail intermodal terminal
- 2) Resurfacings and fortifying a 4-acre yard that is used for ultra-heavy project cargo

The project's objective is to reduce congestion, facilitate the movement of marine and rail cargo, stimulate international commerce, and maintain an essential port asset.

Strategic Importance of the Port of New Orleans

The Port of New Orleans is the only deep water port in the United States with six Class I railroads. This involves 132,000 miles of connecting rail tracks situated within a 14,500 mile inland waterway that serves large portions of North America including 29 states and 6 Canadian provinces. Investment in the Mississippi River Intermodal Terminal and Yard Improvements project will improve PONO's ability to attract and handle increased container volumes. This is particularly important as expansion of the Panama Canal nears completion. Additionally, this project is anticipated to generate more than 400 jobs with over 150 permanent high-quality jobs in the intermodal marine/rail sector.

Project Highlights

- Increases annual traffic flow of the Louisiana Terminal more than four-fold, from 25,000 Twenty-pound Equivalent Units (TEUs) to an estimated 120,360 TEUs
- Reconstructs 4,000 feet of rail track which facilitates safer, more efficient loading and unloading
- Renovates a 4-acre storage yard to handle ultraheavy cargo



The New Orleans Rail Gateway of Jefferson & Orleans Parishes

The New Orleans Rail Gateway (NORG) is one of the five largest railway hubs in the country: stretching from the west bank of the Mississippi River near the boundary between Jefferson and St. Charles parishes, it continues east across the Huey P. Long Bridge, crosses into New Orleans at the 17th Street Canal, and then New Orleans East via the Almonaster Bridge. It connects the Port of New Orleans to the national rail network and serves Amtrak and Class I Railroads, making rail an integral part of the local economy.

Unfortunately, this system is also one of the most congested and inefficiently equipped in the nation. Current infrastructure and controls tend to be aged and obsolete (Almonaster Bridge was built in 1919), and frequently break down, leading to delays in both rail and vehicular traffic, inadequate accommodation for rising freight

demand, and a severely limited ability to evacuate residents and deliver supplies in times of emergency. To correct these issues, the Federal Railroad Administration is planning a project to upgrade these systems, resulting in fewer delays, and improved emergency response and overall environmental quality.

Before beginning a project of this magnitude, however, the National Environmental Policy Act requires a thorough investigation of any social, economic and environmental impacts that may occur as a result. To do this, the Federal Railroad Administration and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, in coordination with the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission and the Association of American Railroads, are currently conducting a three-year study of the 110 square miles of the

NORG; the end result will be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), scheduled to be finalized summer of 2014. This EIS will include the benefits of upgrading the NORG, alternative avenues to reach the same goals of the project, and any potentially negative impacts on the environment and ways to mitigate them.

Part of this EIS process includes public meetings, most recently held in February, in order to communicate the process to and gain input from the community. Future outreach meetings will be held this summer, as well as during the spring of 2013, when a draft of the EIS is scheduled to be distributed.

Further information on the EIS process, community meetings and previous studies can be found at the project website at www.dotd.la.gov



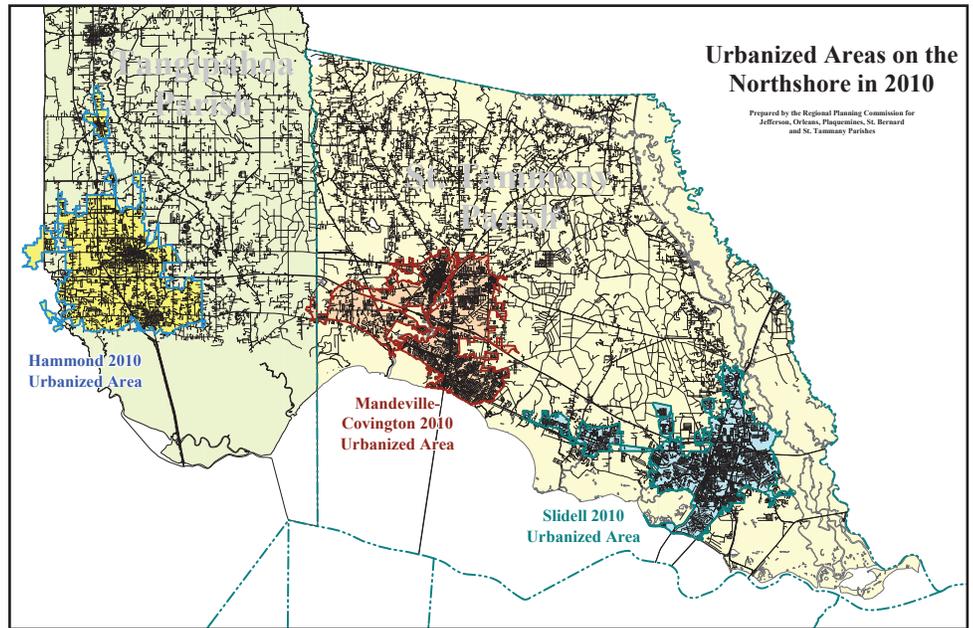
February 2012

Updated 2010 Urbanized Area

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for three Census Bureau designated urbanized areas (UZAs): The Greater New Orleans Transportation Management Area (TMA), on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, and the two urbanized areas of Covington/Mandeville and Slidell, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Urbanized areas by definition consist of a central core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people, generally with an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. The south shore TMA consists of a contiguous urbanized area with a population over 200,000 spreading across Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles and St. John parishes. The south shore TMA is Louisiana's most populous metropolitan area (Census 2010).

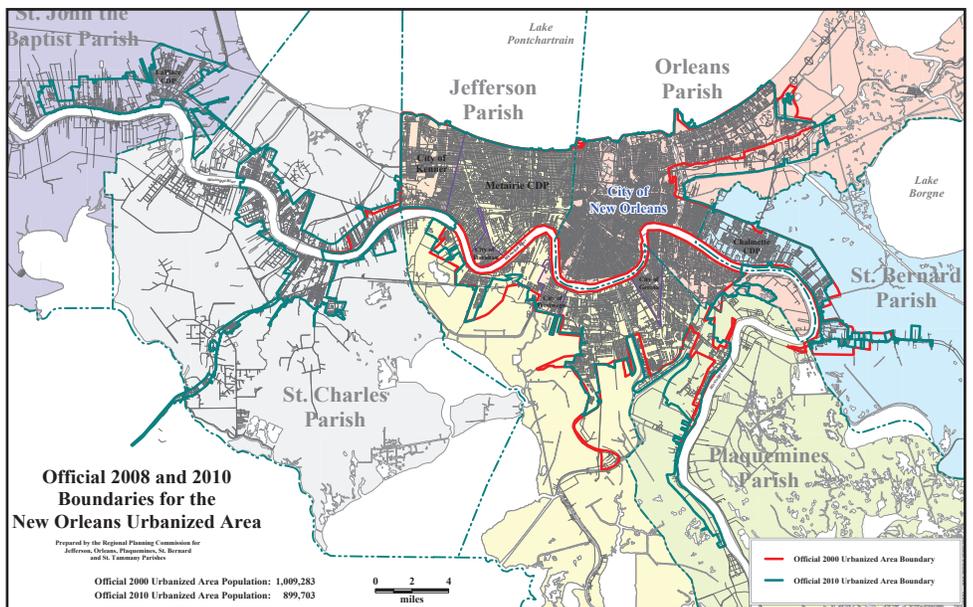
Every ten years, approximately two years after the decennial count (2012) the U.S. Census Bureau reviews and updates urbanized area and urban cluster boundaries. The results from the decennial census can potentially redraw the lines of UZAs. Implications from the redrawn boundaries impact Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning and environment programs which are critical in determining RPC's geographic area of work.

The maps show the 2010 Northshore UZAs and the slight change in the Southshore TMA boundaries from 2000 to 2010.



Implications of updated UZAs include:

- Application of metropolitan planning requirements
- Designation of TMAs
- Application of conformity requirements
- Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding availability (FHWA Census Issues, Jan. 26, 2012)



RPC and Bike Easy Partner to offer Bicycle Workshops



The Regional Planning Commission's Pedestrian & Bicycle Program has embarked on its newest education program: Bicycle Education Workshops. The program is designed to get new and old riders out on their bikes as educated ambassadors with safe, smart riding skills. The workshops utilize a proven national curriculum from the League of American Bicyclists and will be taught by local League Cycling Instructors (LCIs). In preparation for these workshops, RPC trained over two dozen LCIs in the region, who can now instruct the commuter workshop, as well as several other League education programs.

Beginning in January, Bike Easy kicked off a busy spring of workshops, aiming to host 30 in the first six months of 2012. They have hosted a variety of workshops with neighborhood groups in Gentilly, the 9th Ward, and Hollygrove. Upcoming workshops will expand the program to more areas including Arabi, Woodmere, Slidell, and Mandeville in the coming weeks. There has also been strong interest for the workshops amongst employers in the region - reaching the likes of large businesses like Entergy, Tulane Research Center, Louisiana Public Health Institute, and a variety of small business owners.

The success of the workshops has been seen in its numbers, as classes have had up to 30 participants at a time gaining hands on knowledge about bicycle safety, helping to build confident and smart ridership in the region.

For more information about the program and upcoming workshops, visit Bike Easy's bicycle workshop web site: <http://bikeeasy.org/projects/community-bicycle-workshops/>

The RPC

26-member board of local elected officials and citizen members of the greater New Orleans metropolitan area. The RPC provides an open forum where elected officials and community leaders of the five member parishes (Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany) come together, in partnership, to discuss how regionalism can promote the general welfare and prosperity of the entire region.

Officers: John Young, Jr. Chairman
David Peralta 1st Vice Chairman
Mitchell J. Landrieu 2nd Vice Chairman
Billy Nungesser Secretary
Patricia Brister Treasurer

Jefferson Parish	Orleans Parish	Plaquemines Parish	St. Bernard Parish	St. Tammany Parish
John Young, Jr. <i>Parish President</i>	Mitchell Landrieu <i>Mayor, City of New Orleans</i>	Billy Nungesser <i>Parish President</i>	David Peralta <i>Parish President</i>	Patricia Brister <i>Parish President</i>
Elton Lagasse <i>Councilmember-at-Large</i>	Jacquelyn B Clarkson <i>Councilmember-at Large</i>	Keith Hinkley <i>Councilmember</i>	Casey Hunnicutt <i>Councilmember</i>	Steve Stefancik <i>Councilmember</i>
Michael S. Yenni <i>Mayor, City of Westwego</i>	Stacy Head <i>Councilmember-at Large</i>	Byron Marinovich <i>Councilmember</i>	Ray Lauga, Jr. <i>Councilmember</i>	R. Reid Falconer <i>Councilmember</i>
John F. Stumpf, Jr. Lee Giorgio	Ronald Carrere, Jr. Jeffrey Schwartz	Darren Barrois, Sr. Mike Ford	Charles Ponstein David Munn	Richard P. Kelley Maureen Clary

La. Dept. of Transportation and Development: Sherri LeBas, *Secretary*

Transportation Policy Committee:

John Morrow <i>N.O. Public Belt Railroad</i>	Barbara Major <i>Regional Transit Authority</i>	Cathy Gautreaux <i>La. Motor Transport Assoc.</i>	Freddy Drennan <i>Mayor, City of Slidell</i>
<i>Greater N.O. Expwy. Comm.</i>	Iftikhar Ahmad <i>N.O. International Airport</i>	V.J. St. Pierre, Jr. <i>St. Charles Parish President</i>	Donald Villere <i>Mayor, City of Mandeville</i>
Ryan Brown <i>Jeff. Dept. of Transit Adm.</i>	Pat Gallwey <i>Port of New Orleans</i>	Natalie Robottom <i>St. John Parish President</i>	Mike Cooper <i>Mayor, City of Covington</i>

Executive Director: Walter R. Brooks



Regional Planning Commission
10 Veterans Memorial Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70124-1162