

Regional Planning Commission

Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes
September, 2010



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New Orleans Ranked 8th in Nation for Bicycle and Pedestrian Mode Share

New Orleans ranks eighth among the nation's largest cities for the percentage of residents who walk and bike to work. According to American Community Survey data from the Census Bureau, New Orleanians walk to work at more than twice the national average and bike to work at more than three times the national average. This marks a steady increase since 2000 when the city's active transportation mode share ranked 13th in the nation.

A new report released by the Alliance for Biking & Walking, "Bicycling and Walking in the U.S.: The 2010 Benchmarking Report," highlights this finding and others in an overview of pedestrian and bicycle conditions in all fifty states and the fifty largest cities. Local transportation officials have increasingly integrated pedestrian and bicycle facilities into the city's transportation projects in order to provide residents with greater transportation choices.

"We are seizing on the opportunities provided by the state and Regional Planning Commission to enhance our pedestrian and bicycle network," said Robert Mendoza, Director of Public Works. "As we continue to rehabilitate many of our major roadways in the city, we look for opportunities to add pedestrian and bicycle friendly infrastructure."

Over the next year, improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities will take shape around the city in conjunction with the Submerged Roads Program. "Beyond these infrastructure projects, the Regional Planning Commission has been developing a variety of education and enforcement programs to promote bicycle safety," said Dan Jatres, Director of the Regional Planning Commission's Pedestrian and Bicycle Program. "These include design



The new buffered bike lane on Gentilly Avenue provides additional protection for cyclists.

Business Civic Leadership Center Annual Disaster Forum held in New Orleans

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) hosted its annual disaster forum, *Next Steps for Gulf Coast Recovery and National Resiliency*, at the Louisiana Humanities Center in

New Orleans. At this forum the BCLC, which addresses manmade and natural disasters, brought together businesses, nonprofits, and government officials locally and nationally to do three things: advance recovery and resiliency strategies in the Gulf Coast region; catalog local lessons learned to improve the resilience of communities across the nation; and provide participants with simple strategies to help their communities deal with ongoing disaster threats.

RPC Commissioner and St. Bernard Parish President, Craig Taffaro, Jr., participated in the forum as a panelist at the plenary session: *Lessons Learned from Hur-*

ricane Katrina. During his presentation, President Taffaro offered candid comments and observations, including his belief that elected officials should be present, but should not run disaster recovery efforts. Taffaro expressed that disaster management is best left to the appointed professionals.

In addition to its support to the Gulf Coast from Hurricane Katrina, the BCLC has provided support to the California wildfires, earthquakes in Haiti, and the Tsunami in Chile.



Photo by: Kitty Taylor, U.S. Chamber BCLC

Craig Taffaro, Parish President
St. Bernard Parish

RPC Meetings

The Regional Planning Commission meets the second Tuesday of each month at 12:30 pm at its offices, 10 Veterans Boulevard, New Orleans. Agendas for the meetings are placed on RPC's website, www.norpc.org, one week prior to the meeting.

RPC Participates in UASI Strategy Review

The leadership of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) asked the RPC to participate in its five-year strategy review. The UASI region is comprised of representatives from the parishes of Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and Jefferson.

The UASI strategy is designed to better prepare the region's emergency response community to deter, detect, respond to, and recover from any man-made or natural disasters. The workshop provided participants the opportunity to review and revise the strategy to better reflect the current capabilities and threats faced by the region.

The RPC was represented by Chris Laborde, who also participated in prior

workshops helping to identify hazards that pose the greatest risk in the region.

Topics discussed included

- Interoperable Communications
- Urban Search & Rescue
- Community Preparedness and Participation (A Culture of Preparedness)
- Critical Infrastructure Protection
- Public Laboratory Testing
- Medical Surge
- Mass Care (Sheltering, Feeding and Related Services)
- Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution
- Animal Health Emergency Support
- Emergency Public Information and Warning
- Economic & Community Recovery

National Conference on Evacuation Planning Held in New Orleans

The RPC participated in the 2010 National Evacuation Conference, which was held in New Orleans this past February. The conference, which featured an impressive lineup of keynote speakers, panels and discussions, focused on a variety of topics, including: challenges faced by vulnerable populations during

to avoid making assumptions about the general public. The General also recommended utilizing dual-use facilities (ie: schools, auditoriums, community centers, etc) for shelter facilities, which can be easily retrofitted to meet the need of evacuees.

a mix of academics, practitioners and government agency representatives who address significant challenges and develop solutions for emergency management.

The conference was organized by the Stephenson Disaster Management Institute and the Gulf Coast Research Center for Evacuation and Transportation Resiliency, a collaborative effort between the LSU Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the University of New Orleans' Department of Planning and Urban Studies. The Stephenson Disaster Management Institute, an integral part of LSU's E. J. Ourso College of Business, was established to help save the lives of people and animals by continuously improving disaster response management through research and education. The two universities intend to continue working together on emergency evacuation and preparedness initiatives and anticipate convening the conference on a bi-annual basis.



General Russel Honoré

disasters, improvements made in evacuation planning and modeling, national evacuation policy development, and the evacuation of animals. Retired U.S. General Russel Honoré, former commander of Joint Task Force Katrina, gave the keynote address at the conference.

Honoré emphasized the importance of establishing a “culture of preparedness.” He provided concrete examples of how to grow such a culture by instituting actions, such as ensuring that persons evacuating bring their medical records, having the ability to shelter up to 150,000 persons along the Gulf Coast, placing restroom facilities along evacuation routes, and when developing plans

Dual-use facilities are ideal as they offer additional restrooms, showers, cafeteria facilities, and medical assets.

In addition to General Russel Honoré, Eighth Coast Guard District Commander Rear Admiral Mary Landry, and FEMA Region VI Director Tony Russell, and a cadre of experts in the fields of transportation and emergency management addressed conference participants. Attendees came from diverse communities throughout the U.S., Canada, Sweden, and the Caribbean to partake in this three day event, and represented



Chris Laborde, RPC Staff

Responding to Terrorists Attack Highlights

All Hazards Workshop

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) hosted a Senior Officials All Hazards Workshop on December 9, 2009 that focused on local and state officials' response to an attack on key infrastructure in this region, and the impact damage may cause locally, nationally and internationally. Involved in the workshop were 47 participants from various disciplines, including law enforcement, transportation and traffic engineering, hospitals, maritime industries, military, and railroads, joined by parish and state officials in addressing preparedness for natural and man-made disasters. The particular event (scenario) as designed would disrupt multimodal transportation systems and seriously impact major commodity prices around the globe. Particular scenarios presented were done so in a classified manner and all possible solutions and preventative methods were the focal point of the workshop.

The workshop was led by Bob Lowery and Steve Keim from the Texas Engineering Extension Service. Mr. Lowery has conducted over 100 of these workshops in communities throughout the nation. According to Mr. Lowery, this particular workshop was one of the two to three best he has led around the

country, noting that the quality of participants and quality of the discussion were unparalleled.

Workshop topics included: roles and responsibilities and preparedness challenges; domestic preparedness resources and how to leverage them for your community; homeland security strategic planning as it relates to risk and needs assessment and the emergency operations plan (EOP) for your jurisdiction; and executive-level incident response and recovery considerations, including medical/public health, situational appraisal, incident management (ICS), mutual aid agreements, media relations, recovery and restoration processes, federal assistance, and business/economic recovery.

Chris Laborde, Senior Transportation and Incident Management Planner for the RPC, organized the mix of participants from throughout the region, with key input from first responders in the community. The event was one of the first major meetings hosted at the RPC's new location in the Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC) located at 10 Veterans Blvd, New Orleans, Louisiana 70124.

• **Bike and Pedestrians**
• continued from page 1

• workshops for engineers, training for law enforcement officers, public service announcements and starting this spring, bicycle commuter workshops."

• As this network of improvements takes shape, officials hope that the city's active transportation mode share will continue its upward trend and firmly establish New Orleans as a national leader in walking and biking.

• "More people walking and bicycling is a step in the right direction," said Jennifer Ruley, a bicycle and pedestrian engineer with the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI). "For the past five years LPHI has partnered with the city to bring expertise to improve facilities for bicycling and walking through grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Entergy Corporation. While we still have a lot of work to do, it's great to see these efforts finally paying off."

• For more information contact Dan Jatres at RPC at djatres@norpc.org

Officials participating in the workshop included

- Chief Anthony Behrens, New Orleans Fire Dept
- Ron Branch, Exec VP, Mississippi River Maritime Assn
- Chief Nick Congemi, Causeway Police
- Major Ken Curlee, LA State Police
- Lt . Col. William Doran, Civil Support Team, LA National Guard
- Colonel David Dysart, St Bernard Parish CAO
- Cherrie Felder, Chairman, Lower Mississippi River Waterway Safety Advisory Commission
- Honorable Marty Gould, St Tammany Parish Council
- Deborah Keller, Port of New Orleans Development Director; Deputy Chief
- Peter Maggiore, Crescent City Connection Police

About the Alliance



Alliance for Biking & Walking

• The Alliance for Biking & Walking is the North American coalition of over 160 grassroots biking and walking advocacy organizations. The Alliance works to strengthen state and local organizations through research, sharing best practices, training, resources, and grants. For more information or to find a local organization visit www.PeoplePoweredMovement.org.

Globalplex Intermodal Terminal and I-10 in St. John the Baptist Parish Need for Increased Access



Globalplex Intermodal Terminal, St. John the Baptist Parish

Anticipated commercial and industrial growth at the Port of South Louisiana Globalplex Intermodal Terminal in St. John the Baptist Parish spurred the Regional Planning Commission and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) to study alternatives for improving access between the Globalplex Intermodal Terminal and US 61 (Airline Highway). Globalplex plans to expand its warehouse, and as a consequence, projects the potential for an additional 900 daily trips. In addition, the current lack of access to the I-10 causes truck traffic to route through the heart of Laplace and impedes the mobility of emergency vehicles.

A range of potential alternative solutions to address the aforementioned transportation needs were developed and analyzed through the initiation of an Environmental Assessment (EA). An EA is an analysis process that projects utilizing federal funds must undergo to clearly define the purpose and need of a proposed project, determine potential impacts to the environment, and evaluate a range of alternatives to

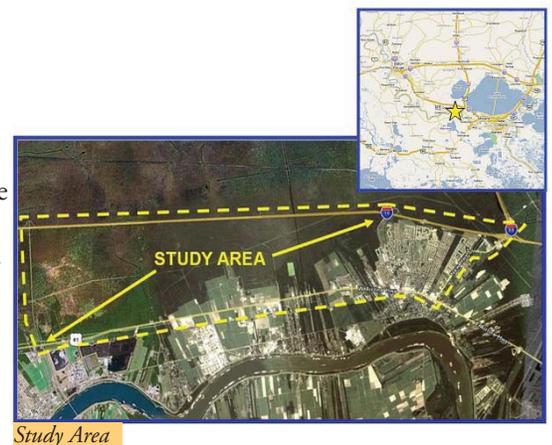
address identified issues. In the EA for the US 61 Globalplex Intermodal Terminal Connector Roadway, two alternatives were proposed and studied in detail. The first alternative proposed the construction of a new roadway between Globalplex Intermodal Terminal and Airline Highway. The second alternative examined the potential for increased capacity by making improvements to the existing roadway, West 10th Street.

The EA process for this project was initiated in 2004. Through this process, a range of issues were raised by resource agencies such as the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to the concerns of the resource agencies, residents and environmental non-profits also expressed apprehension, due to the potential negative impacts that the construction of a new road would pose to surrounding wetlands. Based upon the findings, LaDOTD, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and St. John the Baptist Parish came to an agreement that there are actually distinct needs for the areas south of Airline Highway and north of Airline Highway. Consequently, the corridor study areas were split: the area south of Airline Highway continued to be studied as an EA and the area north of Airline Highway to I-10 entered into the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An EIS (EIS) is

prepared when it is anticipated that a federal action will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. An EIS requires a substantially greater detailed analysis.

In 2009, the EA for US 61 (Airline Highway) to the Port of South Louisiana Globalplex Intermodal Terminal Connector Roadway was completed. The FHWA determined that the project would not have any significant impact on the environment, and, subsequently, issued its Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EIS for the area from Airline Highway to I-10 will further explore and propose methods for enhanced interstate access. N-Y Associates has been chosen as the consultant to facilitate the coordination of activities related to the EIS development and produce the final document. To date, the following meetings regarding the EIS have taken place: initial scoping meeting with the consultant and cooperating and participating agencies; a public scoping meeting; and a meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Additional information about the EIS, including meeting minutes can be found by going to www.norpc.org.



Study Area

2009 Transportation Enhancements Awards Announced

Bicycle lanes, trees, and landscaping are becoming prevalent features included in transportation projects throughout southeast Louisiana. Many of these improvements can be attributed to the Transportation Enhancement Program funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by the Louisiana Department of Transportation (LaDOTD). This program, which was established in 1991 through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, strives to create a more balanced transportation system. Since the program's inception more than \$119.5 million has been invested in the state of Louisiana.

The most recent round of applications culminated in July 2009, and awards totaling \$22.4 million were made throughout the state of Louisiana. Of this amount, approximately \$8.4 million in projects was awarded to Regional Planning Commission member parishes. This was an exceptional year for the Transportation Enhancement



Laplace Gateway Sign Installation in St. John the Baptist Parish

Program, with the State receiving supplemental funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

This bi-annual program has become exceptionally popular, with communities throughout the region striving to plan and design for all users of the transportation system and enhance the appeal of their areas. While applications will not be accepted again until 2011, communities are encouraged to begin thinking about potential projects. Parishes, municipal governments, universities, non-profits, or other local government agencies may sponsor an application, with the support of their Metropolitan

Planning Organizations. It is important to note that the Transportation Enhancement Program is a cost reimbursable, "pay-as-you-go" program. It is also required for the sponsoring entity to contribute matching funds. Additional information about this program can be found on LaDOTD's website: <http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/planning/tep/>

Below is a range of activities related to surface transportation that are eligible for funding through the Transportation Enhancement Program:

1. Provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
2. Provision of pedestrian and bicycle safety and education activities
3. Acquisition of scenic or historic easements and sites
4. Scenic or historic highway programs including tourist and welcome centers
5. Landscaping and scenic beautification
6. Historic Preservation
7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities
8. Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails
9. Control and removal of outdoor advertising
10. Archaeological planning and research
11. Environmental mitigation of highway runoff pollution, reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality, maintain habitat connectivity
12. Establishment of transportation museums



Proposed Fat City Streetscape Enhancements, Jefferson Parish including the addition of trees, wider sidewalks, lighting and removal of signs

Greater New Orleans 2009 Transportation Enhancement Projects

Project	Description	Award
St. Roch/St. Claude Intersection Revitalization, Orleans Parish	Bump outs, lighting, new sidewalks, bike racks and landscaping along the street face and median	\$567,622
St. Bernard Mississippi Levee Bike Path, Phase II	A multi-use path along the levee top spanning from Murphy Oil Refinery to Rodriguez Lane for approximately 1.6 miles	\$681,031
St. John Eastbank Mississippi River Multi-Use Trail, Phase II	Construction of a multi-use path on the east bank Mississippi River levee extending from Redwood Street to the intersection of West 2nd Street and West 5th Street	\$946,200
I-10 Beautification Jefferson Parish	Landscaping along I-10 in Jefferson Parish	\$1,203,000
Metairie Road Enhancement Project Jefferson Parish	Supplemental street planting along a 2.5 mile stretch of Metairie Road between Orpheum St and N Causeway Blvd.	\$249,755
St Charles Eastbank Multi-Use Path, Phase V	Extension of multi-use path located on crown of the Mississippi River Levee, 1.13 miles on eastbank from Apple Street to the East Guide Levee of the Bonnet Carre Spillway.	\$231,700
St Charles Westbank Multi-Use Path, Phase III	Extension multi-use path located on crown of the Mississippi River Levee, 4.3 miles on westbank from Davis Drive in Luling to the Jefferson Parish Line.	\$881,700
Fat City Streetscape Enhancements, Jefferson Parish	Streetscape enhancements creating a pedestrian-friendly environment in this commercial node. Activities include sidewalk widening, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture.	\$1,044,240
US 190 Landscaping (Fairway Dr to Bogue Falaya River), St. Tammany Parish	Landscaping enhancements along US 190 between Fairway Dr and the Bogue Falaya River. This corridor is one of St Tammany Parish's most important travel and commercial corridors.	\$555,500
St John Eastbank Mississippi River Multi-Use Trail, Phase II	Construction of multi-use path on east bank Mississippi River levee from the end of Phase 1, near Redwood Street to near the intersection of West 2nd St and West 5th Street	\$946,200
Boston Street Beautification (Covington) St. Tammany Parish	Installation of sidewalks, trees, planters, trash receptacles and light bollards.	\$862,700
Laplace Gateway Sign Installation St. John the Baptist Parish	Installation of five town boundary signs and accompanying landscaping at major roadway entrances to Laplace in St John the Baptist Parish	\$75,500
Summit Boulevard Streetscape Phase II St. Tammany Parish	Construction of sidewalks, lighting and landscaping of Summit Boulevard, Phase II.	\$519,500
		\$8,764,648

The RPC is a 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: Billy Nungesser Kevin Davis Craig Taffaro John Young Mitchell Landriou
 Chairman 1st Vice Chairman 2nd Vice Chairman Secretary Treasurer

Jefferson Parish	Orleans Parish	Plaquemines Parish	St. Bernard Parish	St. Tammany Parish
Steve Theriot <i>Interim Parish President</i>	Mitchell Landriou <i>Mayor, City of New Orleans</i>	Billy Nungesser <i>Parish President</i>	Craig Taffaro <i>Parish President</i>	Kevin Davis <i>Parish President</i>
John Young <i>Councilmember-at-Large</i>	Arnie Fielkow <i>Councilmember-at Large</i>	Don Beshel <i>Council Chairman</i>	Frank Auderer, Jr. <i>Councilmember at Large</i>	Steve Stefancik <i>Councilmember</i>
Michael S. Yenni <i>Mayor, City of Kenner</i>	Jacquelyn B. Clarkson <i>Councilmember-at Large</i>	Keith Hinkley <i>Councilmember</i>	Ray Lauga, Jr. <i>Councilmember</i>	R. Reid Falconer <i>Councilmember</i>
John F. Stumpf, Jr. Lee Giorgio	Sandra Diggs-Miller E. Eean McNaughton	Bill Bubrig James Hufft	Charles Ponstein David Munn	Richard P. Kelley James Smith

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>
Carlton Dufrechou <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>	

Executive Director: Walter R. Brooks



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