

Regional Planning Commission

for Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard,
St. Tammany and Tangipahoa parishes

November 2013

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Sprucing up Severn

Reimagining the Metairie corridor as a walkable, bikeable, more vibrant thoroughfare

In October, the RPC Board received an update on a nearly-completed feasibility study commissioned by the RPC aimed at turning Severn Avenue into a more attractive, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly corridor.

The study, part of a broader effort to redefine the Fat City section of Metairie as a more vibrant, desirable neighborhood, identified a slate of improvements to transform Severn into a “multi-modal corridor reflective of its role at the center of Metairie’s commercial and business district.”

The consultant team comprising Meyer Engineers, Perez, APC and ITS Regional outlined proposed improvements including widened sidewalks, a “parklet” with street furniture, a dedicated bike lane running between 18th Street and W. Esplanade Avenue, upgraded pedestrian and street lighting, treatments to screen parking structures, new vegetation along the median and to screen power poles and the possible removal of some curb cuts to minimize conflicts between cars and pedestrians and bicyclists.

The work would also include drainage improvements. The current estimated cost of construction for the full slate of projects is just under \$8 million.

Once the study is completed in January, a minimum of 18 months of environmental analysis and design work performed in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and Jefferson Parish would be required before the project became eligible for construction.



Severn Ave. in Metairie as it exists (top) and as it is imagined (above) near Lakeside Shopping Center in a feasibility study commissioned by the RPC. The plan proposes improvements including widened sidewalks, shade trees, bike lanes, parklets, and upgraded pedestrian and street lighting.



Living with water

In September, a group of experts led by New Orleans-based Waggonner & Ball Architects held a workshop at the Regional Transportation Management Center to celebrate the completion of a water-management planning study for the Greater New Orleans region and to begin its implementation.

The Greater New Orleans Water Plan, which covers levee-protected areas on the east banks of Jefferson, Orleans and St. Bernard parishes, is the culmination of two years of work. It aims to reverse decades-old patterns of pumping water out of urbanized areas as quickly as possible - a process that over the years has contributed to the region's worsening subsidence problem - by figuring out ways to store more water and in the process replenish groundwater supplies, mitigating subsidence and flooding and reducing reliance on resource-intensive pumping systems.

The plan relies on three overarching strategies: 1. Delaying stormwater by using bio-retention and infiltration strategies like rain gardens and bio-swales; 2. Storing stormwater in the landscape by retrofitting canals and finding space for new canals and ponds; and 3. Using stormwater to enhance neighborhoods, and draining it only when necessary.

The workshop, held a day before the official release of the water plan, solicited input on steps for implementing proposed projects. Advocates say implementation of the plan will improve the safety and sustainability of the region's environment and economy and make Greater New Orleans a more attractive place to live and work. More information is available at livingwithwater.com.

Workshop participants included public officials from across the region. Those pictured in the photo at top left include Marcia St. Martin (second from left), executive director of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, and Candace Watkins (second from right in foreground), director of community development for St. Bernard Parish.

CEDS input sought

RPC is in the midst of updating its 5-year regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the agency's guiding document for economic development. The CEDS is used by the U.S. Economic Development Administration in evaluating funding requests from the region. RPC invites you to participate in upcoming meetings to be held Nov. 22nd and Dec. 18th. Contact Amber Seely at aseely@norpc.org or 504.483.8527 for information.



Breaking ground on TOD

Numerous public officials including New Orleans Mayor and RPC Vice Chairman Mitch Landrieu (second from left in above photo) and New Orleans City Council President and RPC Board Member Jackie Clarkson (second from right), in September celebrated the start of construction on the Domain Cos.' \$200 million Southmarket District in downtown New Orleans. RPC helped the Downtown Development District apply and receive funding from the Delta Regional Authority to assist with improvements along Girod Street that helped to spur the mixed-use, transit-oriented development along the new Loyola Ave. streetcar line.

RPC and UNO secure grant to encourage university-industry collaboration



Eva Klein, right, pictured here with RPC Interim Economic Development Director Amber Seely, served as a consultant on RPC's economic development project *Closing the Loop on University-Industry Collaboration for Innovation*. She presented findings to the RPC Board in August.

The U.S. Economic Development Association (EDA) has awarded a \$300,000 grant to RPC and the University of New Orleans to fund the launch of the New Orleans Regional Innovation Alliance (NORIA), a consortium of regional universities and economic development organizations aimed at fostering collaboration among those institutions. Such an entity was a key recommendation of a recently-completed RPC economic development study called *Closing the Loop on University-Industry Collaboration*.

In August, consultant Eva Klein presented findings on *Closing the Loop* to the RPC Board, describing the importance of creating a consortium to make permanent relationships formed over the year-long project between the 11 participating universities and nine economic development organizations that span the region.

"There is huge opportunity here for an ever more successful innovation-based economy," Klein said, speaking ahead of the EDA grant announcement.

RPC and UNO applied for funding to support this consortium through a competitive funding process at the EDA. The money will be made available over three years.

Identifying quality jobs

Allison Plyer, executive director of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, presented at RPC's September board meeting on the findings generated by an RPC-commissioned study focused on identifying quality jobs and addressing the growing gap between emerging knowledge-based industries and the skills sets of the regional workforce. The study involved the creation of "basic economic security" - or BEST - tables, a measurement of the earnings required to sustain a basic quality of life, for each parish in the state. These can be found at baseconomicsecurity.org.



Evaluating potential safety, quality of life enhancements for Gause Blvd.

An audit commissioned by RPC has identified a number of potential hazards faced by drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists along Gause Blvd. in Slidell and outlines a series of recommended enhancements to improve safety for all users.

Completed in June by Stan- tec, the audit relied on RPC crash data that were used to identify problem areas along the heavily-trafficked, two-mile stretch of Gause running between Robert Blvd. and Pearl Drive. An analysis of crash type and frequency found that rear-end collisions, right turn-opposite collisions and side-swipe collisions are overrepresented along this segment of the multilane arterial. It also found that certain intersections and segments are especially crash-prone.

The consultant conducted an in-depth survey of field conditions, documenting specific conditions that may be contributing to high crash rates and other safety concerns, along with opportunities for improvement.

The audit identified deficiencies including deteriorating curbs, shoulders and other elements; inadequate roadway lighting; missing signals; an overabundance of driveways; inadequate striping; and discontinuous sidewalks.

It also outlines a number of recommended enhancements that can be made over the short and long term to improve safety and livability measures.

Among the short-term measures suggested are removal of broken curbs and other debris along the corridor that pose hazards; improved signal timing and signage; and removal of vegetation that obscures sight lines.

Although the corridor is presently dominated by motor-vehicle traffic, mid-term and longer-term recommendations point to the importance of provisions that would benefit pedestrians and bicyclists. These include installation of ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps; consolidation of driveways to reduce conflicts; improved crosswalks, sidewalks and pedestrian countdown signals; and provision of dedicated bikeways.

Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements would help to reduce congestion along the corridor while improving public health, the environment and livability.

“Improvements in sidewalks and provision of bike lanes will complement and diversify the modes of transportation,” the report states. Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, it says, will help to reduce congestion along the corridor while improving public health, the environment and quality of life.

Inventorying Kenner intersections

An RPC-commissioned inventory completed in June identifies existing conditions and deficiencies at 20 signalized intersections in Kenner.

The inventory, conducted by Robert J. Lambert, Jr. Professional Consortium Engineering Consultants, includes information related to the type and condition of existing traffic signal equipment, along with data on intersection geometry and striping. It also details recommendations and estimated costs of upgrading the system to increase driver and pedestrian safety and to enhance overall system performance.

The data will be used by Kenner, RPC and LADOTD to identify and evaluate system-preservation and transportation-improvement needs.

The following intersections were evaluated:

1. Chateau Blvd. at Joe Yenni Blvd.
2. Pavilion Mall at Esplanade Ave.
3. East Loyola Dr. at W. Esplanade Ave.
4. Loyola Dr. at W. 30th St.
5. Loyola Dr. at W. 31st St.
6. Loyola Dr. at East and West Loyola
7. Sal Lentini Pkwy. at Joe Yenni Blvd.
8. Loyola Dr. at Vintage Dr.
9. Loyola Dr. at Esplanade Ave.
10. Roosevelt Blvd. at W. Napoleon Ave.
11. Veterans Blvd. at Airport Access Rd.
12. Veterans Blvd. at Bainbridge St.
13. Veterans Blvd. at Loyola Dr.
14. Veterans Blvd. at Walmart
15. W. Esplanade Ave. at Esplanade Mall (East)
16. W. Esplanade Ave. at Esplanade Mall (West)
17. W. Esplanade Ave. at Chateau Blvd.
18. W. Esplanade Ave. at Walmart
19. Roosevelt Blvd. at W. Metairie
20. Roosevelt Blvd. at Veterans Dr.

Weighing Veterans Blvd. transit options

A recently-completed study sponsored by RPC evaluated options for improving transit service along the Veterans Blvd. corridor in Jefferson and Orleans parishes.

The Veterans Boulevard Corridor Transit Mobility Plan Development study, completed in June by Parsons Brinkerhoff, was initiated by RPC to support development of a regional transit system and to encourage the use of transit, particularly on high-traffic corridors like Veterans Blvd.

The study examines the potential for light rail and enhanced bus service and considered the potential for streetcar and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Veterans, running between the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority’s Canal Blvd. Transit Terminal at City Park Ave. and the Lakeside Shopping Center at Veterans and Severn Ave. in Metairie.

The study found that enhanced transit service is feasible along the corridor, though frequency of turning lanes, driveways and inconsistent shoulder widths among other factors could complicate provision of streetcar or BRT service, as could the recent installation of landscaping enhancements along the Veterans median.

It also determined that the upfront costs of implementing streetcar service - more than \$400 million - would be substantially higher than that of BRT, which consultants estimated would cost roughly \$16 million to implement.

The study suggests that an incremental approach could be taken to build toward premium transit service, beginning with the institution of improved bus service that could eventually give rise to full-scale BRT and potentially future streetcar service.

Paths to Progress targets Nashville Avenue



Nashville Avenue in New Orleans is the latest road in the metro region to be reconstructed under the Paths to Progress program. The avenue has been repaired and resurfaced between S. Claiborne Avenue and Fontainebleau Drive. Additionally, curbs are being installed and a bike lane added. Construction began in August and is scheduled for completion this month. Paths to Progress is a collaborative effort of the RPC, Federal Highway Administration, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and New Orleans, Jefferson Parish and Kenner.

Reconsidering roadway classification in St. Tammany

RPC has submitted to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) its recommendations for reclassification of certain St. Tammany Parish roadways.

Functional classification is the process by which public roads are grouped into categories according to how they are expected to function in the roadway network. The classification of a roadway affects its design standards and its eligibility for federal funding.

Functional classification affects roadway design standards and eligibility for federal funding.

The recommended reclassification comes in light of changes in roadway use brought by population shifts and development over the

past decade. The recommendations were informed by an RPC-commissioned study completed in June by Richard C. Lambert Consultants that identified the need for reclassification of some St. Tammany roadways.

St. Tammany is one of the fastest-growing parishes in the state. Between the years 2000 and 2010, the parish’s population grew by more than 22 percent to 233,740. Louisiana as a whole saw just 1.4 percent population growth over that same period.

LADOTD is in the midst of updating the functional classification of roadways across the state in light of 2010 Census data.



RPC releases updated bike map

The RPC, in partnership with the University of New Orleans and Bike Easy, has released a new, 2013 edition of the New Orleans Bike Map and Guide to Safe Cycling.

The fold-out map shows the city's existing bikeway network and popular connector routes and also includes easy-to-understand explanations of Louisiana laws governing bicyclists and motorists.

The updated map reflects bike facilities added since the guide's last printing in 2012, including new bike lanes on Esplanade, Loyola and St. Charles avenues, along with important connector routes identified by frequent bicyclists.

The document is also newly available in Spanish and Vietnamese translations.

Printed copies are available for free across the city, including at local bike shops and at the Regional Transportation Management Center at 10 Veterans Blvd. It is also available online at www.norpc.org and www.bikeeasy.org.



The Carrollton Ave. bike lane

RPC studies ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in Slidell

An RPC-commissioned feasibility study completed in June identified a slate of options for improving pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety in Slidell.

The project, led by Stuart Consulting Group, considered potential bicycle routes to connect the popular Tammany Trace to Heritage Park and Olde Towne Slidell. The initial list of nine options was whittled to five recommended alternatives for further review based on public and advisory committee input.

The study also identified intersection improvements to facilitate pedestrian movement across Front Street between

Heritage Park and Olde Towne. These improvements are the subject of a separate RPC-commissioned study currently underway.

The consultant team suggested that the feasibility of each of the preferred bike routes next be analyzed based on cost and other factors and that an action plan for implementation be developed in conjunction with the City of Slidell and St. Tammany Parish.

At public meetings held in conjunction with this project, city and parish officials expressed interest in pursuing implementation.

State's first bike corrals installed in New Orleans



In September, New Orleans City Council President and RPC Commissioner Jackie Clarkson, left, celebrated the installation of Louisiana's first on-street bicycle parking corral at Latrobe Park in the French Quarter. Four corrals have been installed to-date in the French Quarter and Marigny neighborhoods, with strong interest shown in other parts of the city. The bike corrals provide parking for 12 bicycles in the same space required to park one car and help to keep the sidewalks clear for pedestrians. The new corrals were part of the Young Leadership Council's Where Ya' Rack? program in partnership with the French Quarter Management District. Also present for the ribbon-cutting were New Orleans Public Works Director Col. Mark Jernigan and City Councilmembers Susan Guidry and Kristin Palmer.

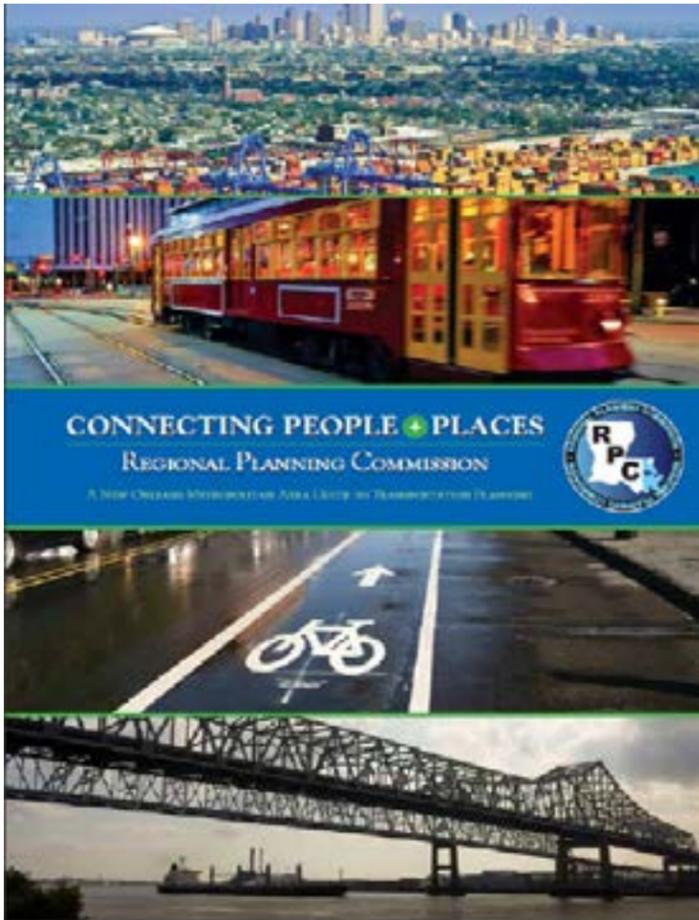
Where Ya' Rack?, working with local sponsors, has installed hundreds of bicycle racks like the one pictured below across the metro region.



Bike rack program expands to St. Bernard



St. Bernard Parish President and RPC Chairman David Peralta, center in photo at left, in September celebrated the installation of new bike racks at Sidney D. Torres Memorial Park in Chalmette. The racks were the first in St. Bernard installed under the Where Ya' Rack? program, a project of the Young Leadership Council that has installed hundreds of racks across the New Orleans metro region. They were sponsored by the St. Bernard Community Foundation and the Law Offices of Sidney D. Torres III. Also among those pictured is Dan Jatres, second from left, RPC's bicycle and pedestrian program coordinator and a member of the YLC board. For information on sponsoring bike racks, visit whereyarrack.org.



CONNECTING PEOPLE + PLACES
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
A New Orleans Metropolitan Area Council for Transportation Planning

RPC releases new outreach guide

RPC recently wrapped up work on a first-of-its-kind guide to the agency and the transportation-planning process.

The booklet, pictured at left, is an easy-to-read, 40-page guide filled with descriptive text, images and graphics. It is geared toward members of the general public, new RPC board members and elected officials. It explains the role of a metropolitan planning organization, provides an overview of the RPC's major program areas, explains the project prioritization and planning process and illuminates how the various component parts of the RPC - staff, board members, the general public, and committees and advisory boards - work together. It also provides specific ways in which the public can stay informed and get involved with RPC activities.

Copies of the guide are available at RPC's offices at the Regional Transportation Management Center at 10 Veterans Blvd. in New Orleans and will be distributed across the region. A digital version is available on RPC's website, www.norpc.org.



Sprucing up Severn

A member of the consultant team presents preliminary proposals for Severn Avenue improvements to the RPC Board in October. See cover story for more on this project.

Public input sought on Tangipahoa TIP + MTP

RPC invites public input on Tangipahoa's draft Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the parish's short-term and long-range transportation planning documents. The TIP outlines projects being advanced to construction over the next four years, while the MTP reflects the region's transportation needs and goals over the next twenty years or more. Public meetings will take place Nov. 12th from 6 to 8 p.m. at Hammond City Council Chambers, 312 E. Charles Street, and Nov. 14th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Ponchatoula City Council Chambers, 125 W. Hickory Street. Draft plans can be found on RPC's website, www.norpc.org, where you can also share your comments online.

Cleaning up trash collection

Two Southeast Louisiana Clean Fuel Partnership stakeholders are cleaning up garbage collection in the New Orleans region.

Progressive Waste in Jefferson Parish and Metro Disposal in New Orleans are both transitioning their trash and recycling fleets to cleaner-burning, and more economical, compressed natural gas (CNG). The switch reduces emissions and noise along neighborhood streets while utilizing a locally-sourced fuel that supports Louisiana's economy. In return for their upfront investment, both companies stand to benefit from lower fuel and maintenance costs and the convenience of onsite fueling.

Louisiana's Alternative Fuel Vehicle and Fueling Infrastructure Tax Credit, along with federal tax incentives, contributed to the economic viability of the projects.

Representatives of both companies said the benefits of operating a CNG fleet is worth the investment. The CNG vehicles are roughly 15 percent more expensive than their diesel counterparts, but can save around \$1.50 per diesel gallon equivalent and make refueling easier. They can also go a long way toward furthering the companies' sustainability goals.



Progressive Waste's new CNG-powered recycling truck, at left, photographed at the Clean Energy Station opening adjacent to the New Orleans International Airport. The company has to-date replaced 10 vehicles with CNG trucks, and plans to replace two more by year's end.

Metro Disposal, right, has replaced 20 of its diesel waste-collection vehicles with CNG vehicles and plans to convert 80 percent of its 70-vehicle fleet within 18 months.



Ten Progressive vehicles have been replaced with CNG trucks already, with an additional two scheduled for replacement this year. Eventually all 85 vehicles in the fleet will be powered by CNG. "This is a business decision that supports our company's commitment to sustainability," said Progressive Waste Solutions Vice Chairman and CEO Joseph Quarin.

Metro Disposal has replaced 20 of its diesel vehicles with CNG vehicles so far with plans to have 80 percent of the company's 70-vehicle fleet running on CNG within 18 months. President Glenn Woods said Metro Disposal's switch to CNG brings "pride and satisfaction ... for being the first independent waste hauler in the state to utilize this clean, domestic fuel."

Walter Brooks honored by good-government group BGR



Longtime RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks was recently named a recipient of the Bureau of Governmental Research's 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award.

The good-government group honored Brooks and other outstanding public sector employees at its annual Excellence in Government Awards luncheon, held Sept. 24 in downtown New Orleans.

Brooks has spent almost four decades with RPC. After working for the City of Boston as a transportation planner in the early 1970s, Brooks returned to his native New Orleans and was hired as a senior planner with the agency after previously serving as an RPC intern. He was eventually named RPC deputy director and became executive director in 2004.

BGR praised Brooks for his ability to successfully balance the interests and priorities of multiple jurisdictions and agencies and his skill at maximizing limited financial resources.

“In government circles, you hear a lot of talk about ‘reaching across parish lines’ and forging cooperation among multiple levels of government,” BGR wrote in explaining its selection of Brooks. “Walter Brooks doesn’t just talk about these things. He does them.”

BGR continued:

Mr. Brooks has guided countless transportation projects in his 36-year career at the RPC, from highway expansions to new streetcar lines. Citizens enjoy the fruits of his knowledge and labor every day, though many know little or nothing of the RPC.

Mr. Brooks’ fingerprints are all over the region. That boulevard that got repaved after Katrina? Mr. Brooks and the RPC worked tirelessly to steer the federal funds to town. That nationally recognized network of bike paths that has developed in recent years? Mr. Brooks helped make it possible. That sleek, new Regional Transportation Management Center at Veterans and West End boulevards? Mr. Brooks pushed hard to make it happen.

Time and again, Mr. Brooks has leveraged state and federal funds to pay for local street projects, saving taxpayers in the region untold millions. Not everyone, perhaps, knows Mr. Brooks’ name. But they know his works.

Brooks was one of two recipients of the group’s Lifetime Achievement Award, along with Kenner Public Works Director Jose Gonzalez.

BGR describes itself as a “private, nonprofit, independent research organization dedicated to informed public policy and the effective use of public resources for improvement of government in the New Orleans metropolitan area.”



ABOVE: RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks, left, accepts a 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award from Bureau of Governmental Research President and CEO Janet Howard at BGR’s annual Excellence in Government Awards luncheon, held Sept. 24 in New Orleans. RIGHT: Brooks (center) poses with Mandeville Mayor and RPC Board Member Donald Villere (left) and Covington Mayor and RPC Board Member Mike Cooper. BELOW: Brooks and LADOTD Statewide Planning Engineer Dan Broussard.



LEFT: Walter Brooks (center) poses with his wife Jane Brooks (right) and New Orleans City Council President and RPC Board Member Jackie Clarkson.



TOP RIGHT: From left, St. Bernard Parish President and RPC Chairman David Peralta, RPC Principal Planner and GIS Coordinator Lynn Dupont, Louisiana DOTD District 02 Engineer Administrator Michael Stack, Walter Brooks, and St. Charles Parish President and RPC Board Member V.J. St. Pierre. ABOVE: Bruce Badon, executive vice president of Burk-Kleinpeter Inc. and Walter Brooks. LEFT: RPC staffers Chris Laborde and Maggie Woodruff (left and second from right), pose with Brooks and David Doss, state director for U.S. Senator David Vitter. BOTTOM: On Oct. 24th, the New Orleans City Council recognized Brooks and other 2013 BGR Excellence in Government award recipients who work in the City of New Orleans. Honorees pictured here are Brooks (left); Jennifer Rene Cecil, director of operations at the city’s One Stop Shop (second from left); Sara Hudson, web content manager for the city (center in green); and Malachi Hull, director of New Orleans’ Taxicab and For Hire Bureau (at right). City councilmembers pictured are James Gray, LaToya Cantrell, Kristin Palmer, Council President Jackie Clarkson, Cynthia Hedge-Morrell and Stacy Head.



ABOVE: Walter Brooks (center) with his wife Jane Brooks (left) and their daughter Courtney.

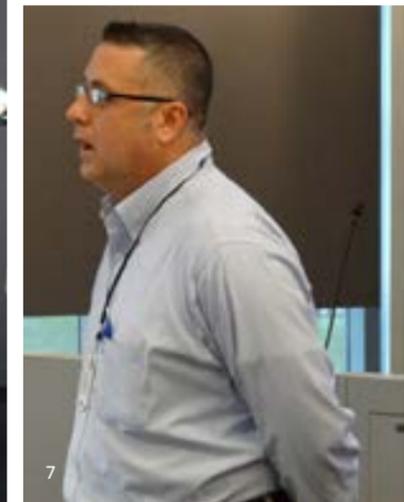
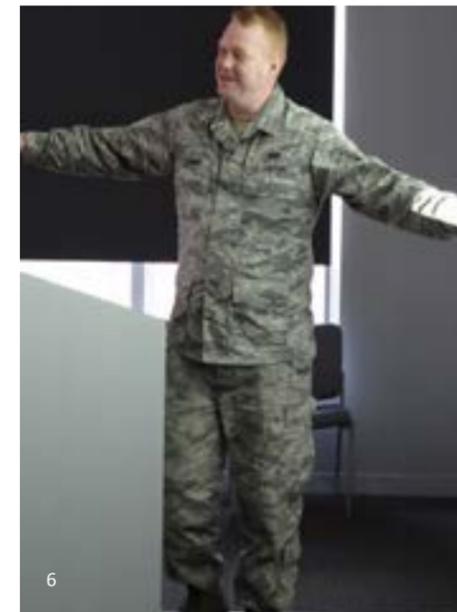


EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Regional Planning Commission's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership brings together a variety of stakeholders to support emergency management in Southeast Louisiana and South Mississippi. For more information, contact Chris Laborde at claborde@norpc.org.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 1). In July, Capt. Peter Gautier, U.S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port, discussed strategies used by the maritime sector to ensure hurricane preparedness and response; 2). Robert Williams, of New Orleans UASI/Homeland Security, and 3). Eric Acosta, of the St. Bernard Port, participate in the discussion on hurricane preparedness; 4). Partnership members gathered for the August meeting; 5). Partnership members listened to Federal Reserve representatives' presentation at July's meeting; 6). Dennis Bailey, fleet safety manager for Walmart, in August spoke about the mega-retailer's strategy for preparing for and responding to disasters.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 1). Trauma surgeon Lance Stuke of the Interim LSU Hospital at September's partnership meeting discussed his work at the state's only level-one trauma center. The facility, which maintains an open operating room 24 hours a day, seven days a week, treats life-threatening injuries, including those resulting from serious vehicular and industrial accidents and gunshot and stab wounds; 2). Louisiana State Police Captain Mark Richards in September discussed Southeast Louisiana's hurricane-evacuation plan; 3). In July, Dean Woitha and 4). Jack Bonin, both representing the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's New Orleans Branch, discussed cash control and availability pre- and post-disaster; 5). Partnership members listen to Capt. Gautier's presentation at July's meeting; 6). Master Sgt. Brian Lamar with the U.S. Air Force Reserve in August presented about the work of the Hurricane Hunters; 7). Bruce Cuber, regional emergency services director for the Southeast Louisiana chapter of the American Red Cross, in August updated partnership members on his organization's shelter policies and procedures for responding to disasters.



Seeing Stennis

ABOVE: The RPC organized and participated in a September tour of Stennis Space Center and its Infinity science center. The NASA rocket testing facility in Hancock County, Mississippi spans 125,000 acres and employs 5,200 workers. Pictured above, from left, are: George Ioup, Ph.D., director of UNO at Stennis; Ron Gardner, LSU Health Sciences Center vice chancellor for administrative, community and security affairs; RPC Board Member Charlie Ponstein; Amber Seely, RPC staff; Gary Cecchine, Ph.D., director of RAND Gulf States Policy Institute; Chris Laborde, RPC staff; Ann Wilson, science program coordinator for the Louisiana Department of Education; Kenneth Sewell, Ph.D., vice president for research and economic development at UNO; Becky Mackie, CFO of the National World War II Museum; Andrew Jacques, business development associate at the New Orleans Business Alliance; RPC Board Member Richard Kelley; Bob Farnsworth, senior vice president at the National World War II Museum; Ivan Miestchovich, Ph.D., director of UNO's Institute for Economic Development & Real Estate Research; and George Hobor, Ph.D., senior research fellow at the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. Photo by Danny Nowlin.



Strengthening oil spill response

LEFT: In August, representatives from Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany parishes marked the completion of a plan developed in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard to improve response to future oil spills with a signing ceremony at the Regional Transportation Management Center in New Orleans. The plan is the result of two years of work by the state oil field coordinator, U.S. Coast Guard representatives and parish presidents from coastal parishes affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010.

The 2010 spill was "our Katrina in terms of oil spills," said Jefferson Parish President John Young. "Obviously, we learned lessons from Katrina. We've also learned lessons from BP."

Officials said that work is underway to prepare similar response plans for Louisiana's western coastal parishes and for the Mississippi River. Pictured here in the foreground are, from left, St. Tammany Parish President Pat Brister, St. Bernard Parish President David Peralta, Plaquemines Parish President Billy Nungesser and Young.



DeCA recognized

ABOVE: In September, Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler, right, presented Randy Chandler, director of Sales for the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), center, with a model fishing boat and plaque in recognition of his agency's work to promote Gulf seafood. Also pictured is Capt. John Hill III, left, commanding officer of the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans. The DeCA program was formed through efforts by the Gulf Coast Alliance (GCA), organized by the RPC to help accelerate the rebuilding of key markets along the Gulf Coast following the Deepwater Horizon Oilspill in 2010. GCA spans Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi.



Rethinking food options

LEFT: Amber Seely, RPC interim director of economic development, third from right, in July participated in a panel discussion on bringing healthy food to New Orleans food deserts. Also on the panel was RPC Board Member and Broad Community Connections Executive Director Jeff Schwartz, third from left. The event, held at the Little Gem Saloon in downtown New Orleans, was sponsored by the Penn, Harvard and Cornell clubs of Louisiana.



Promoting traffic safety

CENTER: New Orleans Saints player Malcolm Jenkins, from left, and former Saints player Mike McKenzie take part in a demonstration on the effects of drunk driving at the Regional Transportation Management Center in September. They were joined by RPC's Megan Leonard, middle, and Chris Laborde, right, among others. The event was part of the New Orleans Regional Traffic Safety Coalition's annual Traffic Safety Summit. Topics included the importance of seat belt usage and the dangers of impaired and distracted driving. LEFT: At the same event, Laborde took part in a perspective trick that left him temporarily shrunken (through the camera lens, at least) as part of an exercise aimed at demonstrating how the brain doesn't always detect reality.

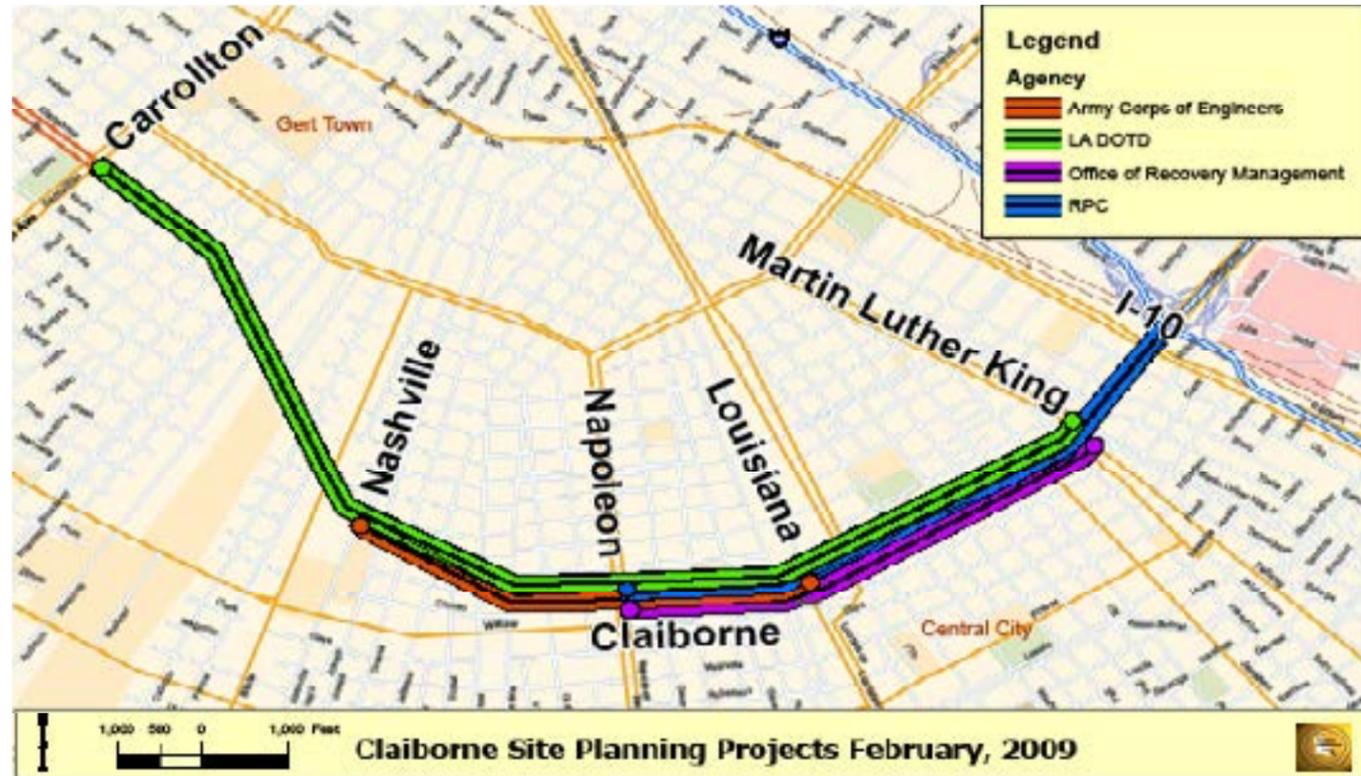
Corridor planning

The South Claiborne Avenue (U.S. 90) corridor in New Orleans received a great deal of attention between 2009 and 2013. Claiborne Avenue is a route of regional significance that connects Jefferson, Orleans and St. Bernard parishes. As illustrated in the map at bottom, several agencies including the RPC had overlapping projects along the corridor over the aforementioned period that included road paving and curb installation, drainage improvements, facilitation of pedestrian access, and the install-

ion of landscaping, lighting and other site amenities, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial pavilion and paths pictured in the photographs below. The RPC played the role of facilitator, bringing the various agencies involved together and sharing information while coordinating design and providing background and context for the avenue during public outreach sessions. Each agency ultimately had oversight and responsibility for its own project elements, but all slightly adjusted their designs in an effort to work within the context of the corridor as a whole.



ABOVE: The Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial pavilion in the Claiborne Ave. neutral ground near Jackson Ave. was among the amenities added as part of a multi-jurisdictional effort aimed at improving the corridor. BELOW: This map describes the jurisdictions of the various agencies involved in planning recent Claiborne Ave. improvement projects. RPC was involved in the section stretching between Napoleon Ave. and I-10.



Honoring Walter Brooks

LEFT: RPC staffers, from left, Megan Leonard, Chris Laborde, Maggie Woodruff, Nik Richard, Karen Parsons, Jeff Roesel, Walter Brooks, Lynn Dupont, Rebecca Otte, Amber Seely, Dan Jatres, Meredith Soniat and Emilie Bahr pose for a photo after a luncheon sponsored by the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) honoring excellence in government. RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks (center) was given BGR's Lifetime Achievement Award.



Celebrating retirements

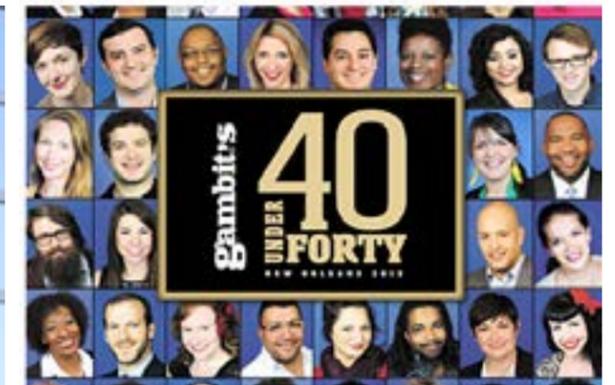
RIGHT: RPC recognized longtime office manager Patricia Gagliano with a plaque and card signed by staff and board members. "She meant a lot to all of us," said RPC Principal Planner Karen Parsons, who presented the plaque to the RPC Board in August, praising Gagliano's decades of dedicated work. Gagliano retired in Dec. 2012 after 38 years with the agency. LEFT: RPC staff joined in celebrating former Louisiana DOTD District 02 Traffic Operations Engineer Steve Strength's retirement in August. Strength, left, pictured here with LADOTD District 02 Engineer Administrator Mike Stack, is now working at the Louisiana Transportation Research Center's Local Technical Assistance Program in Baton Rouge.



RPC staffer named one of "40 Under 40"

RPC Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Coordinator Dan Jatres, pictured at right, was named one of *Gambit's* 2013 "40 Under 40," the publication's annual list of high achievers in New Orleans under 40 years of age. Jatres, 30, was honored for his work to make the metro region more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. Read more in the publication's November 5th issue.

Jatres is the second RPC staffer in as many years to be included on *Gambit's* list. RPC Transportation Planner Nik Richard was one of *Gambit's* "40 Under 40" in 2012.





Bike lane break-in

LEFT: A crowd turned out in June to celebrate and test out the newly-striped bike lane along Esplanade Avenue in New Orleans. RPC staffers Tricia Keffer, Karen Parsons and Emilie Bahr were among those who participated in the roving bike party, which pedaled between the New Orleans Museum of Art and the French Quarter. Photo courtesy Peter Bennett.



Cyclovia

ABOVE AND BELOW: Several RPC staffers took part in New Orleans' first cyclovia in October. For three hours on a Saturday, sections of Esplanade Avenue - the site of a recently-completed Paths to Progress renovation - and Bayou Road were closed to cars and open to use by pedestrians and bicyclists. The event, organized by Bike

Easy and dubbed "Play Streets," was similar to those held in a growing number of U.S. and Latin American cities. It featured food vendors, health screenings, bike repairs, kids' activities, a secondline (ABOVE RIGHT) and more in celebration of the city's expanding pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure and culture. ABOVE LEFT: The Esplanade Ave. bike lane, specially-decorated for October's cyclovia.



Congratulations, Jason!

LEFT AND BELOW: RPC Senior Transportation Planner Jason Sappington and his wife Katie Baudouin welcomed their first child, Katherine Ruth Sappington, in September. Congratulations Jason and Katie!



RPC's newsletter

RPC's newsletter is produced quarterly. Hard copies are available at the Regional Transportation Management Center at 10 Veterans Blvd. in New Orleans. The document is also available electronically through the "public involvement" tab on our website, www.norpc.org. For information, contact Emilie Bahr at ebahr@norpc.org.

Remembering WTC's Schreiber

RIGHT: RPC Principal Planner Karen Parsons, left, and Interim Economic Development Director Amber Seely attended the World Trade Center of New Orleans' Louisiana International Trade Gala in October. U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu was honored with the inaugural Eugene J. Schreiber Award, named after the late director of the World Trade Center (pictured below), in recognition of Landrieu's work to promote economic development and prosperity through international trade and diplomacy.



The RPC

Is a 31-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 six member parishes -- Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany and Tangipahoa -- come together, in partnership, to discuss how regionalism can promote the general welfare and prosperity of the entire region.

Officers:

David Peralta Chairman	Mitchell J. Landrieu 1st Vice Chairman	Billy Nungesser 2nd Vice Chairman	Patricia Brister Secretary	John Young Jr. Treasurer	Gordon Burgess
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Jefferson Parish

John Young Jr.
Parish President

Chris Roberts
Councilmember-at-Large

Vinnie Mosca
Mayor of Harahan

Lee Giorgio
Citizen Member

John F. Stumpf, Jr.
Citizen Member

St. Bernard Parish

David Peralta
Parish President

Casey W. Hunnicutt
Councilmember

Ray Lauga
Councilmember

Charles Ponstein
Citizen Member

David Munn
Citizen Member

Orleans Parish

Mitchell J. Landrieu
Mayor of New Orleans

Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson
Councilmember-at-Large

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Councilmember-at-Large

Jeffrey Schwartz
Citizen Member

Ronald Carrere, Jr.
Citizen Member

St. Tammany Parish

Patricia Brister
Parish President

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Councilmember

R. Reid Falconer
Councilmember

Richard Kelley
Citizen Member

Maureen Clary
Citizen Member

Plaquemines Parish

Billy Nungesser
Parish President

Keith Hinkley
Councilmember

Byron Marinovich
Councilmember

Darren Barrois
Citizen Member

Mike Ford
Citizen Member

Tangipahoa Parish

Gordon Burgess
Parish President

Mayson Foster
Mayor of Hammond

Lionel Wells
Parish Council Chairman

Dr. Bonnie Lewis
Citizen Member

Appointment pending
Citizen Member

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

Transportation Policy Committee (MPO) full RPC membership plus:

Jeff Davis
N.O. Public Belt Railroad

Salvador Longoria
Regional Transit Authority

Cathy Gautreaux
La. Motor Transport Assoc.

Freddy Drennan
Mayor, City of Slidell

Larry Rase
Greater N.O. Expwy. Comm.

Iftikhar Ahmad
N.O. International Airport

V.J. St. Pierre, Jr.
St. Charles Parish President

Donald Villere
Mayor, City of Mandeville

Ryan Brown
Jeff., Dept. of Transit Adm.

Pat Gallwey
Port of New Orleans

Natalie Robottom
St. John Parish President

Mike Cooper
Mayor, City of Covington

Executive Director: Walter R. Brooks



Regional Planning Commission

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New Orleans, Louisiana 70124-1162