St. Tammany and Tangipa

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# Jefferson Parish adopts bicycle master plan

This spring, Jefferson Parish became the first parish in the state to adopt a parishwide bicycle master plan after the Parish Council voted to incorporate he document into the parish's comprehensive plan.

The plan provides a roadmap for future investment and policies that will help to make Jefferson Parish more bicycle friendly - a place where people are encouraged to bicycle for transportation and recreational purposes and where bicyclists are able to get around conveniently and safely.

The plan, commissioned by RPC, was developed with substantial public input gathered through community meetings, workshops and citizen advisory panels, along with a survey, website and social media. The document, which serves as a vision statement for bicycle infrastructure and policy, proposes a total of 460 miles of bikeways, well up from the parish's current total of 42 miles.

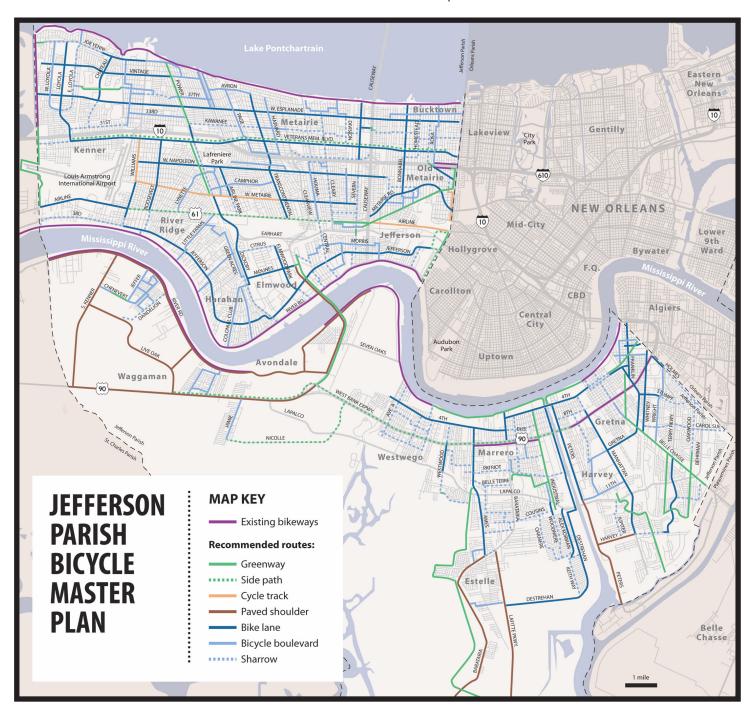
Whereas the Mississippi River and Lake Front trails have for years served as important bicycling amenities in Jefferson Parish, relatively little investment has been made to-date in the parish in the form of on-street bikeways of the sort that benefit transportation cyclists in particular. The parish striped its first on-street bikeway in the fall of 2013.





#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Bicycles are traffic. In Louisiana, bicyclists riding on state roadways are granted all rights and subject to all responsibilities of a motor vehicle operator.



### Bike-related improvements will boost Jefferson Parish safety, environment and quality of life

A dozen additional miles of bikeways are already planned and funded for construction in the parish within the next few years. These include facilities such as the Bucktown connector route, Leo Kerner Parkway, the Power Boulevard Multi-Use Trail Extension and the Gretna downtown bike route.

In voicing their support for the plan, planners, policy makers and parish residents noted that improving the bikeability of the parish will help to attract and retain young professionals, who tend to seek out places that offer walkability, bikeability and transit. Additionally, places with higher rates of bicycling tend to have healthier populations and be more economically and environmentally sound.

The plan - crafted with the help of consultants GCR, Inc., Alta Planning + Design, Villavaso & Associates, Dana Brown & Associates and Jemison & Partners, Inc. - offers no timeline for bicycle improvements to take shape. Rather, it suggests that as roads are reconstructed, these corridors be evaluated for the feasibility of adding bikeways and related improvements.

Jefferson Parish engineering and planning departments vetted the feasibility of all routes and recommendations and will continue to play a vital role in implementing the plan, said RPC Principal Planner Karen Parsons.

Meantime, the very existence of the plan is expected to aid in obtaining federal and state money for construction of these projects. The RPC and Jefferson Parish government will work to identify capital funds to build projects

#### **VISION**

The vision set forth by the public in the Jefferson Parish bike master plan is a community in which:

**Bicycling is a practical, fun and convenient** activity for all ages and abilities

Everyone can safely and comfortably bicycle for recreation and transportation throughout the parish

Levee top multi-use trails are continuous, easy to access and well-marked

A network of north-south and east-west bicycle facilities connect neighborhoods, existing trails, and community destinations

**Bicycling connections bridge barriers** such as the Mississippi River, canals and railroads, enabling cyclists to directly travel to destinations

**Connections to bikeways and destinations** in Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Charles parishes are frequent and convenient

All road users are educated in traffic laws and respect one another's rights and safety

Least Protected Most Protected

#### Arterial/Highway Bikeway Continuum (without curb and gutter)



# RPC solicits transportation concerns, ideas through public outreach effort



RPC this summer conducted a public outreach effort aimed at engaging residents on transportation priorities and challenges. Several community meetings were held across the region, including in New Orleans East, Kenner and on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish. Additionally, a survey was disseminated online and in print, geared toward identifying the public's transportation needs and ideas. To share your thoughts, visit RPC's website, www.norpc.org. For more information about this outreach program, contact Nik Richard at 504-483-8535 or nrichard@norpc.org.













1. Residents of eastern New Orleans look over planning materials at a community meeting held in late May. 2. RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks reviews road projects planned for New Orleans East with community residents. 3. Brooks, standing third from left, and RPC Deputy Director Jeff Roesel, standing at left, listen as community members share their thoughts about the New Orleans East transportation system. 4. RPC Title VI Coordinator and Transportation Planner Nik Richard, center, leads residents of New Orleans East through a planning exercise. 5. RPC planners Lynn Dupont, center, and John King talk before the start of the public outreach meeting in New Orleans East. 6. and 7. A Kenner resident speaks with city planning director Jay Hebert at an RPC-sponsored public meeting in June. 8. Kenner residents share their thoughts about the city's transportation system at a public meeting in June. 9. Brooks, left, takes notes at June's public meeting in Kenner. 10. State Sen. Robert Billiot addresses the crowd gathered at West Jefferson Medical Center in June. 11. Brooks





talks about RPC's current and future work across the region and on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish. 12. Residents and other stakeholders listen to Brooks talk. 13. Richard reviews a survey with West Bank Jefferson Parish residents. 14. Brooks speaks with a West Bank Jefferson Parish stakeholder. 15. Roesel gives an overview of completed and planned West Bank Jefferson Parish transportation projects.













#### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP:

A coalition of stakeholders that supports emergency management in Southeast Louisiana and South Mississippi

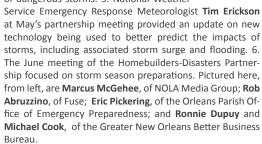
1. Claude Maher (from left), with Louisiana Operation Lifesaver; Ellis Cattan, partnership railroads liaison; Jim Hufft, of Jefferson Parish Public Schools; Will Hatcher, of Ochsner Health System; Ricky Burke, of Atmos Energy; Lee Gary, of SMS-USA; and Richard Metcalf, of the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, listen in at the March partnership meeting as John McCrossen of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad (not shown) talks about the Public Belt's role in emergency coordination with the six Class I railroads that service the region. The Public Belt, a shortline switching railroad, moves over 12 million tons of freight annually, including 500,000 rail cars that move each year over the Huey P. Long Bridge, one of four strategic Mississippi River railroad crossings in the country. At the same partnership meeting, participants heard from Kathy Fulton, president of the American Logistics Aid







Network, who spoke via conference call about her organization's work building cross-sector relationships before, during and following disaster. 2. March's meeting of the Homebuilders Disasters Partnership focused on leveraging organizational and agency assets in order to better prepare homeowners who are preyed upon by unscrupulous contractors and builders following disaster; 3. United Way representatives offered their input at the Homebuilders Disasters Partnership meeting in March; 4. Louisiana State Police Crisis Response Commander Captain Mark Richards discusses evacuation plans at the Emergency Preparedness Partnership meeting in May. Those plans include coordinating traffic movement with the Mississippi Highway Patrol as residents flee the coast in advance of dangerous storms. 5. National Weather











7. At the Homebuilders-Disasters Partnership meeting in June, Deputy Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Ileana Ledet, center, stresses a key point about strategy to overcome contractor and builder fraud. Also pictured is Kevin Smith, of the Louisiana Insurance Commission. 8. Peter Young, foreground, of the Louisiana Homebuilders Association, stresses the importance of unity in this initiative to overcome contractor and builder fraud. Carla Bonaventure, of the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office is pictured at center. 9. Billy Ward, left, with the Louisiana Homebuilders Association, urges a final vote on the official name for this partnership, which it was decided would be the Contractor Fraud Prevention Alliance. Also pictured is Jon Luther of the Greater New Orleans Homebuilders Association.

## RPC participates in emergency-preparedness symposium



RPC's Chris Laborde, second from right, listens in as a critical infrastructure strategist talks about regional initiatives to build resilience.

Chris Laborde, who heads up the RPC's Emergency Preparedness Public-Private Partnership, traveled to Colorado Springs in April to participate in the 2014 Critical Infrastructure Symposium, hosted by the Society of American Military Engineers and the Infrastructure Security Partnership. Laborde joined a panel of other emergency-preparedness professionals in addressing "Successes in Regional Partnerships for Preparedness and Resilience."

The theme of the Critical Infrastructure Symposium was "Disasters are Personal. Resilience is Regional. Partnerships are Strategic." The event highlights essential functions of resilient infrastructure systems and their importance to society's safety, security, quality of life, prosperity and progress. The primary focus of the Infrastructure Security Partnership is improving the security and resilience of the built and virtual environments.

Participants in the symposium - including staff, researchers, government officials and other professionals from the public and private sectors - exchanged ideas, lessons learned and expertise related to infrastructure resilience, policy, structure and design and education and training.

#### RPC recognizes new board members



RPC welcomes to its ranks new board members Jason Williams and Mitch Williams. Jason Williams was elected in March to serve as an at-large New Orleans City Councilman. He fills the post on the RPC board vacated by former New Orleans Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson. Mitch Williams, of no relation to Jason, was appointed to serve as one of two citizen members on RPC's board representing Tangipahoa Parish.

### Delta Regional Authority reps visit regional project sites



RPC Economic Development Director Amber Seely-Marks, second from right in photo above, poses with representatives of the Delta Regional Authority at the Port of New Orleans' Nashville Marshalling Yard, a site where large and heavy overseas shipping containers can be stored when needed. The port project benefitted from DRA funding assistance.

#### **Targeting operations**



RPC in May hosted a workshop titled "Integrating Planning for Operations into Metropolitan Transportation Plans and Programs." Led by representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, the two-day training session, attended by planners and engineers from the public and private sectors, including several RPC staffers, emphasized an objectives-driven, performance-based approach to developing operations objects, selecting strategies and incorporating performance measures in keeping with the requirements of MAP-21.

## Belle Chasse bridge and tunnel replacement project discussed

In June, an RPC consultant updated the board on a stage 1 environmental assessment being performed in anticipation of the replacement of the aging Judge Perez Bridge and Belle Chasse Tunnel. Paul Waidhouse, of the consulting firm Burk-Kleinpeter, informed board members that there were seven alternatives under consideration, consisting of fixed and moveable spans of varying lengths. Each of them involve trade offs related to functionality, construction and maintenance costs, impacts to the community and environment and operational issues.



The tunnel and bridge are the primary access points for residents, businesses and industrial interests on Plaquemines Parish's westbank to cross the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. The replacement project aims to reduce delays associated with routine breakdowns and everyday operations, facilitate hurricane evacuation and provide opportunities for industrial growth.



### Ozone awareness

RPC Sustainability Coordinator Meredith Soniat, pictured at right in photo at left, appeared with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Environmental Scientist Michael Vince on WWL TV's morning news show in April as part of a segment related to anticipated summer spikes in ozone levels. Soniat and Vince discussed various ways in which RPC and DEQ are working to curb air quality problems associated with industrial and transportation-related emissions, such as efforts to encourage walking, biking and transit use, and a new EnviroFlash alert program that sends email alerts about air quality to registered residents. Visit www.enviroflash.info for more information.

(Right) participants pose for a picture at the Louisiana Remote Sensing and GIS Workshop, in which several RPC staffers participated, in May.



### RPC staffer gets DRA certification



In May, RPC Economic Development Director Amber Seely-Marks attended the annual Local Development District training for the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) in Memphis. There, she obtained the designation of DRA Certified Project Coordinator. The DRA is a federal agency that has as its goal "creating jobs, building communities and improving lives" in Louisiana, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. Pictured in the photo above are, from left, Kemp Morgan, with the DRA; Seely-Marks; DRA Federal Co-Chairman Chris Masingill; and Emanuel Edmund of the DRA. Seely-Marks' certification means that she understands DRA programs and can help entities in the region access DRA funding.

### RPC takes to two wheels for Bike to Work Day



RPC staffers took to two wheels this year in commemoration of New Orleans Bike to Work Day, celebrated this year April 10. One of numerous similar events held at different times of year across the country, Bike to Work Day encourages the public to try bicycling as a mode of transportation and calls attention to the rights and needs of bicyclists as legal users of the road. In the photo above, RPC staffers, from left, Karen Parsons, Meredith Soniat, Tricia Keffer, Dan Jatres, Maggie Woodruff and Emilie Bahr, head out to grab lunch on their bikes.

#### **Mapping mavens**

Several RPC staffers participated in the 30th annual Louisiana Remote Sensing and GIS Workshop, held in New Orleans in May. The three-day workshop is the hallmark annual event for the Louisiana Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing community, allowing geospatial professionals to share their work and research. Close to 200 professionals and students were in attendance this year, offering over 30 outstanding presentations. The themes this year were geospatial technology and analysis within the urban and environmental sectors, with a special emphasis on coastal resiliency and public safety.

RPC Principal Planner and GIS Coordinator Lynn Dupont was among the presenters. She delivered a talk titled "Census Numbers to Local Government Funding — Census Apple Seeds to Fruit Bearing Trees" and she moderated the four-paper session on Urban GIS. Dupont and RPC Data Manager and Web Master Clare Brown serve on the steering committee for the annual workshop, and Brown administers the workshop website. RPC staffers Tricia Keffer and Alison Maulhardt served as administrative aides at this year's workshop.

Other presentations of particular interest to the planning world were: "System Engineering Analysis for the Hurricane Surge Defense System of the East Bank of the Greater New Orleans Area," presented by the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, and "Mapping Industrial and Demographic Transformations," by University of New Orleans professor David Gladstone.

The RPC has been an active member of the Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council since 2002, with Dupont representing the data needs of planning and development districts statewide.

#### AROUND THE RPC

#### **Turning water into work**



RPC Economic Development Director Amber Seely-Marks, pictured at left in photo above, was among the panelists at a New Orleans Entrepreneur Week session focused on innovative ways of managing water. The panel, convened March 24th, discussed the numerous business opportunities that exist in the rapidly-growing water-management sector. New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, celebrated for the sixth year in 2014.

sector. New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, celebrated for the sixth year in 2014, is the culmination of the Idea Village's annual Entrepreneur Season. NOEW engaged more than 5,000 entrepreneurs, business executives, investors and MBA students this year and showcased 70 New Orleans-based startups that competed in capital competitions for venture, angel and seed funding.

#### Working toward equity

For the second year, RPC participated in the Equity Caucus convened by the Foundation for Louisiana and the City of New Orleans' Liveable Claiborne Communities Corridor initiative in April. The one-day event had as its theme "Working Together for Redevelopment that Increases Equity in New Orleans." It brought together neighborhood associations, cultural and civic groups, non-profit organizations, businesses, foundations and other public partners to discuss transportation access, housing affordability, economic opportunity, public safety, sustainability and cultural preservation.

#### RPC assists with SBA award

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Louisiana District Office recognized top small businesses in Louisiana at a ceremony held in Baton Rouge May 14th. World Trade Center nominee George M. Shaffer, president of Baton Rouge-based Crompion International, was honored as runner-up Louisiana exporter of the year. RPC's Economic Development Director Amber Seely played a key role in this nomination. She made a connection between the WTC and the SBA to suggest that the WTC nominate a member for the awards program and provided technical assistance and promotion for the WTC's nomination.

#### **RPC facilitates STTARS training**

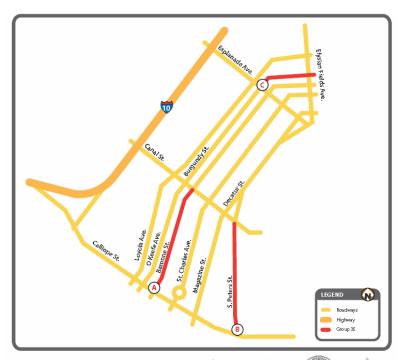
RPC has launched a series of training sessions designed to help public transportation providers serving elderly, disabled and rural clients improve their understanding and use of the Statewide Transit Tracking and Reporting System, or STTARS, a database used to track client trips, vehicle maintenance and inventories for providers who receive federal transportation money. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's Jamie Ainsworth is leading the sessions, the first of which was held in April as part of RPC's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Council meeting. In addition to assisting transportation providers with their required reporting, this effort is aimed at improving understanding of who uses transportation services, where needs may be unmet and how transportation resources may be better coordinated to best serve the public.

## Designing streets for pedestrians and bicyclists



Participants in the design workshop put their skills to the test in developing suggested improvements for the intersection of West End and Veterans boulevards outside the RPC's offices.

In May, RPC hosted the three-day workshop "Designing Streets for Pedestrians and Bicycles." Instructed by nationally-renowned pedestrian and bicycle design experts Michael Moule and Michael Ronkin, the workshop covered a variety of planning and design standards and best practices. More than 30 people participated in this year's workshop, including representatives of the public and private sectors, graduate students and community members. RPC and DOTD have sponsored similar workshops for the past several years.



Road work is underway along sections of Bienville Avenue, Banks Street, and Jefferson Davis Parkway in New Orleans as part of the Paths to Progress program.

#### **Marking Paths to Progress**

This spring and summer, construction crews were at work on close to \$3 million in road-restoration projects in the metro region completed under the Paths to Progress program. In New Orleans, Hard Rock Construction completed \$2.87 million of work on Baronne, Peters and Burgundy streets. The largest of these projects was a \$1.2 million repairs on Baronne between Calliope and Canal streets. Paths to Progress is a transportation improvement program that is a collaborative effort by the Regional Planning Commission, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Federal Highway Administration, the City of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish and the City of Kenner.

### Covington printing company wins LED award



RPC Economic Development Director Amber Seely-Marks poses with Mallery
Mele, president and CEO of Mele Printing and 2014 Lantern Award winner.

RPC and other planning and development districts in the state helped solicit and review nominations from regional manufacturers for a state economic development award bestowed by Louisiana Economic Development in June. Covington-based Mele Printing, nominated by the St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation, was the 2014 Lantern Award winner for our region. The awards program recognizes Louisiana-based manufacturers that, in LED Secretary Stephen Moret's words, "demonstrate true quality in their work and genuine commitment to their local communities."

#### **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, or to be added to our mailing list, contact Emilie Bahr at ebahr@norpc.org.

#### Stomping for pedestrian safety



A public service announcement posted to an RTA bus reminds drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

caution that they would want someone to show them.

Louisiana's pedestrian-fatality rate is the fifth highest in the nation, at 2.29 per 100,000 residents, according to a 2014 report compiled using statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The New Orleans metro region leads the state in pedestrian fatalities. The Stompers' campaign is part of RPC's continuing efforts to improve pedestrian safety.

The beloved dance troupe the 610 Stompers showed off their moves as safety ambassadors this spring, partnering with RPC for the second round of a pedestrian-safety campaign. On radio ads, billboards, transit shelters and parking meters throughout the metro region, the Stompers reminded New Orleanians that "We Are All Pedestrians" and to "Stop for Pedestrians at Crosswalks." This most recent campaign follows previous pedestrianand bicycle-safety campaigns featuring the Stompers launched in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

"Our market research and anecdotal stories showed the previous Stompers campaigns to be very memorable and effective, so we decided to bring them back this year with a new message to improve safety on the streets of Southeast Louisiana," said Dan Jatres, the RPC's pedestrian and bicycle program manager.

The "We Are All Pedestrians" message was aimed at reminding everyone that whether they are in a car, taking transit or riding a bicycle, they still walk for at least a part of that trip and that they should afford pedestrians they same degree of attention and



#### Targeting pedestrian crash hotspots

Pedestrians in Orleans Parish are killed at a higher rate in vehicle-related crashes than in any other part of the state. In response, RPC is stepping up its efforts to improve New Orleans' pedestrian-safety landscape. One component of this effort is a recently-completed project that identified hotspots for crashes involving pedestrians and potential ways to enhance the safety of these intersections and road segments.

RPC Principal Planner Karen Parsons gave an overview of the project at RPC's June board meeting. She explained that the Federal Highway Administration named New Orleans a "pedestrian safety focus city" in 2012 based on a disproportionately high rate of pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 residents.

"There's a very high cost to all of us," Parsons said. "This is a critical issue." Over the last 10 years, as much as 33 percent of all traffic-related fatalities in the city have involved pedestrians, Parsons said.



As part of a project funded by RPC and carried out by consulting firm GCR, Inc., with support from Dana Brown & Associates, the last five years of data from police reports written in the aftermath of crashes involving pedestri-

### **PEDESTRIANS**



ans were reviewed, with fatalities and serious injuries given more weight. Using that information, a list of the worst 20 intersections in the city for pedestrian crashes was established. Additionally, common factors involved in these crashes were identified, along with nationally-recognized standards for mitigating trouble spots. The result is a list of short-term, low-cost and longer-term countermeasures to help improve pedestrian safety. Using this information RPC will work with the state Department of Transportation and Development and the New Orleans Department of Public Works to implement recommended physical enhancements.

Meantime, New Orleans is not the only parish in the state with a pedestrian-safety problem. East Baton Rouge, Jefferson and St. Tammany parishes are also in the top four places in the state for pedestrian fatalities, Parsons noted. In 2012, Louisiana had the third highest incidence of child pedestrian fatalities and the fifth highest rate of all pedestrian fatalities in the nation.

### The sweeter side of safety



RPC GIS Coordinator and Principal Planner Lynn Dupont, pictured at left in the photo above, shows off her winning entry in an orange-themed bake off held in commemoration of Work Zone Awareness Week in April. Dupont's entry, orange pecan cake, took second place in the contest.

RPC Transportation Planner and Title VI Coordinator Nik Richard, third from right in photo at top, was one of three judges in the sweet competition, hosted by DOTD. Entries were judged on presentation, taste and creativity.

Work Zone Awareness Week was recognized in Louisiana April 7 through 11 in an attempt to promote safe travel through work zones.

In 2012, the most recent period for which data are available, there were 12 deaths and 661 injuries involving motor-vehicles in Louisiana work zones, according to DOTD.



Lynn's award-winning entry, orange pecan cake.



The contest judges evaluate entries.





#### 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.

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Citizen Member

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Larry Rase Greater N.O. Expwy. Comm.

Ryan Brown

Jeff., Dept. of Transit Adm.

Salvador Longoria
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**Executive Director:** Walter R. Brooks



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