

February 2010

Citizen's Guide To Transportation Planning



Regional Planning Commission



What Is The Regional Planning Commission?

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is the designated MPO for the Greater New Orleans area which includes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Tammany and St. Bernard Parishes. The federal government requires urban areas with a population of 50,000 or more to form a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is made up of local elected officials, transportation authorities and citizens, who assist in creating transportation policy. The RPC brings together the local governments, citizens and other interested persons and organizations to develop comprehensive plans that reflect the area's vision for the future. The RPC has a 26 member board that helps with the planning, allocations of funding and public involvement for the areas transportation needs.

The Transportation Planning Process

- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** UPWP is the RPC's transportation planning work program for the upcoming year. It is updated annually.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): The MTP is the region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is updated every 4 years based on regional population and economic growth projections. The plan identifies and prioritizes needed improvements of all types of transportation for the next 20+ years. The plan must be fiscally constrained.

- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** The TIP is our region's short-term spending program for implementing transportation related projects. The program identifies, prioritizes and allocates funding for transportation improvements to begin over a 1 to 5 year period. The TIP is updated every two years.

The MTP and TIP are available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. The documents can be found on the RPC website www.norpc.org

How The Process Works

Projects come to the RPC in many different ways. Once a project has been selected for a planning study, it undergoes a detailed evaluation process. There are six steps in the evaluation process and both federal and state governments must agree with any decision, finding or recommendation before the process can go to the next step. The RPC uses this six-step process which is approved by the Louisiana Department of Transportation (DOTD).

Step 1 - Feasibility Study

All potential projects require an up-front evaluation to determine if the project can be completed and what the project will do to benefit the community. Basic information is gathered together, typically in report format. The report will generally describe the purpose of the project, identify who will implement the project, document conditions in the area and show the design of the project where the money will come from.

Step 2 - Environmental Analysis

Based on the projects achievability, the project may proceed to an environmental analysis to determine the social, economic, and environmental impacts on the community. All environmental work is carried out in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The results of the environmental analysis are presented for public review and comment prior to the release of the final of the environmental document.

Step 3 - Cost Estimation

The cost of a project is an important factor that is used in deciding whether or not a project is advanced. During Step 3, the federal, state and local funding agencies, including the RPC, consult on the amount and funding sources that would be needed to finance the project based on an estimated timeline for design and implementation.

Step 4 - Preliminary Engineering

The RPC is primarily responsible for Steps 1, 2 and 3. Beginning with Step 4 (preliminary engineering), the project is turned over to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) which oversees project design and engineering. The work is reviewed by DOTD staff for compliance with state and federal design standards.

Step 5 Final Design

After an in-depth review of the preliminary engineering plans by DOTD headquarters and district offices as well as involved local agencies, the final architectural and engineering plans are prepared.

Step 6 - Construction

The DOTD uses a bidding process to hire a contractor to complete the purchase of materials and supplies and construction. A bid package, consisting of a detailed set of plans is prepared by DOTD then advertised to contractors for construction services. Bids are reviewed by DOTD and the job is awarded to the lowest cost, qualified bidder for construction.



Why Is It Important To Be Involved In The Development Of Transportation Plans?

Improving the transportation system is critical to the goal of raising the quality of life for the people of our region. Transportation is important to our economy as it provides a way for people and products to move freely. Transportation impacts our environment, the air we breathe, the safety of our family and our personal budget. We need your help to ensure our transportation system serves you.

The Regional Planning Commission Wants To Ensure That Our Transportation System:

- Gives all people access to employment, education, healthcare, shopping and recreation through a variety of transportation choices.
- Supports economic growth through improved mobility for both goods and people.

- Promotes livable communities and healthy lifestyles by creating pathways for people to ride bicycles and to walk.
- Creates strategies to help our region have cleaner air.
- Includes in community-based planning the needs and impacts of projects and policies on members of our community.
- Includes procedures for safety on all types of transportation in the planning process.
- Includes accessibility for citizens with disabilities.





What Has The RPC Done In Your Area?

Since Katrina, over \$2.4 billion has been spent on transportation infrastructure in the New Orleans, Slidell and Mandeville/ Covington areas. The RPC has played an important role in constructing 95 miles of bicycle routes, lanes and paths region wide, helping to make New Orleans one of the leading cycling cities in the South. We work constantly with the local port

authorities, RTA, Jefferson Transit, Louis Armstrong International Airport and Louisiana Department of Transportation to make moving around the region easier and more convenient.

The RPC Is An Inclusionary Agency

The RPC ensures that no person, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, is excluded from participation, is denied benefits, or is otherwise subject to discrimination of any program receiving Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation.

Special assistance is made available to any persons who do not speak English as a primary language and/or have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. The MTP and TIP are available in both Spanish and Vietnamese. Celebrity

RPC also accommodates the persons with visual and hearing impairments.

How To Become Involved

- Attend our commission meetings. Regional Planning Commission meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 12:30pm at the RPC offices. RPC's office is at 10 Veterans, New Orleans, LA 70124.
- For those unable to attend RPC meetings, but interested in learning what happened, agendas are available online as well as special presentations in a multimedia format.
- Register on www.norpc.org for our quarterly newsletter and to get notification about upcoming public meetings, or submit your comments to the RPC on our online public forum, or send in the form at the end of this guide specifying your interest.

All comments submitted through the website will be reviewed by RPC staff.

All of our meetings are held in areas in close proximity to public transit, and are accessible by those with disability

Contact the RPC Staff:

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Title VI Public Notice

Title VI Notice: The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, executive orders, and regulations in all programs and activities. RPC operates without regard to race, color, national origin, income, gender, age, and disability. Any person who believes him/herself or any specific class of persons, to be subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI may by him/herself or by representative file a written complaint with the Regional Planning Commission (RPC). RPC's Title VI Program Manager may be reached via phone at 504-483-8535. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination.

RPC meetings are conducted in accessible locations and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact the Title VI Coordinator at RPC at 504-483-8535 or nrichard@norpc.org. If you wish to attend a RPC function and require special accommodations, please give RPC one week's notice in advance.

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**STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT
OF
TRANSPORTATION
AND DEVELOPMENT**

WILLIAM ANKNER
Secretary



(Tear off and mail back)

For additional information on how to be involved in the transportation planning process tear this form off and mail it back to:

Regional Planning Commission
10 Veterans Memorial Boulevard
New Orleans LA, 70124

How would you like to stay informed?

- Mail
- Email
- Quarterly Newsletter

How can we reach you?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____