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REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Connecting People + Places in Southeast Louisiana
Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John, St. Tammany and Tangipahoa Parishes



The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission is pleased to present quarterly news, events, and project updates to a region-wide audience.

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Letter from the Director



Springtime in Southeast Louisiana - It is a great time of year to be here! The weather is balmy but not too hot. As a result, there is a proliferation of festivals and fun events that make our region unique in America.

For the Regional Planning Commission staff, the springtime brings an opportunity to develop planning programs and work efforts that will set the stage for continued progress and growth. Our staff has embarked on new initiatives across current programs and funding sources and has initiated new ones. Working with our stakeholders, we have applied for and received several planning grants and studies that have been made available to our region by way of recent congressional legislation, the IIJA among others, in our region. These efforts will ultimately make this region cleaner, safer, and more economically competitive.

This has been accomplished in no small part by our dedicated staff that has undertaken extensive and targeted outreach to a myriad of stakeholders, local governments, non-

Jeff Roesel

And right now you have a chance to take a look at it before it's finished. The draft UPWP for fiscal year 2024 is currently up for review on the RPC website, and will be until May 9th. So pull up a lawn chair under an azalea tree, wipe the orange seasoning off your fingers, and dig in.

[Click Here to read FY24 UPWP](#)

New Orleans East I-10 Service Road Pedestrian Safety Study



In January RPC kicked off a study that will explore ways to make the service roads of I-10 in New Orleans East safer for all travelers. Both RPC and the City of New Orleans have identified the Interstate as a substantial barrier for non-motorized travel in the surrounding communities, and a history of crashes demonstrates that the service roads

are far too dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists.

RPC's study will first examine existing conditions on both the north and south service roads between Dwyer and Paris Roads. How many motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists are currently using the service roads, and what days and times of day are they most heavily used? How fast are cars going? Where are crashes taking place, and how are they happening? What's the condition of the road itself, and the lighting on the road? Planners will collect extensive data to answer these questions, and will also reach out to the community itself, to hear from residents about their own experiences with the service roads.

With these data and personal accounts, the study will make recommendations toward making the service roads safer for non-motorized road users. These recommendations will focus on protected bike and walkways that are uninterrupted along the length of the corridor, and that connect to the surrounding bicycle and pedestrian network. The study will also look at ways to make crossing the service roads and potentially the interstate itself safer, and explore how to calm traffic where speeding is identified as a constant issue.

Keep an eye on the RPC website (www.norpc.org) to see how you can get involved. In the meantime, for more information reach out to Karen Parsons at kparson@norpc.org.

RPC Awarded Safe Streets For All Grant

On January 30, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced the Regional Planning Commission received a \$820,000 grant for the creation of a regional safety action plan as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, a new discretionary program created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to fund regional local and tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. RPC's application was for the development of a regional action plan for the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany. With the support of this grant, the Regional Planning Commission will develop a comprehensive action plan addressing the root causes of unsafe streets and propose evidence-based infrastructure and behavior solutions. By completing the safety action plan, the parishes and municipalities within St. John the Baptist, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany Parishes will be eligible to apply for implementation funding from the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program.



Public outreach and participation are important elements of the Safety Streets for All grant program. In the coming months, we look forward to engaging with our community to identify social norms and traffic safety issues to address with the help of this grant. This program offers our region a unique opportunity to create a safer, more equitable transportation network for residents of the three-parish region.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Update



The Southeast Louisiana Clean Fuel Partnership continues to track updates on the progress of all federal funding that supports Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, including the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula program. NEVI funds in Louisiana will go through LADOTD with a competitive grants process. The minimum standards and requirements for NEVI were published by FHWA at the end of February. LADOTD still plans to release the application process in 2023. We plan to send out more details when more information is available. Since SLCFP is not involved in the selection process, we plan to assist interested applicants with reviewing grant applications and providing letters of support when applicable. [Read more about standards HERE](#)

A Notice of Funding Opportunity also been announced for the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program through the US Department of

Transportation. Unlike the NEVI Formula Program, Discretionary Funds are both for community grants and corridor grants. The deadline for applying for discretionary funds will be May 30, 2023, through grants.gov. (include link: [Apply Here](#))

With the recent news about discretionary funding, the SLCFP is planning our next EV Readiness Roundtable on **Thursday, April 13 at 10:00 am at the RPC** conference room. This next roundtable will focus on discretionary funding, and we plan for this informational session to have a roundtable at the end for collaboration between municipalities. To register for this meeting and receive additional information, please sign-up on our website, or email Clean Cities co-director [Aspen Nero](#).

Upcoming Clean Cities Events:

Hosted by Louisiana Clean Fuels and the Southeast Louisiana Clean Fuel Partnership, the Clean Fuels Summit welcomes both public and private fleet managers, business owners, municipalities, educational institutions, policy makers, and clean transportation stakeholders. This summit brings stakeholders together from across the gulf south region to discuss the latest in innovative clean fleet technologies and products, provides networking opportunities with leaders in the alternative fuel industry, and features an indoor expo in the Raising Cane's River Center in Baton Rouge, LA. [:Click Here for more info](#)



We will also be at City Park on Saturday, April 22 for Drive Electric Earth Day. Multiple electric vehicles will be available and all stakeholders and community members are welcome to come see multiple electric vehicles in person. [Click Here](#) for more info!

Saturday, April 22



9am – 12 pm

New Orleans City Park

Reunion Shelter, 4 Frederich's Avenue**RPC Staff Member Highlight - Dr. Li**

Dr. Li began his career at RPC in 1994. He is currently the longest serving staff member, and has been an invaluable resource over the span of his career at RPC.

“When I started at RPC, our computing processes were primitive. Things that we take for granted now were very challenging then. We were working in a modular GIS environment on 486's. Our network set ups were very rudimentary- just to send a file to the plotter required a lot of effort. But things are much better now. We have made progress over the years.”

Dr. Li received his undergraduate degrees from Nanjing University, and his PhD in Geography from LSU in 1994. His dissertation involved documenting environmental changes in the southern Pearl River Basin.

Over the years, Dr. Li has seen significant changes in the technology of Geospatial Information Systems or GIS. “Much has changed with the technology and computing capacity in this field, but it still takes an experienced person to review outputs and make sense of things.”

Dr. Li's primary role at RPC is in a support capacity, assisting other RPC team members on various data analysis and imagery issues- and lending valuable experience and expertise on the subject “I enjoy helping others here [at RPC]”, said Dr. Li. “We use GIS much more frequently and in different ways.”

“Dr. Li's knowledge and experience have been invaluable to our organization,” said Jeff Roesel, Executive Director. “Dr. Li has helped make our GIS work among the most advanced in the state, especially for an agency our size.”

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