

Plaquemines Parish MASTER PLAN

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▶ THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (RPC)
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President Billy Nungesser

Focus on Coastal Restoration

Coastal restoration in Plaquemines Parish must provide the proper balance to adequately protect the valuable wetland habitat while providing adequate flood protection for the residents of the parish.

– Billy Nungesser, Plaquemines Parish President



In the past 50 years, Plaquemines Parish has lost over 248 square miles of land due to sea level rise and land subsidence. Coastal restoration helps preserve wetlands while providing additional flood protection. It stands in the forefront of the multiple lines of defense to protect parish residents from flood damages by storm surges due to hurricanes. The existing Plaquemines Parish Coastal Plan combines levees with coastal restoration projects to achieve 100-year flood protection for all of Plaquemines Parish. A major objective of the plan is to use Mississippi River sediment to built wetlands and marsh barriers.

- Phase 1 involves building forested ridges adjacent to back levees and reinforcing naturally occurring ridges;
- Phase 2 involves marsh creation and enhancement by pumping sediments into areas that were previously healthy wetlands but have succumbed to erosion and subsidence; and
- Phase 3 involves construction of bay fringe barriers to protect against wetland loss.

Over \$700 million in coastal restoration projects have been committed to Plaquemines Parish, more than any time in the Parish's history.

Forested ridge improvements result in the reduction of the wave action on top of tidal surge to a level below levee height, helping achieve the 100-year flood protection for the protected area in the Parish.



Source: Parish, "Coastal Restoration in Plaquemines Parish" a PowerPoint presentation given by Billy Nungesser, 2010.

COASTAL RESTORATION/ FLOOD PROTECTION AS THE CORE NEED

Coastal restoration/ flood protection has been identified as the core need and foundation for Plaquemines Parish to have a high quality of life and sustain a robust & healthy economy. A protected coastal environment is the key to overall safety of the residents, business, facilities, and communities - critical to future parish growth. The CMP project team is working with Plaquemines Parish on various, possible development scenarios, including Mississippi River commerce enhancement, eco-tourism, green energy, etc., each demanding a unique focus in flood protection level and coverage. In each case, coastal restoration is a long-term endeavor that requires continuous efforts and support from local, state, and Federal governments.

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Coordinates with Plaquemines Parish Master Plan

– Lynn Dupont, ASLA, GISP, RPC Principal Planner/GIS Coordinator

The RPC works closely with each parish to produce local data that is relevant for planning purposes across the region. Presently, the RPC is in the midst of a smart growth initiative, which incorporates these data sets and will provide a tool for local and regional governments to examine alternative land use scenarios as projects are proposed. For this reason, Plaquemines Parish could not have chosen a better time for an in depth Master Plan Study. With more detailed existing and future land use information supplied by the Parish, the RPC will be better able to provide regional input that allows Parish proposals to be seen in a context of regional significance. This may lead to faster implementation and in some instances to supplemental funding, should a project meet federal funding standards.

It is an exciting time in the region as we move forward from post-Katrina and oil spill recovery. We have proven ourselves to be a resilient and tenacious people capable of dealing with the weaknesses and deficiencies at all levels of government that were exposed by both events. Population shifts throughout the region coupled with levee protection projects have created a more urgent need for updated information and analysis of development trends. The region is using these events as learning opportunities when preparing its long term planning.

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The RPC has re-written its procedures for determining proposed projects supporting a vision of place-based, people-based communities. This process includes evaluation of all options, including cross-modal transportation systems management and no-build alternatives with expanded public review.

Plaquemines Parish is home to transportation projects of regional significance such as the extension of Peters Road, which will ease traffic on Belle Chasse Highway and the future replacement of the Belle Chasse tunnel and drawbridge. The region, now more than ever before, has supported one another across parish lines as was exemplified in the resolution passed at an RPC meeting promoting solidarity as the oil lingered at our precious coastline.

The leadership of Plaquemines Parish has had significant impact as Plaquemines Parish becomes more nationally recognized for its irreplaceable wetland ecology, fertile land, abundant recreation areas, raw materials and a base for oil and gas industry.



What to Expect

Stay involved and connected!

Check out the project website: www.plaqueminesmasterplan.com

- **Subcommittees & Focus Groups** –Very soon the project team will be launching a group of Master Plan subcommittees as well as a series of focus groups. If you have specialized knowledge in specific issue area and would like to participate, please contact us.
- **Newsletters** – Sign up to receive your newsletter by emailing: website@plaqueminesparish.com.

For questions or more information, please contact:
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The RPC's Important Role in the Region



The RPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the urbanized area of greater New Orleans. The Planning Horizon Area for the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain extends from St. John the Baptist Parish in the west to St. Bernard Parish in the east and includes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Charles Parishes.

Through its federally funded Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the RPC works cooperatively with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and local governments to carry out a comprehensive transportation planning program. UPWP activities promote the development of land use and transportation policies and projects that encourage accessibility and livable and sustainable communities for all residents throughout the region.

Master Plan Hotline 504-849-2153