# REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES WITHIN THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS

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April 7, 2015

### Louisiana Civil Code Article 456

"The banks of navigable rivers or streams are private things that are subject to public use.

The bank of a navigable river or stream is the land lying between the ordinary low and the ordinary high stage of the water. Nevertheless, when there is a levee in proximity to the water, established according to law, the levee shall form the bank."

The concept here is that while a river bank or levee can be subject to private ownership, the public needs to be able to access the river for a navigable right of way, to fish, to load and unload vessels, etc.

## The Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans

The Dock Board is charged with the duty to oversee the construction, maintenance, and administration of wharves, docks, loading areas, cruise terminals, and other traditional maritime functions.

#### Louisiana Revised Statute 9:1102.2

### § 1102.2. Rights and duties of riparian owners and their lessees; joint usage of certain riparian lands

A. (1)(a) Property under control of a Port Authority through ownership or lease may be developed by the riparian owner, or his lessee or assignee, when "the governing authority in its discretion determines that the needs of commerce, navigation, or other public purposes respecting such property are being satisfied and would not be unduly interfered with." The grant of use may include "the air space above any wharves, buildings, or improvements constructed by the governing authority, for the construction and maintenance of buildings or improvements for any purpose, including residential purposes."

- (b) The Port Authority can charge rent for these rights.
- (c) Existing or new improvements owned by the Port Authority can connect to or provide structural support to constructions made by the riparian owner.
- (d) The riparian owner's constructions may be subdivided and owned separately by persons with the riparian owner's consent. (This provision allows for condominium development.)
- (e) The Port retains rights to administer and maintain such constructions and can charge fees for same.
- (2) Port property can be leased without public bidding for maritime or other purposes.
- B. Nothing herein shall deprive the levee boards of their authority with respect to levees in their respective districts or their right to appropriate such wharves, buildings, or improvements.

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