



Louisiana Planning District 5

**SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, February 20, 2025, 12:00 PM**

**PHYSICAL LOCATION:**

**2nd Floor, SEED Center,  
4310 Ryan Street, Lake Charles, LA 70605**

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order**

Jacob Dillehay,  
Chair

**II. Roll Call**

Mike Hollier  
Director

Mr. Jacob Dillehay – Responded Present  
Mayor Hal McMillin – Responded Present  
Mayor Nic Hunter – Responded Present  
Ms. Mary Kaye Eason – Responded Present  
Mayor Marcus Renfrow – No Response

**III. Resolution No. 2299 Approving and Authorizing the  
SWLA-RPC Application for a PROTECT Grant at  
Fabacher Road and I-10.**

Jamie Gaines

Action requested

A MOTION to approve Resolution No. 2299 Approving and Authorizing SWLA-RPC Application for a PROTECT Grant at Fabacher Road and I-10 was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Mayor Nic Hunter.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Mike Hollier explained that this is a Metropolitan Planning Organization project, but the board acts on all MPO contracts.

According to Mr. Hollier, PROTECT stands for “Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative Efficient and Cost-Saving Transportation” Discretionary Grant. This application is for the parish’s Mega site area at Fabacher Road and several adjacent local roads between Vinton and Sulphur. If awarded, the grant will be used for updating and retrofitting roads to make sure they are resilient and sustainable. This is a \$40-million grant. Matching funds have been committed, and a consulting firm has been hired.

Mr. Hollier stated that this does not build the Fabacher interchange, nor does it widen Fabacher. This is to take the existing roads and upgrade

them to make sure they don't flood, are resilient and sustainable. When asked how they could be more resilient, Mr. Hollier replied they could raise them, resurface them, and improve drainage, anything that helps protect roadways against disaster.

Mr. Jacob Dillehay asked who was putting up the funds, and Ms. Jamie Gaines indicated it was a private investor.

Mayor Hal McMillin asked if there was any opposition to this project. Mr. Hollier indicated that there was a woman with property along Fabacher. He said that she opposes the rail extension; however, her property will not be taken. Only existing roadways will be affected with this project.

Mayor Nic Hunter asked if the Parish Police Jury is supportive, and Ms. Gaines replied that it was the Police Jury who brought the project to staff attention. He also asked if there was a letter of intent for the private match, and Ms. Gaines replied that it was included in the packet. The consultant has also included letters of support from the parish and stakeholders along the roadways.

Mr. Dillehay asked to see a map of the project location.

Ms. Gaines added said that environmental, engineering and planning are components that will be covered by the grant, if awarded. This is the first step in planning for a potential interchange at Fabacher.

According to Ms. Gaines, Nick Johnon, parish engineer, brought the project to her attention. There were meetings with the parish, consultants and investors – the folks putting the application together. They required an entity to submit the application, where is where the Regional Planning Commission comes in. As the project entity, we will get administrative fees, which is good for us and puts less stress on us from pursuing individual grants. She gave an example of the LUS Fiber Project in Jennings, where we wrote in administrative fees in the application. As we manage that grant, we receive those funds.

Mr. Hollier indicated that timing is critical. The application must be in by February 24th. The Metropolitan Planning Organization will be looking at the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan at the next meetings, and the Fabacher interchange plays prominently in that as well as the North Loop extension and rail east/west rail connections.

Mayor Hunter asked why the MPO is turning in the grant app and not the state or Police Jury, and Mr. Hollier replied that there was not enough time for the other entities to do so.

When asked what federal agency we are applying to, Mr. Hollier replied US Department of Transportation.

Ms. Gaines added that 14,000 acres of the 17,000 acres recently rezoned by the parish will be affected.

With no further discussion, Mr. Dillehay called for approval of the MOTION. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

#### **IV. Director's Report**

Mike Hollier

Discussion. For information only.

##### **a. Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Capital Projects**

Mr. Hollier stated he'd had a meeting with Mr. Joe Donahue, Secretary of the DOTD. He explained that the state has two major activities at the moment. One is a report from a consultant who reevaluated the entire department and drafted a reprioritization on how the system operates. Mr. Hollier informed Secretary Donahue that most of the planning directors for the MPOs in Louisiana have been advocating for Rural Planning Organizations for years because there's a gap between urban and rural organizations. Cameron comes to mind as needing help. Mr. Donahue indicated that he will be pursuing that during the reorganization.

##### **b. Litter Enforcement**

Mr. Hollier believes litter enforcement is much needed and is working on the MPO side to potentially establish a Transportation Management Center, ideally working with the Sheriff's office. The Sheriff has made a huge investment in cameras for security, according to Mr. Hollier, who thinks it's a good idea to make big investments in cameras to catch those who litter. These cameras could potentially be used to enforce litter laws.

Ms. Mary Kaye Eason suggested partnering with Pick It Up Calcasieu, and Mayor Hal McMillin added that the parish is proactive with Trash Bash.

##### **c. Technology Districts**

Mr. Hollier is interested in developing technology hubs that will government, healthcare, and education. He will be meeting with the Superintendent of Calcasieu Schools and that Superintendent of Jeff Davis Parish Schools, who represent rural and urban school systems dealing with transportation, curriculum and technology. Mr. Hollier believes that Economic Technology Enterprise Centers that provide affordable, quality capacity internet services would bring down the cost for businesses. Beauregard Parish has a grant app ready and is trying to secure matching funds. Technology is moving so fast--we are just seeing the beginning.

d. Planning Training Series Pods

Mr. Hollier said that when you're appointed to a planning commission, you have 12 months to take a 4-year training course. These commissioners are volunteering their time, and they currently have to give up a Saturday to train. He believes training pods would be more convenient. He said that we have grant funds, and he would like to use them to create training pods. Rather than having commissioners take a half day off on the weekend to train, they can do attend virtual trainings at their leisure.

e. Watershed Plan

Mr. Hollier stated that there are 11 months remaining to develop a comprehensive plan for Region 4. LWI is under the State Department of Community Development, and they are heavily involved. He indicated LWI is working on projects, including two in Lake Charles: Greinwich Terrace, which is a major retention pond, 6th Avenue. There's also a project in Kinder. Hydraulic studies have been done over the past year. Some costs are going up and some are coming down. Mr. Dillehay is chair of the Region 4 Technical Advisory Committee.

f. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS)

Mr. Hollier stated that the CEDS is a four-year update and the RPC is evaluating a timeline to get started.

**V. Regular Board Meeting March 12, 2025**

Chair

**VI. Public Comment**

Chair


**VII. Adjournment**

Chair

A MOTION to adjourn was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Mayor Nic Hunter. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

  
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Jacob Dillehay, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Michael Hollier, AICP  
Executive Director