RESOLUTION NO. 2303

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (SWLA-RPC) FOR LOUISIANA PLANNING DISTRICT 5 APPROVING AND ADOPTING ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM NO. 10 AND ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025.

WHEREAS, the Executive Director of the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission has prepared and submitted Administrative Memorandum No. 10 including a proposed 2025-2026 fiscal year budget: **AND**

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission has reviewed recommendations presented in Administrative Memorandum No. 10 affecting Board representation, budget line items and cost, staff personnel, anticipated revenues and requested expenditures; **AND**

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors discussed and generally agree with needs and opportunities identified in the proposed budget and concurrent with the revenues and expenditures; **AND**

WHEREAS, the work and engagement between SWLA-RPC staff and member governments has been well received and supported; **AND**

WHEREAS, the Board is desirous of continuing outreach and progressive regional initiatives for the benefit of member governments and their respective participation; **AND**

WHEREAS, the Executive Director and staff continue to work closely with and engage the membership on their respective needs and wants, particularly through preparation and local adoption of "5 Page Comprehensive Plans" for each jurisdiction; **AND**

WHEREAS, research and development of Board adopted initiatives and corresponding implementation of pilot exercises to facilitate realization and achievement for a range of identified projects and programs has been and should continue to be beneficial to all; **AND**

WHEREAS, a consensus driven, comprehensive, cooperative, coordinated, and continuous planning and development process centered on Board support has generated numerous opportunities for the members and the SWLA-RPC; **AND**

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors agrees with the identification of revenues and expenditures as presented in Administrative Memorandum No. 10 and including the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING AND ADOPTING ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM NO. 10 AND THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, WHICH IS ATTACHED AND MADE A PART OF THIS RESOLUTION.

THIS RESOLUTION BEING VOTED ON AND ADOPTED THIS 18th DAY OF JUNE 2025.

Jacob Dillehay, Chair

ATTEST: Michael Hollier

Michael Hollier, AICP
Director

2025000/RPC-2

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 21, 2025

TO: Board of Directors - Mr. Jacob Dillehay (Allen Parish) Chair
Mayor Hal McMillin (City of Westlake) Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Kaye Eason (Calcasieu Parish) Secretary
Mayor Nic Hunter (City of Lake Charles) Treasurer
Ms. Lisa Adams, (Beauregard Parish)
Ms. Katie Armentor (Cameron Parish)
Ben Boudreaux (Jefferson Davis Parish)
Mayor Mike Danahay (City of Sulphur),
Ms. Kim Monte (SWLA Ports)
Mayor Michael Harris (City of DeRidder)
Mayor Henry Guinn (City of Jennings)
Mayor Neal Watkins (Municipalities ≥ 5,000)

FROM: Michael Hollier, AICP
Executive Director

REFERENCE: District Administrative Update, Draft Budget, and Recommendations
Memorandum No. 10

COMMUNICATION:

This Administrative Memorandum No. 10 is submitted to you in advance for the annual SWLA-RPC Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Review and Adoption effective July 1, 2025.

A. Mayors in municipalities having a population of 5,000 or less were represented on the Board of Directors by Mayor Marcus Renfrow until recently. Since Mayor Renfrow will be leaving office at the end of June 2025, he recommended Mayor Neal Watkins be appointed as the Board representative of the mayors of municipalities with a population of 5,000 or less. The mayors of the nine municipalities have overwhelmingly agreed to the appointment of Mayor Watkins by poll vote, and he assumed his seat on the Board effective July 1, 2025.

B. The Planning District will have a "Reserve Fund" (CDs) of $180,000 at the end of June 2025. I do not consider the amount adequate. A minimum "Reserve Fund" of $250,000 should be achieved at the earliest opportunity. Reserve funding can be secured by dues or by member service enterprises or cooperative initiatives operated by the Planning District. The proposed budget for 2025-2026 includes an additional $50,000 for the Reserve Fund.

C. The 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) has been completed, reviewed and adopted for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The plan focuses on 22 regionally significant transportation improvements in the MPO Urban Area. The 2050 MTP also programs planning and development for 45 adopted Designated Arterial Corridors in the MPO Area.

D. There is no update (if or when) there could be established Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) for transportation development in Louisiana that would balance or compliment the urban centered MPOs. I will watch the initiative closely.

E. The Board of Directors previously approved the establishment of a Southwest Louisiana Regional Mobility Authority subject to the identification of transportation projects to be funded by the RMA and revenue streams for funding implementation. A team of MPO and other mayors have discussed options for consideration which may be presented to the board sometime this summer if deemed appropriate.

F. Eleven thirty-minute training pods have been drafted for local planning and zoning commissioners to receive their legally required certificates of completion. Commissioners can view the pods at their own convenience online at no cost. Commissioners outside of Southwest Louisiana wishing to view the training series will be charged a small fee. We will see how pod training works in lieu of volunteer commissioners having to give up a Saturday for travel and training.

G. The “5 Page Comprehensive Plans” continue to materialize and are an important reference source for staff in securing implementation resources. Utilities (sewer, water, electric, and fiber) are the primary needs identified, but bridges, street and road overlays, advanced technology, adjudicated properties, housing, and economic development are significant initiatives noted and the focus of the planning district’s efforts.

H. Public transportation is a need throughout Southwest Louisiana. The SWLA-RPC will be hosting a one-day summit on public transportation in July 2025 in the Henning SEED Center. The challenge and objective are to leverage scarce resources as efficiently as possible while meeting the transportation needs that have been identified.

I. Newly elected officials in the region will be taking office within the next forty-five days. Several new officials will be seated on the SWLA-RPC Board of Directors. A Board Orientation Brief has been developed and is attached to this Memorandum to help with the transition. Please review and provide any changes or suggestions you believe should be added or subtracted.

J. The Adjudicated Properties dilemma that is a problem for most member governments has not been resolved with the most recent constitutional amendment. Legislation is needed strictly for Southwest Louisiana and that is to reduce redemption from thirty to three years with a clean title transfer to local governments. The subject needs to be addressed again with the legislative delegation.

K. The Regional Housing Initiative. The Regional Housing Initiative has not advanced. However, tools are on the table and there have been discussions on addressing housing needs on several levels: Trade Training, Fortified Construction, Financing, and most importantly, affordable

insurance. Parish School Superintendents are now meeting as a group. We will be speaking to them in August about leveraging resources and strategies in the region.

L. Street and Road Resurfacing Initiative. We learned a lot with our efforts to combine road and street resurfacing in the region for member governments. Dramatic fluctuating oil prices skewed the effort, but coordination among local jurisdictions do have some promise for reducing costs individually. We will put additional effort on street and road resurfacing leveraging in the new budget year.

M. Undergrounding Program. A tentative "Undergrounding Proposal" has been drafted for member governments interested in implementation of long-term efforts to place overhead utilities underground. The City of Lake Charles considered the proposal but did not take any action. Undergrounding comes up after every disaster in committees and recovery groups as a stated goal. When is the best time to implement: today or tomorrow? SWLA-RPC staff are ready to facilitate.

N. Economic Technology Enterprise (ETE) Centers. The purpose of the ETE Centers is to facilitate local businesses and industry with affordable, high capacity, and highspeed internet services available with a tech hub service center that is resilient to disasters and advances significantly local commerce. Two centers have been advanced to potential implementation. We are waiting for potential grant awards.

O. Grant Matches. Matching Funds. The challenge for securing matching grant funds is never ending, but five of our member governments have or have begun to budget annually for this opportunity. I encourage all members to factor matching grant funds into their annual budgets. Matching funds should be readily available to take advantage of unexpected prospects when they occur.

P. Bayou Broadband Initiative. We have secured a new Broadband Grant to enhance the goal of establishing Southwest Louisiana as a Technology Hub.

Q. The Southwest Louisiana Marion "Butch" Fox Regional Rail Plan will be submitted for Board review in July 2025.

R. General Administration costs have increased and are reflected in the proposed FY 2025-2026 Budget. We re-evaluate budget line items regularly. Costs are increasing and we are doing our best to keep them under control.

S. Recommended is a graduated personnel evaluation increase in the proposed budget totaling $60,000.

T. Just a reminder that the SWLA-RPC is your "public cooperative" and exists to meet your common needs and objectives.

FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET REVENUE

1.	MPO FHWA Planning 2025 (Fed. 80%) - $387,731 + MPO Match (20%) - $96,933 =	$484,664
2.	MPO FHWA Planning 2025 Complete Streets (Fed. 100%)	$24,365
3.	MPO FHWA Planning Supplemental 2025/26 – (Fed. 80%) - $280,00 + MPO Match - $70,000 =	$350,000
4.	MPO FTA Planning 2025 (Fed. 80%) - $90,000 + MPO Match (20%) – $18,000 =	$100,000
5.	MPO FTA Mobility 2025 (Fed. 80%) - $90,000 + MPO Match (20%) - $18,000 =	$100,000
6.	MPO Chennault "Transportation Study/Plan" (Ingress/Egress) 2025/26 – (Fed. 80%) - $280,00 + MPO Match - $70,000 =	$350,000
	MPO Subtotal	**$1,500,000**
7.	EDA Technical FY 24/26 (Fed. 80%) - $155,560 + RPC Match (20%) - $38,890 =	$194,450
8.	DRA Technical 2024/2025 (Fed. 80%) - $34,000 + RPC Match (20%) - $6,000 =	$ 40,000
9.	USDA Technical Assistance Broadband	$ 350,000
10.	LWI Watershed Region 4 FY 2024/2025 (Fed. and LWI at 100%) =	$ 500,000
11.	Grant Award Services (2024/2025) Contractual	$ 150,000
12.	District Enterprise Services (2024/2025)	$ 25,000
	District Subtotal	**$1,084,450**
13.	Membership Dues – MPO	$ 295,232
14.	Membership Dues – District	$ 200,000
	Dues Subtotal	**$ 495,232**

BUDGET REVENUE	**$3,079,682**
***Note: $326,000 is Match and counted twice in the above stated total**	- $ 326,000
TOTAL ADJUSTED BUDGET REVENUE	**$2,753,682**

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET EXPENSES

1.	Personnel Salaries	= $1,570,000
2.	Office Rental	= $ 55,000
3.	Computer Software	= $ 25,000
4.	Computer Hardware	= $ 40,000
5.	Cyber Security	= $ 10,000
6.	Insurance	= $ 30,000
7.	IT Support	= $ 60,000
8.	Office Supplies	= $ 20,000
9.	Legal & Professional	= $ 10,000
10.	Annual Audit Fees	= $ 30,000
11.	Accounting Services	= $ 15,000
12.	Employee Professional Fees	= $ 5,000
13.	Contract & Consultant Services	= $100,000
14.	Grant Match Opportunity Fund	= $ 50,000
15.	Enterprise Fund	= $ 50,000
16.	Regional Housing Initiative	= $ 30,000
17.	Regional Downtown Initiative	= $ 10,000
18.	Reserve Fund	= $ 50,000

TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES **$2,165,000**