



REGION 7 REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING PROCEDURES AND BYLAWS

Efforts are supported as a part of the Regional Capacity Building Grant Program featured in the State’s Master CDBG-MIT [Action Plan](#)¹ developed in response to Federal Register Notice Docket No. FR-6109-N-02. Regional Steering Committee functions limited to Year 1 Program milestones. This program is administered by Louisiana’s Office of Community Development (OCD) and Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	2
Version History	3
Part I: Background and Purpose	4
Part II: Bylaws.....	5
Attachment A: Template Notice & Certification to Hold Video Conference	9

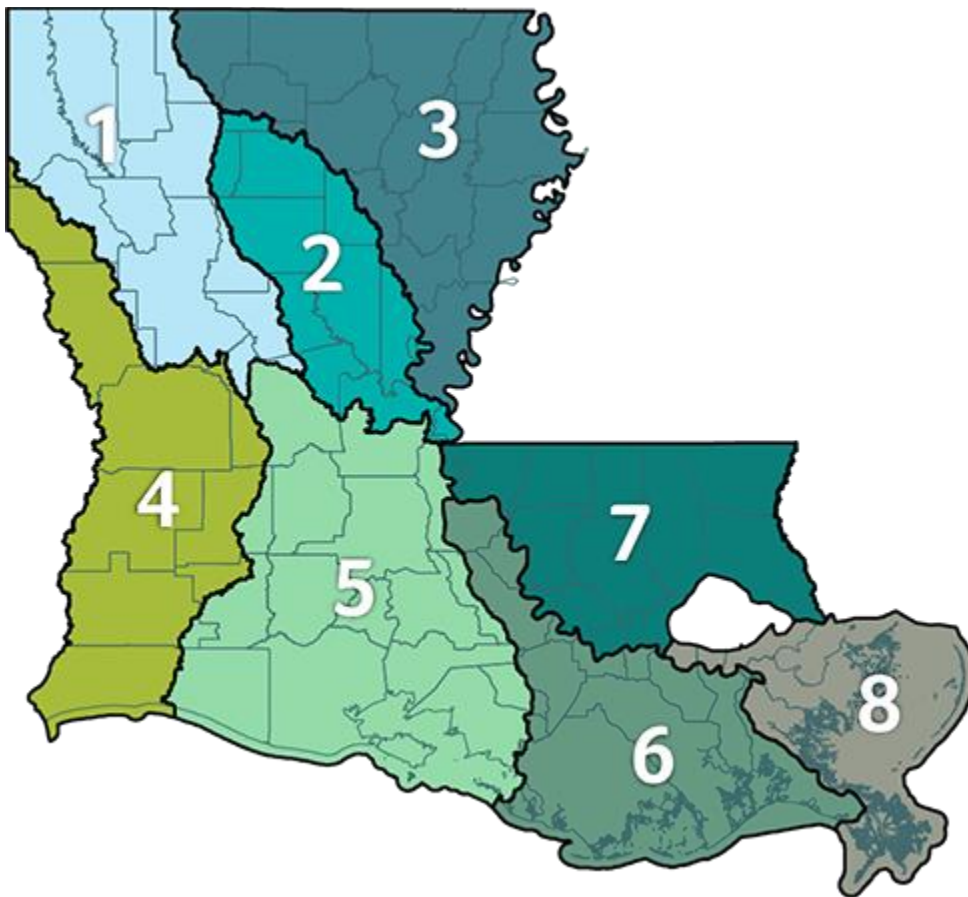
VERSION HISTORY

Version 1	Draft released June 11, 2020.
Version 2	Released July 1, 2020 with recommended changes for adoption from June 30, 2020 RSC meeting. This is the adopted version.
Version 3	Adopted changes to section 1 adopted during May 25, 2021 RSC meeting.

PART I: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1. BACKGROUND

Following the Great Floods of 2016, Gov. Edwards issued an executive order that charged state agencies to coordinate statewide flood risk management efforts through a regional watershed approach, centering decision-making through shared waterways across multiple jurisdictional boundaries. The order identified five state agencies to collaborate on interagency alignment efforts through technical advisory groups, made up of staff from each agency, and the Council on Watershed Management, which oversees all activities associated with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI). Those agencies are as follows: Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Department of Transportation Development, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and the Office of Community Development. Members of the technical advisory groups recommended the eight provisional watershed regions (below) that were then adopted by the Council on Watershed Management.



Region 7 includes the following parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington, and West Feliciana. The Region 7 Regional Steering Committee, hereafter referred to as RSC, is a body comprised of designated individuals who represent individual parishes or the region. RSC members will develop a regional vision and will provide strategic direction for watershed-based decision-making around programs, policies, and projects.

Through the implementation of its programs, efforts of the LWI coordinates enhanced technology, planning, policy and engagement with state agencies, regional partners, and local communities to build support for an

improved, long-term, state and watershed region management framework that can more effectively address mounting flood risks statewide. Funding to support efforts of the Regional Steering Committee (sometimes referred to as the Committee or RSC) is available through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recovery dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to enable proactive approaches to water management statewide. These dollars have been programmed through OCD via the Regional Capacity Building Grant Program, for which the Committee operating here today is charged with:

1. Adopting a fluid work plan
2. Providing input in the development and ultimate implementation of a longer-term, formalized coalition with the ability to adopt different levels of a governance structure for project coordination and prioritization. This long-term entity is intended to outlast specific event-related funding allocations and to provide a sustainable, institutional basis to increase continuity, improve flood resilience, and enable more effective flood prevention within our region.
3. Developing a regional watershed project inventory
4. Participating in the selection of projects totaling up to 5 million dollars, in coordination with the Watershed Initiative Round 1 Projects Program

This Committee will dissolve Winter 2021/2022, unless extended by OCD or the RSC, upon determination of an appropriate long-term watershed coalition framework. Regional activities are intended to continue under this longer-term coalition framework and will build upon the work, input, and recommendations of this group. For more information on this statewide program, click on the “Regional Capacity Building Program” under the “Programs” tab at watershed.la.gov.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Committee is to provide guidance on project, policy, and programs that advance regional coordination for watershed-based flood risk reduction and water management.

To operate efficiently, consistently, transparently, and in accordance with the goals of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, this document provides the bylaws for Region 7 of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.

PART II: BYLAWS

1. OPEN MEETING LAWS

As an advisory committee established for the purpose of providing advice and recommendations to the Council on Watershed Management and the Louisiana Office of Community Development (hereinafter “Grantor”), this Committee constitutes a “public body” under La. R.S. 42:13 and is thus subject to and will follow the Louisiana Open Meetings Law (La. R.S. 42:11-28). Consequently, in the event of any conflict between any term, condition, or provision set forth herein and any mandate of the grantor or Open Meeting Law, the latter shall prevail. In addition, the Committee will follow the guidelines of the Louisiana Office of Community Development and provide notice at least 5 business days of notice for any official meeting of the Committee or sub-committee.” “In accordance with 42:14 of the Open Meetings Laws, any individual or representative of any organization will be allowed to address the Committee on any agenda item that requires a vote be taken. To exercise this privilege, no prior request for placement on the agenda is necessary. Comments from the public may, at the discretion of the Chairperson be entertained at the beginning of the agenda or be after introduction of an item to be voted on and before any discussion by members of the Committee. The Committee shall not be required to entertain comments on any item which does not require that a vote be taken and/or does not appear on the agenda, however, the Chairperson shall have the discretion to hear such comments.

A person wishing to comment on any agenda item may be requested, at the discretion of the Chairperson, to complete a “public comment form” prior to the meeting indicating the specific agenda item that he/she would like to address.

Any person appearing before the Committee in connection with such agenda item shall first state their name and shall limit their remarks to three (3) minutes. However, the Chairperson may deviate from this time limitation unless their decision is overridden by a majority vote of the Committee. All statements shall be directed to the Committee as a whole and not to any specific member. No person shall speak more than once per agenda item. No dialogue between members of the Committee and/or other members of the public shall be permitted, except at the discretion of the Chairperson and then only to clarify the nature of questions and/or comments.

Any person who has been recognized to speak to the Committee on an agenda item shall reserve their comments to matters that are strictly relevant to that specific item. All comments shall be presented in a respectful manner, and participants must conduct themselves orderly and with civility. Comments or language of a lewd, insulting, or provocative nature shall not be tolerated or permitted. Members of the public shall remain silent unless and until recognized as a speaker by the Chairperson. Moreover, personal and derogatory remarks shall be deemed inappropriate. The Chairperson may, therefore, dismiss any speaker who violates the dictates of this policy.

If an organization, formal or informal, wishes to address the Committee on any specific agenda item, then such entity shall select one person as its spokesperson. This limitation shall not prevent others who are associated with the organization from speaking on their own behalf.

2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Working in conjunction with CRPC, the fiscal agent for Region 7 of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, this Regional Steering Committee shall assist in the development and delivery of work products requested by the grantor and endeavor to form a permanent watershed coalition within the parameters defined by the Louisiana Watershed Initiative. The RSC shall further exercise such powers and discharge all other duties and responsibilities as dictated by the grantor (OCD the grant applicant (CRPC), and/or the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. All activities conducted by the RSC shall be in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including the Open Meetings Laws and Public Records Laws of Louisiana contained at Revised Statutes 42:11 et seq., and 44:1 et seq.

Committee members, or their alternates, are expected to attend all meetings. Failure of an RSC member, their alternate, or their designee to attend three consecutive meetings without an explanation acceptable to the other members constitutes grounds for removal from the Committee. Should a member miss more than six meetings in a twelve-month period, the Fiscal Agent will be tasked with coordinating a new appointment amongst parishes represented and may request that the appointing agent for such member appoint another member.

3. COMPOSITION OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Criteria and guidance for the composition of the Regional Steering Committee was set forth by the grantor and consists of 17 total members. The Committee shall be composed of 1 representative from each of the 13 parishes which comprise Region 7 of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative and four regional members that meet the educational and professional guidelines provided by OCD for the LWI.

Each representative must designate an alternate to stand-in for them if they are unable to attend a meeting. If the representative and alternate are unable to attend, a designee may be present.

Membership changes to the Committee will be submitted in writing by the entity they are representing to CRPC.

4. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The Committee shall appoint a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson shall serve as the presiding officer at each meeting, and in the absence of the said Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall serve in that capacity. Moreover, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall perform all other duties and responsibilities as commonly ascribed to such offices.

Both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by a simple majority vote at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee. Where a quorum (defined in section 7) is present, each shall serve for the duration of the Committee or, upon the resignation or cessation of membership of such officer, until his or her replacement is elected.

Both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be voting members on all matters that come before the Committee.

CRPC, as grant applicant, is hereby designated as the recording Secretary and Clerk for this Committee and does not hold a voting membership. The Secretary shall serve as the primary record keeper for meetings and will support any and all documentation efforts.

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

RSC members are subject to the Louisiana Government Code of Ethics and HUD conflict of interest rules, and should not participate in any discussion, deliberation or voting on matters prohibited under those provisions. A committee member must recuse themselves from deliberation and abstain from voting on any matter taken up by the Committee that may affect a business or other entity in which he or she has a significant interest.

6. PROCEDURAL RULES

Except as otherwise dictated by the regulations and mandates of the grantor and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development or the Louisiana Open Meetings Law, this Committee shall be governed in all proceedings by the most current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. The Committee shall meet as prescribed by the fiscal agent, CRPC. All such meetings shall be announced in advance and shall further be open to the public in accordance with Louisiana Open Meetings Law. Moreover, the meetings shall be conducted pursuant to a written agenda approved by the Chairperson of the Committee, working in conjunction with the CRPC, and published in advance in accordance with Open Meeting Law and direction provided by the grantor. At any meeting, only members of the Committee, or their alternates if they are not present, may vote.

7. QUORUM

A quorum shall be defined as a simple majority of the RSC membership. This is required for any action items to be voted upon by the Committee or RSC. Alternates to RSC members, or the designee for that meeting, shall have the same voting rights as the RSC member.

All decisions of the RSC shall be by a majority voice vote of the membership present at a meeting where a quorum is present. If action is to be taken and only the minimum quorum is present (9 attendees), then a two-thirds majority vote is required for an action to pass. All votes shall be recorded in the minutes or records of the RSC.

8. APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

These bylaws and any amendments thereto shall be approved by a majority vote of the members of the Committee. No amendment that restricts or limits the requirements of Open Meetings or Public Records laws will be permitted.

9. DISSOLUTION

This Committee shall exist only until Spring/Summer 2021, unless requested by the Committee or otherwise extended by OCD, as required by OCD acting pursuant to the rules, regulations, and dictates of the grantor and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, with the intention that it will be replaced by a permanent entity.

10. POST WRITTEN CERTIFICATION ADVISING THAT RSC IS UNABLE TO MEET IN-PERSON

Pursuant to Section 4 of Proclamation Number JBE 2020-30, prior to holding a virtual RSC meeting in the form of a teleconference or video conference, the watershed coordinator must post a notice in the form of a written certification that certifies the RSC will otherwise be unable to operate due to quorum requirements and therefore is conducting business via teleconference or video conference. Please see Attachment A for a template certification. The written certification can be posted with the meeting notice. Notice requirements are detailed below.

ATTACHMENT A: TEMPLATE NOTICE & CERTIFICATION TO HOLD VIDEO CONFERENCE

Notice and Certification to Hold Video Conference Meeting Region 7 Regional Steering Committee Meeting [Date]

The Regional Steering Committee of Watershed Region [X] will hold a meeting on [Date] at [Time]. This meeting is in accordance with Louisiana Watershed Initiative activities and is integral to providing a sustainable, institutional basis to increase continuity, improve flood resilience, and enable more effective flood prevention within our region.

In an effort to reduce and limit the spread of COVID-19 in Louisiana, and to preserve the health and safety of all members of the public, the Governor has declared the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and ordered that it is necessary to limit public gatherings in a single place in an effort to avoid individuals being in close proximity to one another.

As a result of the public emergency, the limitations imposed on public gatherings and personal interactions, and the need for a number of members to travel to any physical meeting location from parishes where confirmed cases of COVID-19 have occurred, the [Fiscal Agent for Region X - or - Chair of the Region X Regional Steering Committee] hereby certifies that in order to protect the lives, property, health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Louisiana, it is necessary to conduct the Regional Steering Committee Meeting on [Date] by teleconference or video conference in order to assure the presence of a quorum of the steering committee members.

Therefore, in accordance with Section 4 of Governor's Proclamation Number 30 JBE 2020: Additional Measures for COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Regional Steering Committee of Watershed Region [X] will hold its [Date] meeting virtually. Regional Steering Committee of Watershed Region [X] will utilize the online platform [Name of Platform] to livestream the meeting.

The livestream will be available here [link to website] beginning at [Time] on [Date].
Dial-in information: [insert info here]

Agenda:
[Insert agenda here]

Public Comment Procedure:
Public comments will accepted during the livestream of the meeting. To submit a comment, [insert procedure here].

For questions regarding the virtual committee meeting, please email [email address].