**Draft Interregional Planning Council Report Outline**

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# Executive Summary

In 2019, the 86th Texas Legislature created the Interregional Planning Council (Council), composed of one member from each regional water planning group (RWPG), and charged the Council to

1. improve coordination among the regional water planning groups, and between each regional water planning group and the Board, in meeting the goals of the state water planning process and the water needs of the state as a whole;
2. facilitate dialogue regarding water management strategies that could affect multiple regional water planning areas; and
3. share best practices regarding operation of the regional water planning process.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This second report to the Texas Water Development Board, summarizes the activities of the 2027 State Water Plan (SWP) Council’s activities in relation to their three statutory charges. The Council has put forward X recommendations, summarized below in no particular order. These recommendations represent the majority opinion of Council members, but do not necessarily reflect the views of each entity or interest group.

1. *Recommendation 1*

As relates to Legislative Charge X, the Council recommends that……

1. *Recommendation 2*

As relates to Legislative Charge X, the Council recommends that……

1. *Recommendation 3*

As relates to Legislative Charge X, the Council recommends that……

# Introduction

Texas Water Code Section 16.052 requires the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to appoint an Interregional Planning Council during each five-year state water planning cycle. This 2027 SWP Interregional Planning Council was appointed by the TWDB Board on July 7, 2022, with terms to expire upon adoption of the 2027 SWP. The Council, composed of one member from each RWPG (Appendix A), is charged by statute to

(1) improve coordination among the regional water planning groups, and between each regional water planning group and the Board, in meeting the goals of the state water planning process and the water needs of the state as a whole;

(2) facilitate dialogue regarding water management strategies that could affect multiple regional water planning areas; and

(3) share best practices regarding operation of the regional water planning process.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Council shall (1) hold at least one public meeting; and (2) prepare a report to the Board on the Council’s work.[[3]](#footnote-3) TWDB rules require that the Council’s report, at a minimum, include a summary of the dates the Council convened, the actions taken, minutes of the meetings, and any recommendations for the Board’s consideration, based on the Council’s work. [[4]](#footnote-4)

The Council’s report shall be delivered to the TWDB no later than one year prior to the draft regional water plan due date for the corresponding SWP cycle, as set in regional water planning contracts.[[5]](#footnote-5) For this cycle of regional water planning, that date is March 4, 2024.

## Council Meetings and Deliberations

The Council met five times between July 7, 2022, and March 4, 2024. All meetings were conducted in a hybrid format with options to attend in person at the Stephen F. Austin Building in Austin, TX, and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Meeting minutes are included in Appendix B, and specific policy recommendations are presented by statutory charge in subsequent sections of this report. A summary of actions taken by the Council is also provided below. Additional materials from Council meetings are available on the Council’s webpage at <http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/ipc/2027IPC.asp>.

**November 9, 2022:** At its first meeting,the Council reviewed its responsibilities, agreed on operational procedures, reviewed the status of recommendations made by the previous Council, and appointed Mark Evans (Region H) as Council Chair and Gail Peek (Region G) as Council Vice-Chair.

The Council decided to prioritize recommendations made by the previous Council as a starting point for their work effort. The Council requested that the TWDB survey RWPGs to assess how they have implemented or plan to implement recommendations from the previous Council.

The Council agreed to the following operational provisions:

1. Quorum – A simple quorum (nine members) will be required to conduct business.
2. Regional representation - During the roll call at the start of each Council meeting, each region will designate the member or alternate who will represent that region during the meeting. Only one representative of each region will be allowed to speak for a region during the meeting.
3. Decision making – Decisions will be accomplished by a simple majority vote of at least nine members. Regions may have one vote by either the member or designated alternate.
4. Chair and Vice-Chair – Members elected that the Council have a chair and vice-chair position.
5. Use of committees – Members felt that committees were not necessary at this time, but the Council may establish committees later if needed.

**March 9, 2023:** The Council reviewed supporting materials prepared by the TWDB, the Council’s prioritization of the previous Council’s recommendations, and the results of the survey to assess how RWPGs have implemented or plan to implement recommendations from the previous Council. The Council discussed logistics for report preparation.

**May 30, 2023:**

**September 2023:**

**December 2023:**

## Status of Previous Council Recommendations

The 2022 SWP Council's [*Interregional Planning Council Report to TWDB (2020)*](http://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/ipc/docs/2020_09_30_mtg/IPC_FinalReport-Apps_091620.pdf) provides recommendations for future actions by the TWDB, legislature, RWPGs, and future Councils. As part of its work, the 2027 SWP Council reviewed recommendations made by the previous Council and assessed the implementation status of these recommendations.

To support the Council’s work, TWDB compiled the status of recommendations made to the TWDB and legislature into a summary document. At the Council’s request, TWDB conducted a survey of RWPG chairs, sponsors, and technical consultants to assess how the RWPGs had or planned to implement the recommendations made to RWPGs. RWPG survey results were added to the summary document for the Council’s consideration. A summary of the status of the 2022 SWP Council’s recommendations is included in Appendix C.

# Charge 1. Improve coordination among the regional water planning groups, and between each regional water planning group and the Board, in meeting the goals of the state water planning process and the water needs of the state as a whole

*Review of Existing Practices and Conditions*

The Council focused on the following items:

* TWDB will summarize/bulletize here whatever the 2027 Council decides to focus on from discussion / action at 5/30/23 meeting. More thorough descriptions will then be spelled out like the below paragraphs from the 2022 SWP Council report, which are included as an example.

**Identifying Issues and Opportunities:** The planning process currently does not have explicit requirements regarding when and how RWPGs may identify project development issues (including strategies that propose to develop or use a water resource in another region) and regionalization opportunities. The only specific requirement to notify other RWPGs regarding strategies that propose to develop or use a water resource in another region occurs too late by notice of the Initially Prepared Plan (31 TAC §357.50(b)). By this stage of the planning process, it is too late to adequately coordinate and resolve any potential water planning conflicts between regions.

**Defining Roles for Planning Process Participants:** Consultants, sponsors, and stakeholders may have knowledge or other avenues for early identification of potential opportunities for collaboration and coordination on water resources or potential conflicts between or among regions. Sharing knowledge of when and how consultants, sponsors, and stakeholders are integrated into the water planning cycle in each RWPG may help identify and tailor ways to responsibly develop the state’s water resources through early identification of potential opportunities for collaboration and coordination or to mitigate or eliminate conflicts between regions.

**Documenting Coordination Between Planning Groups:** Because the planning process does not currently provide explicit requirements for coordination, RWPGs typically utilize varying approaches to achieve compliance with current TWDB rules.

## Recommendations

1. Recommendation 1 (copy format for additional recommendations)

Identification of, and coordination around, project development, including strategies that are proposed to develop or use water resources in another region and that would impact the region of origin, should occur ***at the beginning*** of the planning cycle. Implementing this recommendation will help expedite the identification of opportunities for coordination and collaboration, as well as potential interregional conflict concerns. It will help ensure that there are deliberate actions taken by the RWPGs at the beginning of the planning process to identify ***and coordinate on interregional project issues and opportunities.***

1. **Texas Water Development Board**

The Council recommends that the TWDB revise planning requirements (contract and rules, as appropriate) so that

1. RWPGs identify, in their final adopted regional water plans, a list of strategies that were recommended, alternative, or considered, or other projects based upon local knowledge, that present issues or opportunities for other regions and that merit further direct interregional coordination. For the sixth planning cycle, beginning in 2021, development of this list would be an immediate first task for the RWPG as the 2021 Regional Water Plans are being finalized prior to this Council’s recommendations. This list will become the basis for RWPGs to identify issues that encourage further coordination among and between planning regions during the first year(s) of future planning cycles;
2. RWPGs consider strategy information provided by the TWDB during the first year(s) of the following planning cycle regarding recommended strategies in all Regional Water Planning Areas (RWPAs), including specifically identifying those strategies sourced in other RWPAs and/or those strategies that, if implemented, could potentially impact the region of origin;
3. **Legislature**

The Council recommends that the legislature appropriate additional funds to the planning process specifically to support a required task of the RWPG to identify and facilitate interregional coordination, to allow for the additional RWPG work recommended by this Council.

1. **Regional Water Planning Groups**

The Council recommends that the RWPGs, at a minimum, enhance their coordination efforts in accordance with the TWDB process revisions recommended above. RWPGs should include standing agenda items for reports from interregional liaisons to promote a formal exchange of information between RWPGs.

1. **Future Interregional Planning Councils**

Future Interregional Planning Councils should monitor the effectiveness of enhanced efforts to promote interregional coordination and review how best to utilize interregional liaisons in the development or use of shared water resources.

# Charge 2. Facilitate dialogue regarding water management strategies that could affect multiple regional water planning areas

*Review of Existing Practices and Conditions*

The Council focused on the following items:

* TWDB will summarize/bulletize here whatever the 2027 Council decides to focus on from discussion / action at 5/30/23 mtg.

More thorough descriptions would be included here following the bulleted list.

## Recommendations

1. Recommendation 1

The Council makes the following recommendation...

# Charge 3. Share best practices regarding operation of the regional water planning process

*Review of Existing Practices and Conditions*

The Council focused on the following items:

* TWDB will summarize/bulletize here whatever the 2027 Council decides to focus on from discussion / action at 5/30/23 mtg.

More thorough descriptions would be included here following the bulleted list.

## Recommendations

1. Recommendation 1

The Council makes the following recommendation...

# Additional Observations

In the course of its work, the Council made the following observations on topics not directly related to its statutory charge but that it felt are important to acknowledge in this report.

* Water loss
* Rural water use
* Population projections

# Conclusions

The members of the Council dedicated a significant number of hours in Council meetings to deliberate, develop, and present this second report to the TWDB….

# Appendices

1. List of Council Members and Designated Alternates
2. Minutes from Council Meetings
3. Status of the 2022 State Water Plan Interregional Planning Council Report (2020) Recommendations
1. Texas Water Code Section 16.052(c) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Texas Water Code Section 16.052(c) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Texas Water Code Section 16.052(d) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 31 Texas Administrative Code §357.11(k)(4) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 31 Texas Administrative Code §357.11(k)(5) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)