

Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee Report to the Interregional Planning Council – August 12, 2020

1. Proposed Changes to Committee Problem and Goal Statement:

Council Problem Statement:

In creating regional water plans that comprise the state water plan, the expectations for the scale at which planning groups coordinate is not clear, throughout the state.

Coordination requirements are not fully formalized in statute or rule, coordination roles of consultants and liaisons are not fully specified, and regions are not always coordinating early enough in the process. Regions should consider opportunities for coordination and collaboration among Regions affected by the use of the water resource or impacted by the use of the water resource. In addition, where there are areas of interregional conflict between Regions, consideration needs to be given to the roles and responsibilities of sponsors, stakeholders, consultants and liaisons. Further it is important to consider the planning process administrative timing requirements.

Although there have been few interregional conflicts, Regions may not be coordinating effectively on issues related to shared water resources and the development of multi-regional projects. ~~Coordination requirements are not fully formalized in statute or rule, coordination roles of consultants and liaisons are not fully specified, and regions are not always coordinating early enough in the process.~~

Council Goal Statement:

Regions coordinate early and throughout the planning cycle to identify and share knowledge of areas of mutual interest, potential impacts, identification of water management strategies that impact more than one Region, and cooperate to address water supply needs of their regions and identify ways the TWDB can assist the planning groups in meeting these goals.

2. Draft Recommendation Summaries

Recommendation 1: Identify interregional project development issues and opportunities.

- a. **Brief Observation:** The planning process does not currently have explicit requirements at a specific point in the timeline for RWPGs to identify project development issues and regionalization opportunities.
 - i. **Succinct Recommendations:** The TWDB should revise its administrative contract and rule requirements to: Provide RWPGs a report of all recommended and alternative WMSs for each region in the IPPs soon after the submittal of the IPPs.
 - ii. Require RWPGs to identify in their adopted Regional Water Plans those recommended, alternative, and/or considered water management strategies that present issues or opportunities for other regions and that

- merit further direct interregional coordination in the early portion of the following planning cycle.
- iii. Develop a statewide listing of the RWPG-identified projects identified in (i) above and distribute to all RWPGs in support of their coordination work in the next planning cycle.
 - iv. Support or facilitate RWPGs by reporting data and/or developing tools to assist with identifying issues or opportunities for interregional coordination.
 - v. Require that the public meetings required by 31 TAC §§357.12(a)(1) and (b) include discussion / consideration of the issues and opportunities for interregional coordination identified and the work to date to address them.
 - vi. Require that the Technical Memorandum required by 31 TAC §357.12(c) include discussion / consideration of the issues and opportunities for interregional coordination identified and the work to date to address them.

The RWPGs should: remain active in the early portions of the planning cycle to seek input and identify project development issues and opportunities from other regions.

- b. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would ensure there are deliberate actions taken by the RWPGs to identify interregional project issues and opportunities.

Recommendation 2: Coordinate and collaborate on interregional issues and opportunities.

- a. **Brief Observation:** The planning process does not currently specify how RWPGs should coordinate and collaborate on project development issues and regionalization opportunities.
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:** The TWDB should revise its administrative contract and rule requirements to:
 - i. Support or facilitate RWPGs with technical or administrative resources, as able, as they coordinate and collaborate with each other on identified interregional issues or opportunities.
 - ii. Require that the public meetings required by 31 TAC §§357.12(a)(1) and (b) include discussion / consideration of how the RWPG will coordinate and collaborate with other regions on the interregional issues and opportunities identified, including a timeline for action.
 - iii. Require that the Technical Memorandum required by 31 TAC §357.12(c) include discussion / consideration of how the RWPG will coordinate and

collaborate with other regions on the interregional issues and opportunities identified, including the status of the action.

The RWPGs should: remain active in the early portions of the planning cycle to coordinate and collaborate on identified interregional project development issues and opportunities.

- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would ensure there are deliberate actions taken by the RWPGs to coordinate and collaborate on identified interregional project issues and opportunities.

Recommendation 3: Develop an early mechanism to identify strategies using water resources in another region, or that would impact another region.

- a. **Brief Observation:** A mechanism is needed earlier in the planning cycle to identify when a proposed strategy involves use of a water resource in another region or otherwise impacts another region, and when coordination and the opportunity for joint planning should occur early between the regions to determine if the regions are in agreement over the strategy.
- b. **Succinct Recommendations:** The TWDB should:
 - i. Develop a statewide listing of the RWPG-identified projects that use water resources in another region and distribute to all RWPGs in support of their coordination work in the next planning cycle.
 - ii. Require that the public meeting required by 31 TAC §357.12(b) include discussion / consideration of any potentially feasible strategies that would use a water resource in, or otherwise impact, another region.
 - iii. Require that the Technical Memorandum required by 31 TAC §357.12(c) include discussion / consideration of any potentially feasible strategies that would use a water resource in, or otherwise impact, another region.
 - iv. Support or facilitate RWPGs with technical or administrative resources, as able, as they coordinate and collaborate with each other on any potentially feasible strategies that would use a water resource in, or otherwise impact, another region.

The RWPGs should involve the appropriate parties and commit to timely coordination and collaboration on any potentially feasible strategies that would use a water resource in, or otherwise impact, another region.

- c. **Brief Benefit:** Implementing this recommendation would increase the time available to address identified issues that could result in potential interregional conflicts.

3. Draft Recommendations Under Further Consideration (yet to be fully developed):

1. Role of liaisons on planning groups

2. Alternative process(es) to resolve interregional conflicts outside of the regional water planning process (as outlined in the Interregional Conflict Workgroup report to the Council on 7/29/2020.)