

## **Interregional Planning Council Working Solutions Framework**

*This is a working document of the Interregional Planning Council (Council). It represents the collective work of the council to determine the matters it will address, and how it will address them. It attempts to create a framework for discussing and evaluating the four general topics the Council is considering:*

- 1. Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole (pages 2-3)*
- 2. Enhancing Interregional Coordination (pages 4-5)*
- 3. Dealing with Interregional Conflict (pages 6-7)*
- 4. Best Practices for Future Planning (page 8)*

*Actions taken by the Council through its June 29 meeting are noted.*

## **Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole**

### **1. Problem: What needs to be solved?**

#### **Brainstorming for the problem statement**

- a. Planning for and coordinating an adequate statewide water supply as a whole is very difficult due to each regions working around unique characteristics.
- b. Who will pay for studies for interregional projects, innovative ideas?
- c. What projects are cost effective?
- d. How to safeguard small communities' access to reliable supplies, and funds for projects?
- e. How to navigate competing interests and state and local politics?
- f. How to address sustained access to water for economic, recreational, agricultural, environmental and other uses?

#### **Problem statement: Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole**

*(approved by Council at June 10 meeting)*

**Planning Water Resources for Texas as a whole is hindered by the varied and unique characteristics of different regions of the state, land use patterns and trends, the costs of such planning, the protective nature of regions and states over their natural resources, the ownership of water supplies and the impacts of water development, constraints of existing laws and rules, and the many competing needs for the water.**

### **2. Goal: How will things look if we solve the problem?**

#### **Brainstorming for the goal statement**

- a. RWPGs will coordinate on multi-benefit projects and an holistic view, including water quality, flood control, environmental etc.
- b. Effectiveness of projects will be promoted
- c. Long term sustainability

#### **Goal statement: Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole**

*(Approved by Council at June 22 meeting)*

**Texas' water needs will best be addressed through cooperative development of innovative and multi-benefit projects that benefit the state as a whole, while meeting the mandated requirements of regional water planning process, including protecting the agricultural and natural resources of the state.**

### **3. Criteria: How to evaluate solutions you generate**

*(Approved by Council at June 22 meeting with statement that there is flexibility to add criteria as solutions are identified)*

- a. Legislation/legislative mandate
- b. Council can accomplish by Fall 2020
- c. Council can accomplish into Spring 2021
- d. For next council to consider

**4. Possible Solutions:** These are the "issues" identified by the Council on April 29, May 28, June 22 and by Rep. Larson. This list may be expanded with new ideas and will be prioritized based on the criteria you generate.

DRAFT June 29, 2020

- a. Identify potential criteria to evaluate new multi-regional projects for consideration that serve the state as a whole, including recommendations for state involvement where appropriate. (April 29, June 22 & Larson)
- b. Identify criteria to evaluate large amounts of undeveloped/unappropriated water supplies and available developed water across the state (April 29, June 22)
- c. Review the criteria to evaluate viability and justification of projects included in the State Water Plan/ Make recommendations on how to encourage the inclusion of innovative strategies such as aquifer storage and recovery and desalination (Larson, June 22)
- d. Advise the TWDB with preliminary input on their statutorily-mandated planning guidelines review (June 22)
- e. Identify additional ways TWDB might assist in interregional coordination and planning at the statewide level (Larson, June 22)
- f. Methods to plan for the larger picture of water resource development (April 29)
- g. Increase emphasis on water quality and flood control in water supply planning process, acknowledging the new regional flood planning process (May 28)
- h. Legislative support for interstate water resources for the State of Texas as a whole and neighboring states that may benefit (May 28)

## **5. Evaluate and Select Best Solutions for Council Action**

## **6. Action Plan for Implementing Best Solutions**

## Enhancing Interregional Coordination<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Problem: What needs to be solved?

#### Brainstorming for problem statement

- a. Coordination between regions may not be occurring in all regions of the state. It appears to occur as technical touch-base between consultants. RWPGs need to be knowledgeable about what's occurring in adjacent planning areas, or areas where water may originate.
- b. Liaisons need guidance on what their role should be, and should be required to coordinate early.
- c. Few problems historically to guide the need to improve.
- d. Coordination doesn't occur early enough. Even when projects affect multiple regions, each region proceeds independently about the project's inclusion through the planning cycle and then completes the IPP. Need to identify early where potential coordination will be important and appoint/alert liaisons to coordinate, require consultants and administrative agencies to meet early.
- e. Too much burden on individual RWPG to identify potential conflicts from other regions.
- f. Regions differ in their needs; some have few shared resources.

#### **Problem Statement: Enhancing Interregional Coordination**

*(approved by Council at June 22 meeting)*

**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. 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.**

### 2. Goal: How will things look if we solve the problem?

#### Brainstorming for the goal statement

- a. Fulfill purpose of Texas Water Code 16.052(c) (Purposes of the council)
- b. Neighboring RWPGs share knowledge of areas of mutual interest (understand water supply, demands and projections in counties adjacent to their planning areas that are high growth or have projected shortages)
- c. Focus on process to facilitate reconciliation of real or perceived water supply strategy conflicts to include potential impacts of WMSs
- d. Identify interregional conflict
- e. Anticipate problems that may develop and head them off
- f. Make future water planning process better and be better prepared
- g. Earlier coordination
- h. Documented concurrence of water management strategy from applicable water providers and users

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<sup>1</sup> This focuses on how regions can work better together, and not on the separate topic of formal interregional conflict, which will be discussed at a later meeting. TWDB considers interregional coordination to be efforts that occur during the normal development of the draft plans to utilize the consistent and best available information on shared sources or potential projects to address identified water supply needs and develop efficient and coordinated projects and strategies.

**Goal Statement: Enhancing Interregional Coordination**

*(approved by Council at June 22 meeting)*

**Regions coordinate early and throughout the planning cycle to identify and share knowledge of areas of mutual interest, potential impacts, and cooperate to address water supply needs of their regions, and identify ways the TWDB can assist the planning groups in meeting these goals.**

**3. Criteria: How to evaluate solutions you generate**

*(Approved by Council at June 22 meeting with statement that there is flexibility to add criteria as solutions are identified)*

- a. Equity in addressing concerns independent of population/water demand needs
- b. Consideration for all water supply needs including future supply needs of less developed areas
- c. Considers impacts of proposed projects
- d. Encourages earlier coordination by planning groups
- e. Ease of implementation
- f. Solution is expressed as (a best management practice/ a requirement for all regions)
- g. Maintains the current role of RWPGs as planners and not implementers: keep RWPGs in role of assessing supply and demand, not public support or permitting viability.
- h. *Legislation/legislative mandate\**
- i. *Council can accomplish by fall 2020\**
- j. *Council can accomplish into Spring 2021\**
- k. *For next council to consider\**

*\*These criteria were not explicitly included in the Council motion but it was the understanding that these criteria would apply to each topic.*

**4. Possible Solutions:** These are the “issues” identified by the Council on April 29, May 28, June 22, and by Rep. Larson. This list may be expanded with new ideas and will be prioritized based on the criteria you generate.

- a. Develop a formal and informal process to look at projects that cross regions (April 29).
- b. Formal Process for regions to coordinate on projects for shared resources from other regions (Regional Liaisons) (April 29)
- c. Develop ways for metropolitan areas to work within multiple planning processes (April 29)
- d. Any water supply projects for one region that originates from another region should be identified early in the planning process (add a date here) and the regional water planning groups should be promptly notified as to the size, the project scope and location to ensure early coordination and to allow sufficient time for reviewing impacts. (June 22)
- e. Identify additional ways TWDB might assist in interregional coordination (Larson, June 22)

**5. Evaluate and Select Best Solutions for Council Action**

**6. Action Plan for Implementing Best Solutions**

## Dealing with Interregional Conflict

### 1. Problem: What needs to be solved?

#### Brainstorming for problem statement

- a. Who assesses well recognized disputes regarding development of a state water resource: should that be at a state leadership level rather than the TWDB or the two regions?
- b. Should TWDB review projects in draft plans, see where a conflict could be, and help coordination between regions to resolve the conflict?
- c. Who assesses whether project protects agricultural or natural resources in event of a conflict – region proposing strategy or region where strategy is being implemented (or perhaps include in criteria?)
- d. High-growth population projections should be scrutinized when they are used to justify a proposed project with potential impacts.
- e. It is not a RWPG's role to determine the public support or permitting viability of a project. The RWPG makes sure there is sufficient supply to meet the demand and projects/strategies identified to meet that demand. TWDB should distinguish the planning role from the implementation role.

#### **Problem Statement: Dealing with Interregional Conflict**

*(approved by Council at June 22 meeting)*

**The current roles (planning group, TWDB, Legislature, others), responsibilities, and timelines for identifying interregional conflicts, and the rules for addressing them, may not be appropriate. Clear criteria are needed to define what may constitute an interregional conflict, what is the planning group's role in defining and resolving conflict, and when should these actions occur in the planning process.**

### 2. Goal: How will things look if we solve the problem?

#### Brainstorming for goal statement

- a. Proactively consider potential areas of conflict and ways to coordinate in advance of conflict.
- b. A system is developed where concerns (such as project impacts and protection of agricultural and natural resources) are properly addressed.
- c. A system is developed where conservation, per capita water usage rates and realistic population projections are a factor in determining the outcome of an interregional conflict.
- d. The requirement of the Regional Water Planning Groups to designate a conflict is removed—the professionals at TWDB have more expertise and access to the regional water plans than the volunteer members of the individual water planning groups.
- e. The viability and justification of projects included in State Water Plan has been reviewed and recommendations on how to encourage the inclusion of innovative strategies such as aquifer storage and recovery and desalination have been made.

#### **Goal Statement: Dealing with Interregional Conflict**

*(approved by Council at June 22 meeting)*

**Clear guidance will exist early in plan development to address the many factors that may contribute to an interregional conflict. Planning groups, supported by the TWDB, will identify potential conflicts earlier in plan development and will have considered and consistently documented their alternative project evaluations.**

### 3. Criteria

*(Approved by Council at June 22 meeting with statement that there is flexibility to add criteria as solutions are identified)*

- a. Consider the weight given to factors such as: conservation, water usage, first-come first-serve, or how many people a proposed project will serve in determining outcome of interregional conflict, without adversely impacting smaller communities.
- b. Equity in addressing concerns for all water supply needs, including the future supply needs of less developed areas and natural resource needs.
- c. Proposed project impacts to the regions involved for implementing, or not implementing, a project.
- d. Appropriate entities involved in identifying and resolving the conflict.
- e. Agreement from the regions involved on what they will look at for impacts, benefits and costs of the project.
- f. *Legislation/legislative mandate\**
- g. *Council can accomplish by fall 2020\**
- h. *Council can accomplish into Spring 2021\**
- i. *For next council to consider\**

*\*These criteria were not explicitly included in the Council motion but it was the understanding that these criteria would apply to each topic.*

#### **4. Solutions**

- a. Review and make recommendations regarding any identified interregional conflicts (Larson)
- b. Develop a formal process for regions to coordinate on projects that cross regions (April 29)
- c. Develop a formal process by which the IPC will improve coordination between regions in the event of an interregional conflict (April 29)
- d. Define basis for and pertinent facts in resolving conflict (email input, April 29, May 28)
- e. Develop guidance for resolving interregional conflict (April 29, May 28)
- f. Define roles of entities in the interregional conflict process: RWPGs, TWDB, the Council (email input, April 29, May 28)
- g. Resolve interregional disputes, which deal with state water, at a state level higher than TWDB (email input)
- h. Consistent standards for details of information in plans and guidance for why, when, and where an interregional strategy requires more detailed information (email input, April 29)
- i. Identify additional ways TWDB might assist in dealing with interregional conflict ( June 22)
- j. Agreement from the regions involved on what they will look at for impacts, benefits and costs of the project and how that would be funded (June 22)

#### **5. Evaluate and Select Best Solutions for Council Actions**

#### **6. Action Plan for Implementing Best Solutions**

## Best Practices for Future Planning

### 1. Problem: What needs to be solved?

#### Brainstorming for problem statement

- a. Chairs' conference calls are scheduled but cover so much information that Chairs don't have the opportunity to brainstorm
- b. Prior work sessions held by TWDB are no longer held or results aren't formally documented.
- c. Simplified planning process has too many hurdles to be of use or to be a cost savings.
- d. Every five years there is the same information in each regional plan; is there a difference in a 5-year and 10-year report (more detailed every 10 years perhaps.)
- e. Is familiarity with technical support preventing new ideas or critical review by RWPG members?
- f. Work to involve general public in the process by holding meetings in different geographic areas of regional water planning area.
- g. Term limits may be a way to allow more people to serve on the RWPG and bring new ideas.
- h. When groundwater management area members with no term limits joined RWPGs, one region did away with term limits for other members.
- i. Planning group members can recruit new members regardless of term limits.
- j. Alternate cycles to use funding to conduct deeper research on topics.
- k. Ideas present at the end of the planning cycle on how to improve the process but there isn't the time to implement those ideas before starting the planning requirements all over again.
- l. Lack of funding to look at broader picture in region rather than just project evaluations.
- m. Third planning cycle specific topics studied – may be a good thing to do again.
- n. Scoping process evaluations – IPC should inform how to go about Task 5A scoping process.
- o. Compile Chapter 8 recommendations for consideration by IPC – IPC can be sounding board for how TWDB can consider the Chapter 8 recommendations.

#### Problem Statement

*(approved by Council at June 29 meeting)*

Formal requirements may stymie the use of best practices. Formalized sharing of information between RWPGs is not always facilitated timely in the planning cycle by TWDB, including group processing of Chapter 8 recommendations. Funding may be inadequate to devote time and effort for reviewing best practices.

### 2. Goal

#### Brainstorming for Goal

- a. There is a mechanism that best practices are shared with planning groups.
- b. This mechanism is documented for future use (update based upon review of meeting recording)

#### Goal Statement

*(approved by Council at June 29 meeting)*

The regions will review processes for improvement in sharing and solving best practices among and between regions. A formalized process will occur early in the planning process so that best practices are shared between regional water planning groups.

### 3. Criteria

#### Brainstorming for Criteria

### 4. Solutions

**Brainstorming for Solutions**

- a. Survey planning groups for their best practices to share (June 22)
- b. In the first year of each planning cycle, download what was learned and share Chapter 8 recommendations. (June 22)
- c. Identify additional ways TWDB might assist in identifying best practices for future planning ( June 22)

**5. Evaluate and Select Best Solutions for Council Actions**

**6. Action Plan for Implementing Best Solutions**