Chapter 10

Public Participation and Adoption of Plan

Regional water planning in Texas is a public process, requiring strategy for ensuring that each region's citizens are able to participate in the process. Title 31 of the Texas Administrative Code defines the Notice and Public Participation requirements of the process in §357.21. Holding a public meeting or hearing with an opportunity for public comment is required:

- Prior to preparation of the next regional water plan;
- During declaration to pursue simplified planning (if applicable);
- When proposing major amendments to the previous regional water plan (if applicable); and
- Following adoption of an initially prepared plan (IPP).

In addition, opportunities for public participation and input have specific requirements regarding public notice and open meetings in the State of Texas. The rules call for the following:

- Public meetings and hearings noticed and held in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- Agendas, meeting notices, materials presented or discussed at meetings, IPP, and final regional water plan published on the internet.
- Copies of the IPP made available for public viewing.

This chapter addresses the East Texas Regional Water Planning Group's (ETRWPG) strategy for public involvement and participation in the development and adoption of the 2021 East Texas Regional Water Plan (2021 Plan)[1]. The strategy included regular meetings of the ETRWPG, consultation with representatives of the major water user groups (WUG), distribution of press releases when required, and maintenance of a website for the East Texas Regional Water Planning Area (ETRWPA). Copies of public notices and corresponding press releases are included in Appendix 10-A. A description of the ETRWPG and the process follows.

10.1 East Texas Regional Water Planning Group Members

Original legislation for the 1997 Texas Legislature Senate Bill 1 and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) planning guidelines establish regional water planning groups (RWPG) to manage the planning process in their respective regions. The RWPGs include representatives of twelve specific community interests. Table 10.1 lists members of the ETRWPG and the interests they represent.

1 Chapter 10 may be revised, as necessary, during and subsequent to the Initially Prepared Plan public comment period.

Table 10.1 Voting Members of the East Texas Regional Water Planning Group and Group Representation

Member	Interest
David Alders	Agricultural
David Brock	Municipalities
Josh David	Agricultural
Judge Chris Davis	Counties
Mark Dunn	Small Business
Roger Fussell	Water Utilities
Stevan Gelwicks	Public
Scott Hall	River Authorities
Kelley Holcomb	River Authorities
Fred Jackson	Counties
Amanda Maloukis	Groundwater Management Areas
John Martin	Groundwater Management Areas
Dr. Matthew McBroom	Environmental
David Montagne	River Authorities
Gregory M. Morgan	Municipalities
Monty Shank	River Authorities
Darla Smith	Industries
Randy Stanton	Electric Power
Terry Stelly	Public
Worth Whitehead	Water Districts

The ETRWPG appointed a Technical Committee comprised of individuals within the planning group. The charge to the Technical Committee was to work with the ETRWPG consulting team to develop recommended population and water demand projections, review work produced by the consulting team, and provide technical advice to the planning group. Members of the Technical Committee include:

- Scott Hall
- John Martin
- Dr. Matthew McBroom

The ETRWPG also worked closely with water planning staff at the TWDB during the planning process. TWDB water planning staff provided valuable technical and regulatory guidance to the ETRWPG regarding the 2021 Plan.

10.2 Preplanning for the 2021 Plan

Rules in Title 31 of the Texas Administrative Code §357.12 define tasks that must be performed prior to development of the regional water plan. These rules include the following requirements:

- A public meeting to discuss recommendations and suggestions of issues that should be addressed in the regional or state water plan.

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- Prepare a scope of work including a detailed description of tasks to be performed.
- Approve any amendments to scope of work in an open meeting.
- Designate a political subdivision as a representative of the RWPG.
- Determine a process for identifying potentially feasible water management strategies (WMS).

The ETRWPG held a public meeting, in conjunction with the regular RWPG meeting, on May 18, 2016, to discuss issues and provisions important to the ETRWPA that should be included in the 2021 Plan. As a result of this public meeting, a scope of work was prepared by the consulting team. The scope detailed tasks and activities to be performed during the planning cycle, including expense budgets, schedule, and description of reports to be developed as part of the planning process. The City of Nacogdoches was designated as the political subdivision representative of the ETRWPG, responsible for applying for financial assistance for the scope of work and regional water plan development.

On December 11, 2017, the ETRWPG held a regular public meeting to determine a process for identifying potentially feasible WMSs. The consultant team presented a proposed methodology for identifying strategies. Recommendations from the ETRWPG were incorporated into the methodology; no public comments were received. The ETRWPG approved the draft process to identify and select WMSs at a subsequent public RWPG meeting on December 11, 2017.

10.3 Opportunities for Public Input

The ETRWPG utilized various types of media and outreach to keep the public informed and to receive input throughout the development of the 2021 Plan, including the following:

- Water user group involvement
- Press releases
- ETRWPA website – www.etexwaterplan.org
- Public meetings
- Public hearings

These means of media and outreach are described below.

10.3.1 Contact with Water User Groups

The ETRWPG made special efforts to contact WUGs in the region and obtain their input in the planning process.

10.3.2 East Texas Regional Water Planning Website

The ETRWPA website, www.etexwaterplan.org was regularly updated to inform the public of scheduled meetings and to provide meeting notices, agenda, minutes, presentations, memoranda, press releases, documents submitted to the TWDB on behalf of the ETRWPG, and copies of correspondence sent to WUGs.

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10.3.3 Regular Meetings of the East Texas Regional Water Planning Group

In execution of its duties as the water planning organization for the region, the ETRWPG held regular meetings during the development of the 2021 East Texas Regional Water Plan (2021 Plan), received information from the region's consultants, accepted public comment on issues relevant to water planning, reviewed proposed planning elements, and made decisions on planning efforts. ETRWPG meetings were open to the public, with notice made in accordance with the ETRWPG By-Laws and the Texas Open Meetings Act. Regular meetings were held on the following dates:

- May 18, 2016
- November 9, 2016
- August 16, 2017
- December 11, 2017
- February 21, 2018
- May 16, 2018
- August 15, 2018
- April 17, 2019
- July 17, 2019
- October 15, 2019
- November 20, 2019
- January 15, 2020
- February 19, 2020
- July 15, 2020
- September 16, 2020
- January 15, 2020
- February 19, 2020

10.3.4 Public Hearings for the Initially Prepared Plan

This section shall be updated after submission of the 2021 Initially Prepared Plan for incorporation of data into the final 2021 Regional Water Plan including an Appendix 10-B Transcripts, Presentations, and Minutes from the Public Hearings for the Initially Prepared Plan.

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10.4 Public Comment

This section shall be updated after submission of the 2021 Initially Prepared Plan for incorporation of data into the final 2021 Regional Water Plan including an Appendix 10-C a summary of Initially Prepared Plan Public Comments received.

10.5 Final Adoption of the 2021 Plan

This section shall be updated after submission of the 2021 Initially Prepared Plan for incorporation of data into the final 2021 Regional Water Plan including an Appendix 10-D with the submittal letters from the ETRWPA chair to the TWDB for both the 2021 IPP and 2021 Plan.

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