

MINUTES
Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group
Population and Demand Committee Meeting
February 28, 2023

INTERA Incorporated Offices
9600 Great Hills Plaza, Suite 300W
Austin, TX 78759
1:00 P.M.

Meeting Minutes:

1. Call to Order, Introductions and Roll Call – Lauri Gillam, Committee Chair
Meeting was called to order at approximately 1:00 P.M.

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Lauri Gillam, Small Municipalities, Committee Chair
Christina Castleberry, Water Utilities
Barbara Johnson, Industry
Monica Masters, River Authorities
Jennifer Walker, Environmental
David Lindsay, Recreation
Teresa Lutes, Municipalities
Jason Homan, Alternate for Environmental
Sue Thorton, Alternate for Recreation
Earl Foster, Alternate for Small Municipalities

Other Planning Group Members

Daniel Berglund, Small Business
Earl Wood, Water Utilities
Paul Sliva, Agriculture

Other attendees:

Lann Bookout, TWDB
Sara Eatman, Austin Water*
Marisa Flores Gonzalez, Austin Water
Stacy Pandey, LCRA
Robert Adams, Plummer, Consulting Team
Adam Connor, FNI, Consulting Team*

Neil Deeds, INTERA, Consulting Team

*did not sign in, but verified participants

2. Public Comments

No public comments provided.

3. Review Revised Irrigation Projections

Lauri Gillam suggested that this item was moved to near the end of the meeting, after #6. [In these notes referred to as item 6a]

4. Review Draft Mining Projections

a. Discuss why projections changed the last round of planning

Neil Deeds presented his analysis of why projections had changed since the last round of planning. The 2021 projections were identical to the 2016 projections. The 2016 projections were based on a 2011 BEG study. The 2011 BEG study differed from the most recent BEG study in several of the counties where the largest changes occurred. The differences in the analysis included the change in the size of the market for coal, and a change in estimated aggregate mine water use from being based on size/type of facility, to relying on direct TCEQ/TWDB surveys of mining operators. Lauri noted that the decreased demand estimates more closely match estimates of historical use.

b. Discuss any potential demand revisions

Neil Deeds and Robert Adams presented their work on looking into Llano County mining water use. Neil had discussed additional data sources with Mitchell Sodek (general manager at Central Texas GCD, which covers Burnet County), while Robert had asked former Llano mayor Mike Reagor for his take on the TWDB estimates. Both Mitchell and Mike indicated that they did not have better data sources than the TWDB estimates.

Lauri motioned that the draft mining numbers, with the revisions to Burnet County, be brought forward to the planning committee. Barbara Johnson seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Action: Bring forward draft mining demand numbers, with revisions to Burnet County, to planning committee.

5. Review Manufacturing, Steam electric projections; consider proposed revisions

Robert Adams presented some minor revisions based on missing manufacturing demands with associated users. He brought up the question of whether “unassigned” demands could be proposed by LCRA (in Matagorda County) or Austin Water (in Travis County).

Teresa Lutes presented an analysis by Austin Water for their projected demands. She discussed the basis for the estimates, including existing customers showing potential for increase. She noted that the TWDB projections do not account for all of the increases projected by Austin Water. David Lindsay made the case for assuming growth. Marisa noted that Austin Water is planning to provide the supporting materials in the request with TWDB.

Additional discussion occurred about “unassigned demands” (Monica noted she knew of several “tire-kickers” or potential users), and whether they would be accepted by TWDB. Lann Bookout noted that if the TWDB rejected revision requests, there is an appeal process that

was fairly cumbersome. He also noted that LCRA (with their management plan) and Austin Water (with their water forward plan) would have a strong basis for a dialog with TWDB.

Daniel stated that “aiming high” was preferred, and it is preferable to err on the side of overplanning.

Teresa stated that Austin Water could potentially be prepared to outline a revision request in the late April planning meeting.

Teresa moved that the manufacturing demands, with requested revisions by Austin Water and LCRA, be brought forward to the planning committee. Christina seconded. Motion passed by voice vote.

Action: Bring forward draft manufacturing demand numbers, with revision requests by Austin Water and LCRA, to the planning committee.

Robert Adams presented steam electric demands. The committee had some discussion about reductions in demand for steam electric in the future, including Fayette and Decker. The more conservative approach, keeping demands in place in case there is some other power generation use in the future is recommended by the consulting team.

Daniel Berglund moved to accept the draft steam electric demands, [unknown] second. Motion passed by voice vote.

Action: Bring forward draft steam electric demand numbers.

6. Initial discussion of Population and Municipal Water Demand Projections

Adam Connor of the consulting team presented a summary of draft population and water demand projections. General discussion of the 0.5 and 1.0 population growth datasets, both which have been provided by TWDB.

6a. Review Revised Irrigation Projections

Stacy Pandy, Monica Masters of LCRA, and Daniel Berglund led a presentation on irrigation surface water demand estimates. A similar strategy was used to develop demands as the last round of planning. Some modifications included using 2022 as representative year, since it was comparable to 2011 but more recent. 2022 planted acreage was used for Garwood, 2011 acreage for Gulf Coast, Lakeside, Pierce Ranch (and supplemental – i.e. turf grass). The 2nd crop max ft/acre since 2016 was used. They had capped demand at the “duty” last time, but did not use the cap in the current methodology. They include a 2.7% reduction in demands over the planning horizon – comparable to the passive conservation factored into municipal demands.

The groundwater irrigation demand has not been evaluated yet, the consulting team is working to gather this data, led by Robert Adams. Robert said he is planning to use the maximum year instead of the average. The MAG will not be used as a cap, since that is a supply limit.

David Lindsay noted that rice production may increase in the future and the potential for double cropping corn and its effects on demands. Jennifer Walker noted that crop demands are unlikely to decrease under increasing population growth.

David Lindsay asked that a similar writeup on the methodology be provided as in the last round of planning.

At the end of the discussion, Lauri asked whether the committee had a comfort level with the surface water demand revisions as presented, and received general agreement.

7. Review schedule

- a. Schedule future meetings of Population and Demand Committee, as needed.
- b. Consider report(s) to and request(s) of the full Region K Regional Water Planning Group

Next committee meeting should occur in early April, prior to the planning group meeting.

David started a discussion of how golf course water demands were treated in planning. Lann indicated that they should appear under “county-other” WUG demands if not supplied by a municipal WUG. David asked that the golf courses receive attention due to their potential for large water use.

David noted the large potential demand from Region K from the BCRUA project that is bringing water from Lake Travis to Round Rock, Leander, and Cedar Park. So the supply will be from Region K but the demand is in Region G. David expressed concerns about the timing of the diversions, and what limits were placed on how much and when diversions occurred. Monica said that in 2027 the deep water intake and plant expansion were set to be complete, and that water was already being used as part of the project. Monica indicated that the diversion was limited by the treatment plant capacity.

8. New/other business, agenda items for next meeting

Agenda items suggested for next meeting:

- a. Groundwater component of irrigation demand projections, also “apples to pears” comparison of projections from this cycle vs. last cycle.
- b. Pop methodology & projections
- c. Demand methodology & projections

9. Receive public comments

No public comments were offered for this item.

10. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 P.M.