

Public invited to comment on 2021 regional water plans

It's only the second quarter of 2020, but the state is looking ahead - all the way to 2070 - to ensure that Texans have enough water supplies to meet their needs.

Sixteen regional water planning groups, one for each regional water planning area of the state, are in the final stages of developing their 2021 regional water plans. The every-five-year plans include water strategies and projects to ensure each region will have enough water in the event of a drought of record in the next 50 years.

The initial plans were due on March 3 to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), the state agency responsible for overseeing state water planning. They are now available for public comment.

Stakeholder and public involvement are essential to the regional water planning process, and all input is considered.

"The more local input, the more local and accurate the planning process is," said Aubrey Spear, director of water utilities for the City of Lubbock and chair of the Region O water planning group. "That's what makes this type of planning successful - that grassroots effort."

According to Spear, who has been involved in regional water planning for nearly 13 years, the regional water planning process regularly brings together communities and representatives from different water user groups to discuss water issues in their region throughout the five-year cycle.

Each regional water planning group is statutorily required to have at least one volunteer representative from each of 12 interest group categories where applicable: the public, counties, municipalities, industry, agriculture, environment, small business, electric-generating utilities, river authorities, water districts, water utilities, and groundwater management areas.

"There's no other format for that, and this helps us be able to continually be together talking about [water] issues," he said. "With the plan and the right people and networks all in place, if we get into a severe drought situation, it's going to be easier to resolve problems."

When discussing strategies to ensure sufficient water supplies, each planning group takes into account information provided by

the TWDB, including population, historical water use, and demand projections and water source availability. Data provided at the local level is also important.

Another piece of data that planning groups consider is a socioeconomic analysis should groups not meet their water needs during a single year drought of record. The TWDB has historically provided this data, but in an effort to increase transparency, the socioeconomic analyses for the 2021 regional plans are also now available in an interactive format on the TWDB's website.

Planning groups must consider all local plans, big and small, to meet their future water needs. If a city doesn't come forward with specific strategies, the planning group as a whole can put forth a recommendation for them.

"The economic impact to the state as a whole could be very damaging if water needs are not met," said Temple McKinnon, Director of Water Use, Projections, and Planning at the TWDB. "For example, the 2017 State Water Plan estimated annual economic losses of \$151 billion by 2070."

The 2017 - 2021 regional water plans will complete the fifth cycle of regional planning following the Texas Legislature's 1997 legislation that changed

the state water planning process to a bottom-up approach.

"Our process provides a forum for everybody to be talking to one another and informing them of their plans so nothing is going on in a vacuum," McKinnon said. "Now's a good time to get involved to help make sure Texans have the water they need."

Written comments on the regional water plans should be directed to each regional water planning group within 60 days of their scheduled public hearing.

Final, adopted plans will be due to the TWDB on October 14, 2020, and once approved by the Board they will become part of the 2022 State Water Plan.

For more information about the state and regional water planning process, visit the TWDB's website at www.twdb.texas.gov/.

Top Tips to Plant, Grow and Care for a Container Garden

(StatePoint) Container gardens are a viable and popular cultivation option, especially for those who have limited sun-exposed spaces or are looking to start small and learn the basics of gardening.

"Containers, whether bought or recycled, are a great place to plant herb and vegetable gardens," says landscape designer, Doug Scott of Redeem

Your Ground in Atlanta, Ga. "But to get it right, there are a few things to keep in mind."

To help you successfully cultivate a container garden, Scott offers the following pointers:

- Well-drained, not dry or overly wet soil, is necessary for herb and vegetable growth, so using bottom-draining pots with a peat-based potting soil specifically formulated for herbs and veggies will facilitate proper soil drainage and moisture retention.

- The proper container size depends on what you'll be growing. Most small herbs do well in pots as small as eight inches in diameter, while larger plants may require a gallon pot or larger. For visual interest, consider repurposing items around the house to use as your container, such as an old pail.

- Incorporate a "thriller, filler, spiller" planting approach to maximize space and aesthetic appeal. This means tall focal plants in back, middle layer plants that fill in, and plants that will cascade over the container in front.

- Soil dries out more quickly in container gardens than garden beds, especially if you place containers outdoors in the sun. Perform daily soil moisture checks. You may need to water outdoor container gardens every day -- and possibly twice a day -- in extremely hot weather.

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	5-9	5-10	5-11	5-12	5-13	5-14	5-15	5-16	5-17	5-18	5-19	5-20	5-21	5-22	5-23	5-24	5-25	5-26	5-27	5-28	5-29	5-30	5-31	6-1	6-2	6-3	6-4	6-5	6-6	6-7	6-8
Counties w/Covid-19	219	219	218	219	218	218	221	221	221	221	223	224	224	225	226	227	228	229	229	229	230	230	230	231	231	231	235	234	234	234	
Confirmed Cases	37,860	38,869	39,869	41,048	42,403	43,851	45,198	46,999	47,784	48,693	49,912	51,323	52,268	53,449	54,509	55,348	55,971	56,560	57,921	59,776	61,006	62,338	64,287	64,880	66,568	68,271	69,920	71,613	73,553	74,978	75,616
Active Cases	16,670	16,759	17,056	17,241	17,726	18,148	18,472	19,093	18,967	19,065	19,280	19,664	19,664	22,068	22,558	22,558	22,662	22,446	22,055	19,270	19,312	19,039	20,192	19,864	20,353	20,679	21,354	21,960	22,839	23,390	23,341
Fatalities	1,049	1,088	1,100	1,133	1,158	1,216	1,272	1,305	1,336	1,347	1,369	1,419	1,440	1,480	1,506	1,519	1,527	1,536	1,562	1,601	1,626	1,648	1,672	1,678	1,698	1,734	1,767	1,788	1,819	1,830	1,836
Hospitalized	1,735	1,626	1,525	1,725	1,676	1,648	1,716	1,791	1,512	1,551	1,732	1,791	1,680	1,578	1,688	1,572	1,511	1,534	1,645	1,692	1,701	1,752	1,684	1,756	1,773	1,487	1,796	1,855	1,822	1,878	1,935
Tested	489,294	501,776	525,697	538,172	587,431	623,284	645,992	678,471	693,276	723,013	744,937	770,241	800,433	834,437	870,935	870,935	906,074	906,074	961,861	989,994	1,027,444	1,054,791	1,073,491	1,093,676	1,117,274	1,150,868	1,174,948	1,209,187	1,218,955	1,255,899	1,286,139
Recovered	20,141	21,022	21,713	22,674	23,519	24,487	25,454	26,601	27,570	28,371	29,359	30,341	31,223	32,277	33,385	33,385	35,292	36,375	37,626	38,905	40,068	41,651	42,423	43,338	44,517	45,858	46,799	47,865	48,895	49,758	50,439
# Daily New Cases	1,251	1,009	1,000	1,179	1,355	1,448	1,347	1,801	785	909	1,219	1,411	945	1,181	1,010	839	623	589	1,361	1,855	1,230	1,332	1,949	593	1,688	1,703	1,649	1,693	1,940	1,425	638
# Daily New Fatalities	45	39	12	33	25	58	56	33	31	11	22	50	21	40	26	13	9	9	26	39	25	22	24	6	20	36	33	21	31	11	6
% Confirmed of those Tested	7.73	7.74	7.58	7.62	7.21	7.03	6.99	6.92	6.89	6.73	6.70	6.66	6.53	6.40	6.25	6.35	6.17	6.24	6.02	6.03	5.93	5.90	5.98	5.93	5.95	5.93	5.95	5.92	6.03	5.97	5.87
% Hospitalized	4.58	4.18	3.82	4.20	3.95	3.75	3.79	3.81	3.16	3.18	3.47	3.48	3.21	2.95	3.09	2.84	2.69	2.71	2.84	2.83	2.78	2.81	2.61	2.70	2.66	2.17	2.56	2.59	2.47	2.50	2.55
% Fatal	2.77	2.79	2.75	2.76	2.73	2.77	2.81	2.77	2.79	2.76	2.74	2.76	2.75	2.76	2.76	2.74	2.72	2.71	2.69	2.67	2.66	2.64	2.60	2.58	2.55	2.53	2.52	2.49	2.47	2.44	2.42
% Recovered	53.19	54.08	54.46	55.23	55.46	55.84	56.31	56.59	57.69	58.26	58.82	59.11	59.73	60.38	61.24	60.31	63.05	64.31	64.96	65.08	65.67	66.81	65.99	66.79	66.87	67.17	66.93	66.83	66.47	66.36	66.70