

Water Supply Resource Plan



LCRA is preparing a long-range plan called the Water Supply Resource Plan, which is designed to plan for firm water needs for cities, businesses and industries to the year 2100. Firm water is the amount of water that can be supplied from the Highland Lakes and lower Colorado River during a repeat of the 1950s drought of record. Cities and industries acquire firm water to meet their demands. It is important to plan now for future needs because developing additional water supplies can take a long time.

Join the conversation about water supply

Step 1: Log on to www.lcra.org/watersupply. Review the draft Water Supply Resource Plan, a long-range plan focused on planning water supplies for future generations.

Step 2: Give your input.

Attend a community conversation

Tuesday, Feb. 23, open house 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-8 p.m.

El Campo Civic Center

2350 N. Mechanic St. (State Highway 71)

El Campo, Texas 77437

Thursday, Feb. 25, open house 5:30 p.m.; discussion 6-8 p.m.

Burnet Community Center

401 E. Jackson St.

Burnet, Texas 78611

Monday, March 8, open house 6 p.m.; discussion 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Austin - LCRA Service Center

3505 Montopolis Drive, Building A

Austin, Texas 78744



OR

Complete an online survey before March 19 at www.lcra.org/watersupply.

What is in the plan?

LCRA's current water supplies

LCRA's current water supplies - the Highland Lakes and downstream run-of-river water rights - may provide adequate supplies to meet firm (municipal and industrial) water demands for 50 years or more based on the historical drought of record. However, the current drought or future droughts may be more severe than the historical drought of record and could reduce the amount of firm supplies that LCRA currently has. LCRA will continue to monitor and manage its water supplies during droughts and will modify its estimates of reliable, available water supply in future plan updates if new data supports a change.

Planning process

LCRA is planning water supply for future generations. The planning process began in mid-2008 with input from the public on water supply options and planning priorities. Based on this input and technical analysis, LCRA staff prepared the draft Water Supply Resource Plan and is seeking your input on it. Public input will be shared with the LCRA Board before it considers approval of the plan. LCRA also works with the Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group (Region K) to prepare a regional water plan.

Planning water supply for a growing region

LCRA projects that water demand could increase 14 to 25 percent more than previous estimates. LCRA relied on population data and projections from federal, state and local sources to estimate population growth to the year 2100. LCRA then computed water demands based on Texas Water Development Board water use data and added industrial and power plant needs.

Guiding principles

Based on input at the 2008 public meetings, guiding principles were developed by LCRA staff to evaluate the use of various water supply options. Some of the principles are to:

- use all water supplies owned and controlled by LCRA,
- provide a margin of safety of at least 10 to 20 years ahead of when supplies will be needed,
- develop a diversified water portfolio,
- manage and protect existing supplies through watershed management and conservation, and
- develop partnerships and regional cooperation to enhance water supplies.

Water supply options

The good news is that the lower Colorado River basin has numerous water supply options available for future needs. All options have a cost, with some being less expensive and others being much more costly. Refer to the full report to see costs for different water supply strategies at www.lcra.org/watersupply.

Three water supply strategies were developed for the draft Water Supply Resource Plan to demonstrate the range of water supply options available for the region. The best plan will likely include various options from the three strategies.

Strategy I maximizes the benefits of LCRA's existing water rights. At a cost of about \$3 million to \$5 million, this is the least expensive option and it would meet projected firm water demands for 50 years or more. This strategy does not meet firm demands to 2100. Again, as noted above, if droughts worse than the historical drought of record occur, then the reliable water supply available during those more severe droughts may not meet projected demands for as long. Future plan updates will address this issue if it arises, and may require earlier implementation of new water supplies.

Strategy II is designed to maximize the benefits of the existing water rights and significant conservation efforts with estimated costs ranging from \$225 million to \$525 million over a 40-year implementation period, depending on the approach. This strategy would meet projected firm water demands to 2100.

Strategy III relies on the existing water rights, current conservation program, and building one or more of new supplies such as an off-channel reservoir, desalination, aquifer storage and recovery, and groundwater importation. Costs for identified options range from \$721 million to \$1.6 billion. This strategy does not list all possible strategies, but instead, provides a range of options and costs. This strategy would meet projected firm water demands to 2100.

All strategies have impacts on meeting agricultural water needs downstream, lake levels, and environmental flows in the river and Matagorda Bay. Read the full report and give your input at www.lcra.org/watersupply.

Lower Colorado River Authority
P.O. Box 220
Austin, Texas 78767-0220
1-800-776-5272
www.lcra.org