



MEMO

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Jenna Covington, Executive Director
DATE: March 22, 2024
SUBJECT: March 28, 2024, Board Meeting

This month's agenda is quite busy for the Board as we continue to drive projects forward. Additionally, we will be spending time reviewing and discussing the status of our third year in the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan.

As a quick reminder, we have sent out letters to the Member Cities regarding re-appointments. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Brian Brooks bbrooks@ntmwd.com.

Strategic Plan Initiative Highlights

At the Board meeting, we will be providing our annual update on the progress of implementing our 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. It has been a productive and exciting year of work on the big challenges and projects that the District is faced with. Our teams of managers and leaders who oversee the completion of initiatives have done an outstanding job of continuing progress and bringing many initiatives over the goal line.

In the past year, we have completed one-third of the initiatives from the five-year plan. Of the seventeen completed initiatives, eleven are transitioning into the next phases. While we want to highlight and celebrate all these accomplishments, there will not be enough time during the Board meeting to adequately cover these. Below are three initiatives that we will not be able to cover in the meeting but are worth highlighting in this Board Memo.

Initiative 1.4.2: Comply with Regulations for Emergency Preparedness, PFAS, Emergency Preparedness, and Lead and Copper - This initiative covered three very specific and unique regulatory issues. Following Winter Storm Uri and the subsequent passage of SB3 in 2021, our Emergency Preparedness staff moved quickly to plan and implement the requirements put in place by the bill. We have completed and submitted our emergency preparedness plan to TCEQ, which has been accepted. That plan requires the District to implement power supply strategies that will ensure operations for at least 24 hours following a major disaster. Moreover, activities that support our cities' efforts to comply with lead and copper rules are now part of routine water and environmental system operations.

As the Board is fully aware, the regulations surrounding PFAS substances have emerged as a significant and complicated issue that will require high levels of effort from District staff in multiple departments to address. As such, PFAS is transitioning into its own initiative.

Initiative 1.4.1: Complete Long-Range Water Supply Planning Process - Over the last three years, the District has undertaken an extensive examination of long-range water supply planning strategies to meet the substantial demand growth in our region. In February 2021, the Board authorized a Long-Range Water Supply Plan study. Throughout the progression of the study, the Board provided valuable engagement and feedback. We recently completed all tasks of the study and are incorporating the final comments to finalize the study report.

This initiative will now transition into the next phase based on the recommended water supply strategies. The new initiative will be titled "Implement Water Supply Strategies to Accommodate Regional Growth." Because of the time and complexity associated with developing new water supplies, multiple strategies will be simultaneously pursued/studied. Two strategies currently active include the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Study and Wylie Raw Water Pump Station No. 4.

Initiative 2.2.3: Protect Endangered Species in the Trinity River - The District has been working over the last two years with multiple regional partners to develop a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for four species of mussels and two species of turtle found in the Trinity River Basin. Candidate species are those that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is considering proposing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

A CCAA provides incentives for non-federal property owners to engage in voluntary conservation activities that provide a net conservation benefit to the species. For the 25-year agreement, participants agree to undertake specific activities that address the identified threats to the target species. In return for the participant's voluntary conservation actions, USFWS issues an Enhancement of Survival Permit under the ESA. The permit provides assurances that, if the species is subsequently listed and no other changes have occurred, they will not require the permittee to conduct any additional conservation measures without consent. Additionally, the permit authorizes a specific level of incidental take of the covered species, should listing occur.

After much diligent work and hours of coordination with all parties, USFWS signed the CCAA on January 31, 2024. This represents the conclusion of the strategic portion of this initiative with future activities in this area becoming part of regular operations.