

Framing for State-supported Regional Water Planning and Management in Oregon

DRAFT FOR WORKGROUP DISCUSSION

(Version 1; 8/2/2022)

Document Layout and User Guide

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) has worked with Oregon Consensus to develop the following document based on the shared learning, discussions, and research of the workgroup that has occurred between February and June 2022. This document is intended to help the workgroup build towards a final product that contains recommendations for state-supported regional water planning and management in Oregon. **This document is offered as a basis for advancing conversations of the workgroup and does not represent individual positions of OWRD, the state, or workgroup members.**

The first section of this document, “Conceptual Framing”, establishes the foundation for the following section “Options and Scenarios”. The goal of the August 2 workgroup meeting will be to (1) confirm the conceptual framing with the workgroup, (2) discuss and evolve basic framework scenarios for the “pre-planning” and “moving the plan to action” phases, and (3) determine where alignment exists to move forward in building those scenarios out and creating recommendations.

Conceptual Framing

Oregon’s current options for regional water resources planning and implementation are fragmented, underfunded and difficult to navigate. As Oregon enters an era of water scarcity, this workgroup has a unique opportunity to recommend improvements to the Legislature and the Governor to develop a state supported system for regional water planning to help Oregonians achieve a safe, predictable, and reliable water future.

Below are assumptions of the system that OWRD has made to create the options and scenarios laid out in the following section. These assumptions are rooted in workgroup conversations and shared learning to date, including the list of “Essential Elements” derived from previous water planning work in Oregon. Some assumptions contain important nuances that are being developed by task groups (i.e., public and community engagement) or will be discussed at future workgroup meetings (i.e., data).

- A. The system of regional water planning and implementation in Oregon contains 5 phases: (1) Pre-Planning; (2) Planning; (3) Moving a Plan to Action; (4) Project Implementation; and (5) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptation (Figure 1). While other paths exist and can be outcomes of the pre-planning, this group will focus its efforts on the main pathway identified by the dark blue boxes numbered 1-5 in Figure 1 below.
- B. The regional plan will be developed at a watershed(s) or basin scale;
- C. The planning process will be transparent, inclusive, and collaborative, with a balanced representation of water interests

- D. The planning process will be voluntary and community-initiated and led, in partnership with the state
- E. The planning process will involve strong public participation and community engagement
- F. The planning process will be informed by the best available data
- G. The approach to planning will be integrated and based on the goal of better understanding and meeting instream and out-of-stream water needs now and in the future, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs
- H. State agencies will serve as active partners throughout the phases of water planning and implementation
- I. The planning process will be guided by the principles in the state’s [Integrated Water Resources Strategy](#) (p. 179) and [100-year Water Vision](#) (p.21-22)
- J. The basin/regional approach to water planning is not intended to replace existing programs or paths for water resources planning and implementation. It will be non-regulatory, consistent with state laws and policy, and will not jeopardize existing water rights.

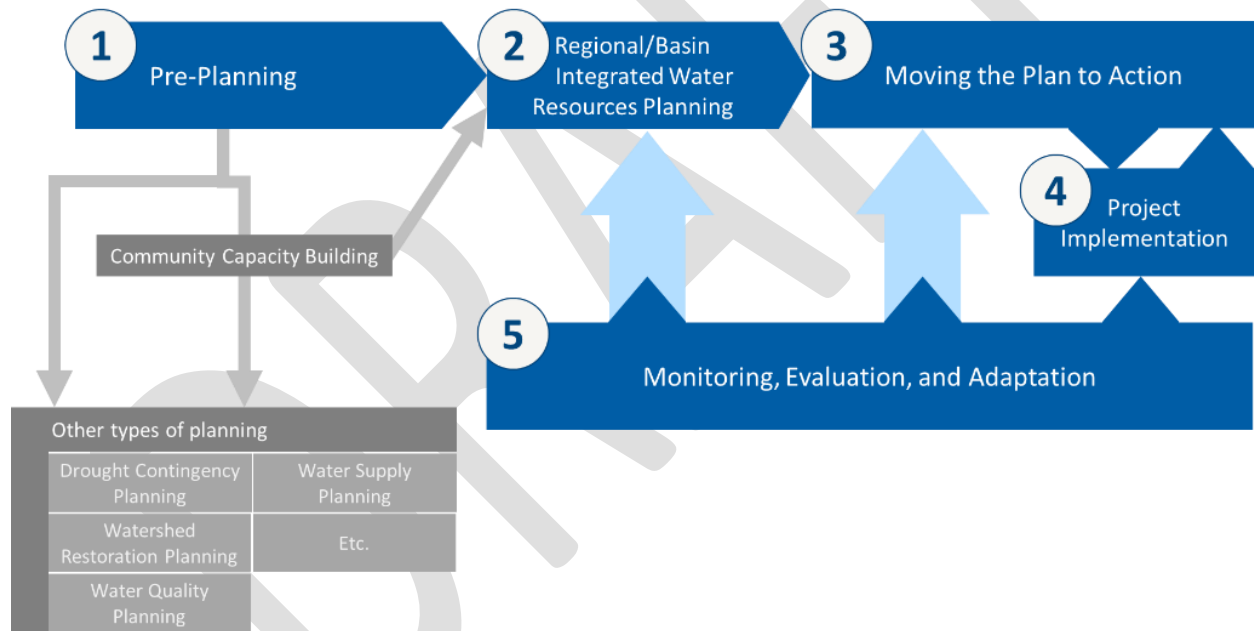


Figure 1. Phases (1-5) and alternate pathways for regional water planning. Numbered dark blue boxes indicate the pathway that this workgroup is currently focusing on.

Options and Scenarios

Options and scenarios have been drafted based on the shared discussion and learning of the workgroup and with the assumptions contained in the section above. At the August 2nd workgroup meeting, there will be an opportunity during workgroup discussion for members to propose revisions or alternate options for consideration. The goal is for the group to build a basic framework/scenario for each phase that will inform any additional work needed and ultimately, final workgroup recommendations.

This document focuses on the two phases of the system that were identified by workgroup members in the June survey as the highest priority to work on: pre-planning and moving a plan to action. After the August 2nd meeting, Oregon Consensus and OWRD will adapt this approach to move forward with the remaining three phases of the system (planning on August 23rd; project implementation, and monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation in September).

Phase 1: Pre-Planning

Summary

As discussed by the work group, pre-planning builds the foundation for intensive planning efforts. The pre-planning phase allows for an assessment of what type of water planning may be most appropriate (e.g., drought contingency planning, watershed restoration planning, water quality planning, water supply planning, etc.) and the level of readiness to engage in formal planning. Pre-planning could include components such as relationship and trust building, collection and review of existing data and analyses, and training for local communities.

Current Status

A pre-planning phase has not been part of previous water planning efforts by OWRD or other state agencies and can currently only be accomplished by groups interested in water planning on an ad hoc basis as their resources permit.

Scenarios

In Table 1, below, three alternative scenarios are considered:

1. **Full State Support for Pre-Planning Program:** The legislature appropriates funding to a state agency to set up a pre-planning program, including grant funds for local planning groups and funding for agency program staff.
2. **State support for Situational Assessment only:** The legislature appropriates funding to a state agency to develop a system of criteria and metrics for a situational assessment, along with minimal ongoing funding to support assessment review.
3. **Minimal State support:** The legislature makes direct appropriations once a biennium on an ad hoc basis with no support to state agencies to participate.

Table 1: Pre-Planning Phase Scenarios		Scenario 1: Full State Support	Scenario 2: State support for Situational Assessment Only	Scenario 3: Minimal State Support	Workgroup (intentionally left blank)
Activities Completed in Pre-planning:					
Local Planning Groups	Convening and facilitating	X		X	
	Community engagement	X			
	Situational assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-level review of existing data to understand the status of water resources Survey of existing plans and planning resources Community interest and readiness evaluation Determination of what interests and groups will sit at the table, including state and federal agencies 	X			
State Agencies	Administering grants	X			
	Technical support (e.g., compiling of foundational data and analyses, developing training materials and educational workshops)	X			
	Development of criteria/metrics to measure success of pre-planning effort	X	X		
	Review of pre-planning effort to determine viability for regional integrated water resources planning	X	X		
Outcomes of pre-planning					
State determines if the area is ready for:					
A. Regional integrated water resources planning					
B. Alternative planning (e.g., drought contingency planning, watershed restoration planning, water quality planning, water supply planning, etc.)					
C. The area needs to build more community capacity before engaging in planning work.					
D. A, B, or C					
Commitments from initial planning group members					

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Table 1: Pre-Planning Phase Scenarios	Scenario 1: Full State Support	Scenario 2: State support for Situational Assessment Only	Scenario 3: Minimal State Support	Workgroup (intentionally left blank)
Connection to next phase				
Phase 2: Planning: If the situational assessment determines regional integrated water resources planning is the appropriate next step, the local planning group:				
a) Automatically qualifies for funding for regional integrated water resources planning	X			
b) Receives a competitive advantage in a regional integrated water resources planning grant program		X		
c) Receives no explicit advantage in a regional integrated water resources planning grant program			X	

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Phase 3: Moving a Plan to Action

Summary

After a plan has been completed, continued engagement by local and state partners to move the plan to the implementation phase may be needed. In this phase, strategies outlined in the plan are refined, feasibility is assessed, policy needs are addressed, and projects are prepared that can take advantage of implementation funding opportunities.

Current Status

Some aspects of this phase, such as capacity building/maintenance, are not currently resourced. Others are largely under resourced, with some agencies offering limited support, such as OWRD's feasibility study grants and OWEB's technical assistance grants.

Scenarios

In Table 2, below, three alternative scenarios are considered:

1. **Full state support:** The legislature appropriates funding to a state agency to set up a plan implementation program that includes grant funds for implementation coordination, along with funding for state agency capacity to continue to engage in and support this phase. The legislature also fully funds current grant opportunities related to this phase, such as OWEB's technical assistance grants and OWRD's feasibility study grants.
2. **State support for implementation coordination:** The legislature appropriates funding to a state agency to offer grants for ongoing implementation coordination each biennium.
3. **Minimal support:** The legislature makes direct appropriations once a biennium on an ad hoc basis.

Table 2: Moving a Plan to Action Phase Scenarios		Scenario 1: Full State Support	Scenario 2: State Support for Implementation Coordination	Scenario 3: Minimal State Support	Workgroup (intentionally left blank)
Activities Completed in Moving a Plan to Action:					
Local Planning Groups	Convening and facilitating	X	X	X	
	Community engagement	X	X		
	Grant writing and administration	X	X		
	Continued engagement with state agencies and partners	X			
State Agencies	Administering implementation coordination grants	X	X		
	Integrated multi-agency team that continues to provide:				
	A) Coordination and consultation with local planning groups				
	B) Technical support				
	C) Permit coordination				
D) All of the above	X				
Outcomes of Moving a Plan to Action					
Continued refinement of project prioritization and implementation strategy		X	X		
Continued relationship building and collaboration of local planning groups		X	X		
Continued relationship building and collaboration of local planning groups and state agencies		X			

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Table 2: Moving a Plan to Action Phase Scenarios	Scenario 1: Full State Support	Scenario 2: State Support for Implementation Coordination	Scenario 3: Minimal State Support	Workgroup (intentionally left blank)
Connection to next phase(s)				
Phase 4: Project Implementation Phase: Continued meeting and collaboration of the planning group beyond the planning phase would:				
a) Create a pipeline of well-designed, well-thought-out regionalized prioritized projects that are competitive for state and federal funding	X	X		
Phase 5: Monitoring, Adaptation, and Evaluation Phase: Continued meeting and collaboration of the planning group beyond the planning phase would give planning groups:				
a) A competitive edge to receive state-support for plan updates		X		
b) Automatic access to state support for regular plan updates	X			