

Purpose and Value of a Plan

[From Water Resources Commission Staff Report: Agenda Item I, August 25, 2021](#)

[Link to Staff Report](#)

IV. Department Support for Implementation of State-Recognized Plans

The value of the plan has been a recurring topic of conversation between the planning groups and state agencies at various Learning Partnership events over the past four years. The planning groups have also asked how the state can help with implementation of their plans, as documented in the Gaps and Needs Handout (see Attachment 2). State assistance for plan implementation can take many forms. One track is for planning groups to access existing services, such as funding programs like Feasibility Study Grants and Water Project Grants and Loans, or water right transaction services like the Allocation of Conserved Water.

A second track would be to provide designated support, with staffing or financial resources. The Legislature's \$1 million authorization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for place-based planning may provide an opportunity for direct financial support of plan implementation. The Department is awaiting guidance on ARPA funding requirements/sideboards and gathering information on planning group needs.

The Department intends to bring a spending plan to the Commission for adoption at the November 2021 Commission meeting. The Department is also considering what staffing resources may be able to engage in plan implementation, akin to how the Planning Coordinators participate and assist with plan development.

V. Conclusion

The transition from planning to implementation is a critical step for planning groups. Providing state recognition of place-based integrated water resource plans can give valuable credibility to those plans. Access to additional state support for implementation of state-recognized plans provides further benefit for seeking state recognition.

[Step 5 Guidance - The following is excerpted from the Step 5 Guidance \(p.2\)](#)

[Link to full document](#)

The purpose of a Plan is to communicate and engage a variety of audiences – water partners, the general public, potential funders, and decision-makers – about the community's water resources situation, critical water issues, its shared vision and goals, recommended actions, and a strategy for implementing the Plan.

The Plan can have significant value in several important ways:

Competitive Edge for Funding Opportunities. State-recognized Plans built through a locally-led, collaborative process describe recommended actions that may be attractive investment

opportunities for funding programs offered by state and federal agencies, philanthropic organizations, partners, local government, the state legislature, and others.

Relationship Development. Developing the Plan has brought diverse water interests together, provided new opportunities for dialogue about difficult water issues, and built new levels of cooperation, trust, and respect for diverse perspectives about the different values of water. These relationships can have positive effects for many years, especially as the group transitions from planning to implementation of the Plan.

Shared Vision for Action. Most communities in Oregon have not previously developed such a deep, common understanding of their local water resources and of the water challenges they face, and then developed actions to address those challenges. Being better informed and having a vision and Plan for a better future can lead to improved cooperation and proactive solutions to complex water challenges.

Communication Tool. A Plan containing consensus-based solutions/strategies that are broadly supported by diverse interests is a powerful tool for communicating to decisionmakers and the public what you need to succeed. The Plan will communicate to decision-makers - local, state, and federal - the community's vision and the financial and technical resources, and cooperation, needed to achieve that vision.

Alignment of Plan with the Statewide Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The Plan should identify which of the planning group's recommended actions are consistent with IWRS recommended actions and will help the state achieve its 50-year vision of "...maintaining healthy water resources to meet the needs of Oregonians and Oregon's environment for generations to come." The Plan will also inform updates to the statewide IWRS and highlight opportunities for achieving statewide IWRS goals at the local level. It can help ensure alignment between local, state and federal actions that affect water management.