

# **Stakeholder Group Guidelines**

## **For Improving Austin Streams: I-Plan Update, 2021-22**

As adopted by the Stakeholder Group at their December 16, 2021 meeting.

### **I. Goal**

The goal of the stakeholder update to the 2015 Implementation Plan (I-Plan) is to develop, implement, and evaluate the success of strategies to reduce fecal contamination such that the affected watersheds fully meet contact recreation use water quality standards by *[date to be determined as work on update progresses]*.

### **II. Composition of General Stakeholder Group**

The Stakeholder Group for updating the I-Plan is composed of any individuals or representatives of organizations who:

- 1) Live or work in the watersheds impacted by the I-Plan.
- 2) May be affected by, or may affect, water quality in those watersheds.
- 3) Are able to develop or implement actions to reduce pollutants in the watersheds.

All interested persons who meet any of these criteria are invited to participate in the Stakeholder Group. The Stakeholder Group will strive to include a variety of people that reflect all the diverse interests within the watersheds. The Stakeholder Group members will work to foster local support for actions aimed at restoring surface water quality in the updated I-Plan.

Stakeholder Group members participate voluntarily. Members are not selected or appointed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), which is the sponsoring agency for the group. The names and affiliation of people who commit to serving regularly in the Stakeholder Group until the I-Plan update is completed will be provided on the webpage [Improving Austin Streams: I-Plan Update](#). This list will be updated at the discretion of the Stakeholder Group to include new people or organizations or remove anyone who leaves. However, any person who qualifies as a stakeholder based on the criteria above and who chooses to attend any Stakeholder Group meeting is entitled to voice his or her opinions or suggestions at those meetings.

### **III. Coordination Committee**

The Stakeholder Group will choose members from amongst them to serve as a Coordination Committee for developing the written I-Plan Update. The Coordination Committee will include at least one representative of the organizations that are likely to be responsible for implementing I-Plan measures, along with at least one representative of each stakeholder class (e.g., government, environmental groups, neighborhood, parks, business groups) participating in the

Stakeholder Group. Coordination Committee members should have the authority to make decisions on behalf of their organizations on routine matters.

Each Coordination Committee member may designate an alternate who may participate fully in committee meetings, including counting toward a quorum and making decisions, if the member cannot attend. The names of alternates shall be submitted to the Coordination Committee and the Facilitator. Coordination Committee members and their alternates shall be responsible for keeping each other informed of relevant issues. Members should attempt to name an alternate who can serve for the duration of the I-Plan development.

Coordination Committee members acknowledge that they have been named as the representatives of all others in their stakeholder classes, and not just themselves. To this end, the Committee members pledge to communicate regularly with other members of their stakeholder classes to ensure that deliberations reflect the viewpoints of their stakeholder classes as a whole. The names and affiliation of people who commit to serving on the Coordination Committee will be provided and updated on the webpage [Improving Austin Streams: I-Plan Update](#) and in Appendix A of this document.

The Coordination Committee will present its recommended management measures and control actions and an outline for the I-Plan Update to the Stakeholder Group for discussion prior to writing the full I-Plan Update. The Coordination Committee will also present its final written draft plan to the Stakeholder Group and discussion prior to submitting it for TCEQ review and concurrence.

#### **IV. Planning Committee**

The Stakeholder Group will choose a Planning Committee that will assist the Facilitator with preparing draft meeting agendas for both the Stakeholder Group and the Coordination Committee. The Planning Group will also assist the Facilitator as needed in gathering information for use by the stakeholders in formulating options or plans.

#### **V. Reaching Decisions**

##### *A. Quorum*

A simple majority of the Coordination Committee must be present to constitute a quorum for making decisions. While informal decisions may be made in the absence of a quorum, formal decisions may be made only when there is a quorum.

The Coordination Committee may make time-sensitive decisions or minor changes to previous decisions by participating in an informal, virtual meeting that is not open to the public, or by vote via email, in the event it is impractical to gather the group together as quickly as needed.

## *B. Decision by Consensus*

The Coordination Committee will attempt to make decisions by consensus. While the Coordination Committee is responsible for making all final decisions regarding the content of the I-Plan, the Committee will work to build consensus for the proposed plan within the entire Stakeholder Group to the extent practical. Consensus is a decision built by identifying and exploring all members' interests and by assembling a package of agreements which satisfies those interests to the greatest extent possible.

A consensus is reached when all members participating in a meeting at which there is a quorum agree that decisions have taken their major interests into consideration and satisfactorily addressed them so that each person can live with and support those decisions. Consensus is also a process that involves developing alternatives and assessing the impacts of those alternatives, with full opportunity for each member to voice his or her perspective.

Achieving consensus does not mean unanimity on all issues. Some members may strongly endorse a particular solution or decision while others may accept it as a workable agreement. A member can be in consensus with a group decision without embracing each element of it or having his or her interests satisfied to the fullest extent. Members agree that given the combination of gains and trade-offs in decision making and in choosing from among available options, they are willing to reach decisions that are the best the stakeholders can make at any particular time with the information available to them.

Members agree to abide by the following principles to foster consensus:

- Everyone actively participates.
- Members have a common base of information.
- Members create an atmosphere where everyone can share views.
- Members respect disagreement as illuminating problems and improving decisions.
- Disagreement is used to discover unmet needs and to find a way to meet them.
- Members are specific about their concerns and why they matter and are open to all options for addressing them.

## *D. Decisions in the Absence of Consensus.*

If it appears that consensus cannot be reached on a particular proposal, the Coordination Committee may suspend the attempt to reach consensus on that proposal by an affirmative vote of 75% of its full membership.

If the vote to end the consensus process is approved, a member may propose a vote on a particular matter. A proposal to be approved by vote must be considered at the same meeting at which consensus is suspended and must receive an affirmative

vote of 75% of the Coordination Committee members present. Each Coordination Committee member has one vote.

Any decision involving a management measure or control action must have the concurrence of any organization or individual responsible for its implementation.

Dissenting members may submit a minority report to be included in the group's records or with the group's final recommendations.

## **VI. Conducting the Meetings**

Meetings of both the Stakeholder Group and the Coordination Committee will be open to the public and may be held jointly. Notice of the meetings and agendas for both groups will be posted on the webpage [Improving Austin Streams: I-Plan Update](#). Any interested person may attend the meetings of either group, but only members of the Coordination Committee may participate in making decisions for the group.

If work groups are formed, their meetings may be open or closed to the public at the discretion of the Coordination Committee. Work group meeting date notices, agendas, and meeting summaries will not be posted on the I-Plan Update webpage. However, work group reports to the Coordination Committee or the Stakeholder Group may be published on the I-Plan Update webpage at the discretion of the Coordination Committee.

### *A. Meeting Schedules*

The Stakeholder Group, Coordination Committee, and any work groups formed will set their own meeting schedules.

### *B. Records of Proceedings*

Meetings will not be electronically recorded unless the group agrees in advance to do so. The Facilitator will prepare draft meeting summaries of each Stakeholder Group or Coordination Committee meeting to circulate among the Coordination Committee by email for review and comment. The Facilitator will make changes based on comments and circulate the revised summary for Committee approval via email. Any content in a meeting summary that cannot be approved via email will be discussed at the next meeting. Meeting summaries will reflect decisions and key points of discussion to assist the group in moving forward, but will not be minutes that document everything said by every person present. The approved meeting summaries will be posted on the [Improving Austin Streams: I-Plan Update](#) webpage.

### *C. Discussion Guidelines*

- Listen to understand
- Work on the problem, not the person
- Stay on topic

- Share relevant information
- Test assumptions

#### *D. Process Facilitator*

The Facilitator will prepare an agenda and process for each meeting with input from the Planning Team.

The Facilitator will support the stakeholder meetings by helping the group move through its agenda and stay on track, seeking to move participants past deadlock or impasse, and generally supporting the meeting process.

### **VII. Safeguards**

#### *A. Others' Positions*

Members agree that they are entering into a covenant of mutual respect and professional courtesy. When speaking in outside public forums, each member may express his or her point of view about the issues being considered by the Stakeholder Group or Coordination Committee; however, members agree not to report, by name, any other member's position. Members also agree that they will not publicly predict the outcome of the stakeholders' deliberations. Members will not make personal attacks against, or prejudiced statements about, other members.

#### *B. Information*

All members agree to openly exchange relevant information that is readily available to them. If a member believes he or she cannot or should not release relevant information, the member will provide the substance of the information in some form (such as by aggregating data, by deleting non-relevant confidential information, or by providing summaries) or a general description of it and the reason for not providing it. No member is expected to share any information that is proprietary or subject to attorney/client privilege.

Members will provide information as much in advance of the meeting at which it will be discussed as is reasonably possible. Information and data provided to the Stakeholder Group and the Coordination Committee will be considered public records.

#### *C. News Media*

Representatives from the news media may attend stakeholders' meetings or may ask members to comment or answer questions about the Stakeholder Group or Coordination Committee business. Members agree that each member may offer his or her individual perspective in response to such inquiries; however, each member agrees not to attribute positions or views to other members by name, or to predict the outcome of the stakeholders' deliberations. Members are encouraged to direct

press inquiries concerning stakeholder group plans and procedures to [TCEQ Media Relations](#).

#### **VIII. Amendment of Stakeholder Guidelines**

The Coordination Committee may amend these guidelines at any meeting at which there is a quorum.

## **Appendix A: Coordination Committee Members**

Representatives of the following organizations are members of the Coordination Committee based on decisions of the Stakeholder Group at their September 29, 2021 meeting. The committee includes one representative from each listed group. The Coordination Committee may add representatives of additional groups that choose to participate in the I-Plan update if their addition will benefit the Committee's process. Organizations in this list may choose to remove themselves from the Coordination Committee prior to finalization of these final proposed stakeholder guidelines.

- City of Austin Watershed Protection
- Austin Water
- City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources
- University of Texas at Austin Environmental Health Services
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Shoal Creek Conservancy
- Austin Parks Foundation
- Austin Neighborhoods Council
- Home Builders Association of Greater Austin
- Lower Colorado River Authority
- Environment Texas
- Colorado River Alliance
- Waterloo Greenway
- People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources (PODER)
- Lone Star Chapter, Sierra Club

The stakeholders identified the following organizations, if their willingness to participate can be confirmed, as desirable members to add to the Coordination Committee.

- Keep Austin Beautiful
- A dog owner group
- Austin Chamber of Commerce or other business interest