



Water Utility Management

Client
City of Houston

Location
Houston, TX, USA

Collaborative Strategic Plan for Development of a Regional Water Distribution System

Project Description

Over the past four decades, the City of Houston has proactively invested more than \$2 billion to develop a comprehensive surface water infrastructure to reduce reliance on groundwater withdrawals that have resulted in severe coastal subsidence and aquifer degradation in the region. The City furthered this effort through the collaborative development of a strategic plan for delivery of surface water services throughout North Harris County.

The strategic plan recognized the diverse needs and interest of the region's water consumers, comprised of water users in the City and more than 240 municipal utility districts, and provide the framework for delivery and equitable cost distribution of high-quality, economical, surface water services.

The CH2M HILL team was selected to structure a consensus-based, decision-making process that will explore all avenues of program implementation, including the full spectrum of available public-private partnerships (P3), to ensure cost-effective delivery of regional water service.

The decision processes and techniques employed were developed by CH2M HILL, in collaboration with AwwaRF, during the "Balanced Evaluation of Public/Private Partnership Options" project.

The collaborative strategic plan was comprised of three basic deliverables, including a procurement instrument for non-traditional delivery and possibly operation of the City's Northeast Regional WTP, a wholesale service agreement template to govern extension of surface water service to area Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs), and a legislative and regulatory strategic plan to address potential institutional barriers to program implementation.

CH2M HILL worked with the Regional Advisory Board to involve groundwater users in the regional planning process. They also developed a comprehensive communications plan to educate civic leaders and members of the community about the City's intentions to develop the regional surface water solution and to promote its collaborative plan.