

CITY OF BLANCO

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-XX-XX-X

R-006

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BLANCO, TEXAS, PROVIDING COMMENTS TOWARD GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA 9 JOINT PLANNING TO ADOPT DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS; MAKING FINDINGS OF FACT; AND PROVIDING FOR RELATED MATTERS.

WHEREAS, Chapter 36, Section 108 of the Texas Water Code provides for the joint planning by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) of various Groundwater Management Areas consisting of Groundwater Conservation Districts; and

WHEREAS, the City of Blanco is contained within the boundaries of the Blanco Pedernales Groundwater Conservation District (BPGCD), which participates in Groundwater Management Area 9 (GMA 9); and

WHEREAS, GMA 9 districts shall every five years consider groundwater availability models and other data or information for the management area and shall propose for adoption Desired Future Conditions (DFCs) for the relevant aquifers within the management area; and

WHEREAS, the year 2021 represents a joint planning year for TWDB to update its 2016 DFCs for GMA 9; and

WHEREAS, state law allows the City to offer comments on behalf, and in the best interests, of its citizens to inform and influence the determination of DFCs by BPGCD and fellow districts within GMA 9, and

WHEREAS, the Trinity Aquifer is the relevant aquifer that feeds and interacts with the Blanco River, which is the primary water supply source for the City of Blanco, and is managed by GMA 9; and

WHEREAS, Texas Water Code Sec. 36.108 requires that GMA 9 districts shall consider aquifer uses or conditions, water supply needs, hydrological conditions, environmental impacts including spring flow and other interactions between groundwater and surface water, impact on subsidence, socioeconomic impacts, interests and rights in private property, DFC feasibility, and any other relevant information; and

WHEREAS, the comment period for the 2021 joint planning effort of GMA 9 districts continues through June 30, 2021;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Blanco City Council:

The Desired Future Condition for the Trinity Aquifer stated as an “increase in average drawdown of approximately 30 feet through 2060” does not adequately protect availability of groundwater in GMA 9, as evidenced by declining groundwater levels over the last decade. With no new demographics until Census 2020 is released later this year and no update of groundwater modeling, the GMA districts should take a more conservative view and reduce the drawdown toward zero to protect the aquifer until new and more refined data can be incorporated.

During the five years since the 2016 DFC update, population growth and rapid development in the eastern and southeastern districts have raised serious questions about modeled available groundwater, as wells fall to historic lows in mild drought conditions. Disparity in groundwater drawdowns across districts argues for greater attention to specific measures and additional DFCs related to spring flows. Health of spring flow is a measure of overall groundwater system health and directly observable to use as a drought trigger to protect groundwater resources.

Modeling to create the Blanco River Aquifer Assessment Tool (BRAAT) comes as a response to dye trace and other studies that have established much more complicated groundwater and surface water interactions. Until the BRAAT is completed, GMA 9 should account for obvious stresses on the groundwater system and the recent historical record of drawdowns greater than 100 feet in pockets near Blanco, Boerne, and Kerrville, during severe drought.

Mining the aquifer according to outdated modeling of drawdown effects is unsustainable. The baseline trend of groundwater health argues instead for reasonable steps to reduce pumping and preserve access to groundwater for essential use. Replacements for groundwater exist—rainwater harvesting, graywater reuse, aquifer storage and recovery, and direct potable reuse—and deserve greater focus and potential promotion through incentives.

The Blanco City Council respectfully asks the districts of GMA 9 to reconsider hydrological conditions rather than continuing an unsustainable status quo. The adverse environmental impacts of current DFCs on spring flow and interactions between groundwater and surface water have become clearer and more frequent and severe of late. Socioeconomic hardship is sure to follow, compounded by a surprising pace of development that only seems to be increasing.

Surface water in the Blanco River depends on support from healthy groundwater. The time has come to preserve and protect groundwater, take steps to use less and reuse more, and earnestly seek sustainable alternatives. Significantly reducing the average drawdown for the Trinity Aquifer as a GMA 9 DFC is the reasonable and prudent opportunity today.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 8TH DAY OF JUNE, 2021,
with 5 ayes, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

Rachel Lumpee
Hon. Rachel Lumpee, Mayor

