

The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of the Trinity River Authority building. The building is constructed from light-colored, textured stone or brick. It features a prominent, curved, cantilevered section that extends over a large glass window. The building is surrounded by lush green trees and shrubs. In the foreground, a low stone wall serves as a base for the text.

Trinity River Authority

2025–2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

CONSERVE ♦ PROTECT ♦ RECLAIM ♦ DEVELOP



Photo by Billie Lambeth.
A winner of the Spring 2024
Photo Contest at Wolf Creek Park.

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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

This 2025-2029 Strategic Plan is a living document that serves as a guide for what the Trinity River Authority of Texas aims to accomplish in the next five years. The document's priorities represent four major areas of focus that were identified through surveys and conversations with the Authority's internal and external audiences. The survey results are displayed on pages 20-23. Working toward each priority will help TRA better serve its customers, stakeholders, employees, and the Trinity basin, and empower its mission with the help of the Authority's staff.

Our goals for the next five years are tied to four priorities: Thriving basin and community, Industry-leading expertise and operational excellence, Effective messaging, and Empowering the mission.

By helping basin communities thrive and achieve their visions for growth and development, we can make vital progress that speaks to the core of TRA's mission and assists the entire basin in meeting future resource challenges. Further establishing our industry-leading expertise and operational excellence will bring about improved services, cost-effective technologies, and opportunities to serve the basin even more. Strengthening our messaging, both internally and externally, will help build trust among communities and help unite all Authority employees in pursuit of the organization's goals. By continuing to invest in staff members, TRA will attract and retain top talent, which will enable the Authority to fulfill its mission and provide high-quality services to its customers.

I would like to thank our board of directors, all the partners, customers, and staff who participated in this effort. Your feedback and collaboration were invaluable. Your continued involvement will help move this plan from the page to reality as we put it into action and measure our success together!



General Manager



FUTURE
AHEAD

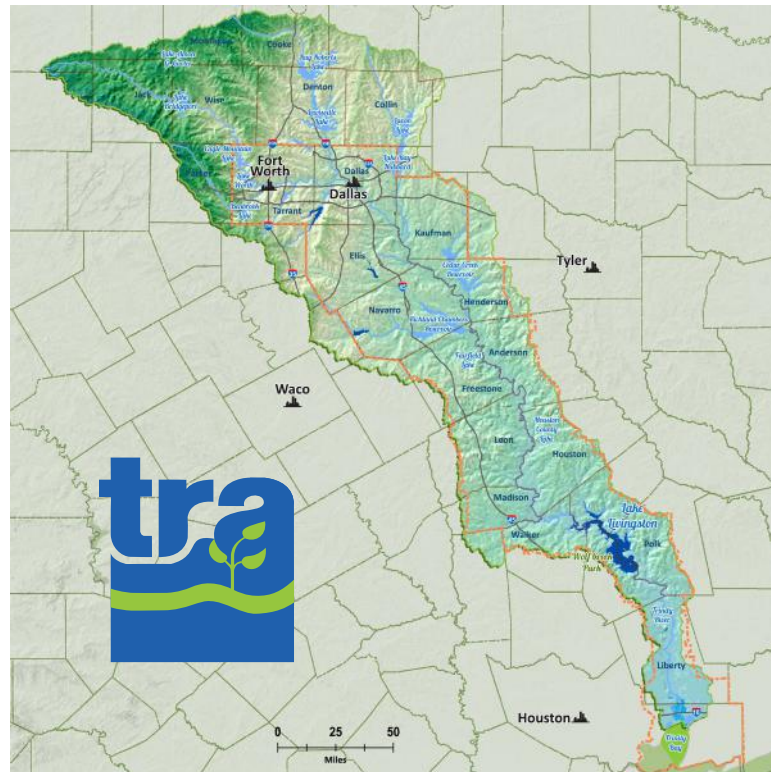
INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The Trinity River Authority of Texas (the Authority) is a water conservation and reclamation district that provides water and wastewater treatment, recreation, and reservoir facilities within the 18,000-square-mile basin. The Authority was created by an act of the 54th Texas Legislature in 1955 and charged with maintaining a master plan for basin-wide development, serving as a local sponsor for federal water projects, and providing services authorized by the Texas Legislature within its territory.

In recent years, the Authority's commitment to a strategic planning process every five years has enabled the organization to connect with its customers, community partners, board, and staff in unique and meaningful ways, staying abreast of key issues and industry trends that impact its stakeholders. As a result of this planning process, the Authority is better positioned to adapt to inevitable challenges associated with regulatory change, finding and retaining talent in a competitive environment, managing cost and quality, and improving the quality of life along the basin. With an increase in population along the basin comes the opportunity for the Authority to provide water, wastewater, and the infrastructure to sustain this growth.

This five-year Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for addressing the challenges and the opportunities presented by growth in the Trinity River Basin. This Plan has been developed by the Board of Directors with assistance from staff and is meant to be a living document, adapting to the ever-changing environment in which the Authority operates.



ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In March 2023, the Authority hired Ernst & Young LLP (EY) to facilitate its 2025-2029 strategic planning process. This engagement began with an in-depth review of the organization and its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan to determine the landscape of existing priorities and the organization’s progress toward meeting its goals. EY then gathered input from approximately 300 stakeholders, both internal and external, through surveys, interviews, focus groups and a board workshop. Engagement with this broad base of stakeholders provided for a greater understanding of the Authority’s assets, needs, and opportunities for adapting to impending changes, and allowed the EY team to identify a series of refreshed priorities to guide the organization into the future.



EY worked with Authority leadership to define goals and strategies that support each priority area. This Plan can inform the program of work, budget and performance metrics for each department responsible for a strategy. Broadly, this Plan can be used to align the Authority with its partners and stakeholders in pursuit of common goals and excellence in the basin.



MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

As part of the board workshop, EY facilitated a discussion about updating the Authority's vision and core values. The vision statement is an expression of the desired future state of the Trinity basin, describing what the impacts will be when this Plan is put into practice. The Authority's mission statement, as well as its updated vision and core values, are as follows:

MISSION

The Trinity River Authority's mission is to promote conservation, reclamation, protection and development of the natural resources of the river basin for the benefit of the public.

Note: The Authority's mission statement is reflective of the language from its enabling legislation; with the term "conservation" referring to the optimal development of natural resources.

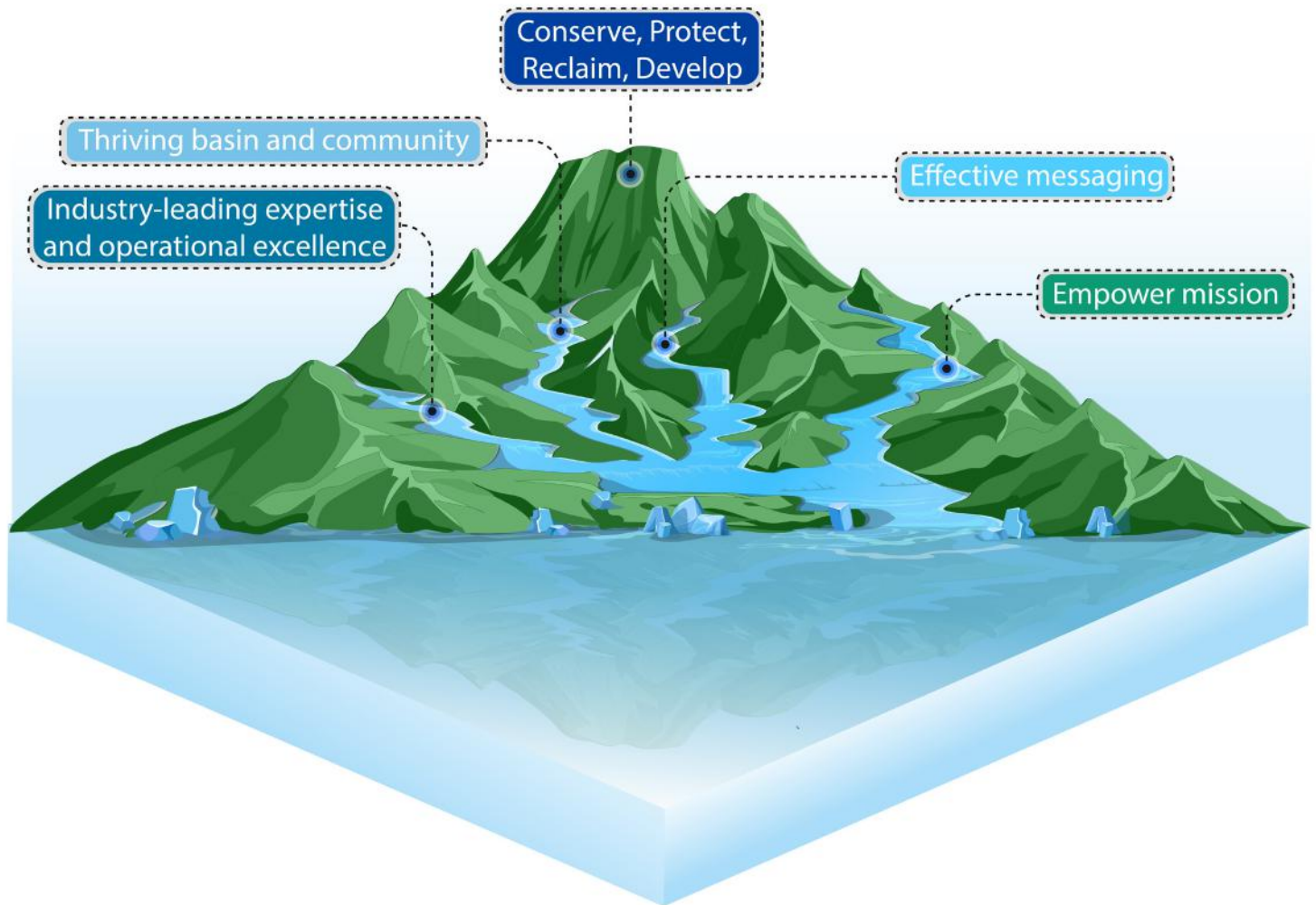
VISION

The Trinity River Authority promotes the natural, economic, and recreational benefits of the Trinity River as the foundation for future generations.

CORE VALUES

- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Service

THE RIVER AS A MODEL



Our mission statement provides the foundation for all of the Authority's activities. Through that mission, we are called upon to conserve, protect, reclaim and develop the natural resources of the Trinity River Basin for the benefit of the public.

The priorities established and the actions that result from those priorities can be viewed like the tributaries of a river. The four forks of the Trinity combine to form the main stem in an ever-larger flow of water. In similar fashion, the incremental implementation of the priorities identified in the Authority's Strategic Plan culminates in the execution of the mission for which it was created.

An aerial photograph of a campus featuring a large, dark blue lake in the center. The lake is surrounded by dense green trees. In the background, there are several buildings, a water tower, and a clear blue sky. A blue arrow-shaped graphic points to the right, containing the text 'STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS' in white, bold, uppercase letters.

STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS

EY conducted quantitative and qualitative research through surveys, focus groups, interviews and a two-day workshop during this process. Approximately 300 people contributed to this Plan, including board members, staff, customers, and other external stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement findings are summarized in a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) format below, and survey results are included in Appendix A.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS

SWOT ANALYSIS

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Leadership is engaged — “always at the table” ◆ Viewed as reliable, responsive, and customer-oriented ◆ Trusted subject-matter experts ◆ Provides a quality product ◆ Resource management ◆ Disaster response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Low public awareness of the Authority in customer communities ◆ Communication of rationale re: project prioritization and rate changes ◆ Resource constraints at lab are adversely impacting customer service |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Embrace a more visible, proactive role (e.g., regionalization) ◆ Develop joint communications strategies for rate changes and project prioritization decisions affecting communities ◆ Capacity building on behalf of smaller/rural communities ◆ Expand modeling capacity ◆ Initiate more research partnerships with universities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Rising costs ◆ Increasing demand for contractors ◆ Losing institutional knowledge of partnerships due to retirements ◆ Regulatory changes ◆ Population growth ◆ Greenfield development outside city limits in ETJ — how to adequately plan for infrastructure needs ◆ Smaller systems reaching capacity |

STAFF PERCEPTIONS

SWOT ANALYSIS

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Engaged, knowledgeable board members ◆ Leadership is recognized statewide and nationally ◆ Work-family atmosphere ◆ Pride in mission — “we have a common goal” ◆ Experience of long-tenured employees ◆ Relatively flat or “unbureaucratic” organization ◆ Policymaking influence ◆ Good benefits ◆ Highly collaborative culture — teamwork is valued ◆ Management’s open-door policy ◆ Innovative/entrepreneurial mindset | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Growing concern about succession planning ◆ Insufficient or ineffective internal communication ◆ Perceived value and timing of mandatory trainings ◆ No uniform policy on WFH/remote work — implications for recruitment and retention and staff perceptions of disparity ◆ Outdated systems (e.g., manual budget process) ◆ Perception that innovation or exploring new sources of revenue could detract from delivering exceptional customer service (“zero-sum”) |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Funding is available to innovate ◆ Growing customer base ◆ Training — comprehensive evaluation/needs assessment ◆ Prioritizing communication and information sharing with staff not always in front of a computer (e.g., all-hands) ◆ More visits from the Authority’s leadership to plants and project sites ◆ Continue to lead in pay and benefits ◆ Strengthening community connections (e.g., more frequent, in-person engagement, professional/branded materials for outreach, TRA-initiated regionalization & other studies, small grant program) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sunset (opportunity and threat) ◆ Embracing growth while retaining high-performing culture ◆ Post-pandemic expectations about WFH/remote work ◆ Impending retirements of long-tenured staff and board turnover could mean loss of institutional knowledge ◆ Rising costs of doing business ◆ Public awareness of the Authority — could be missing out on good candidates because the Authority’s profile is “behind the scenes” ◆ Compliance with new regulations |



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Authority's strategic priorities are themes to organize goals and strategies. The priorities provide the framework for how the Authority will achieve its vision. The four priorities are:



THRIVING BASIN AND COMMUNITY

INDUSTRY-LEADING EXPERTISE AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE



EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

EMPOWERING THE MISSION



Goals paint the picture of the ideal future state within each priority area. They specify how the Trinity basin may be improved resulting from successful implementation of the Plan.

The strategies are programmatic, describing how the Authority can achieve its goals.

PRIORITY 1:

THRIVING BASIN AND COMMUNITY

GOAL

Provide targeted support to help basin communities achieve their visions for growth and development

The Authority is a trusted partner of basin communities, delivering a high-quality product and exceptional customer service. The Authority is also highly responsive to customer needs, providing services that range from urgent assistance during a disaster to scientific and technical expertise for long-term planning. The Authority recognizes the uniqueness of each basin community and is committed to helping customers work together for the long-term prosperity of the region.

STRATEGIES

1. Increase the number of economic and recreational opportunities along the entire basin

Outdoor recreation benefits the health of basin residents, local businesses, and the state's tourism economy. The Authority embraces opportunities to increase activity on the Trinity by partnering with communities, state agencies, and the private sector to expand existing facilities and invest in new amenities.

2. Assist communities in meeting the growing demand for services

The Authority recognizes the growing demands on communities in urban and rural areas of the basin and is committed to helping customers respond to the opportunities and challenges of planning for future development.

3. Address future water reclamation and supply, and flood risk reduction issues

Resilient basin communities are prepared for shifting conditions impacting water utilities and resource management. The Authority actively monitors water availability and identifies sources of future supply while working with growing communities to identify wastewater and water utility service needs. In addition, the Authority helps customers identify and mitigate risks of flooding and other adverse events.

PRIORITY 2:

INDUSTRY-LEADING EXPERTISE AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

GOAL

Continuously improve ability to provide services to communities

The Authority is a nationally recognized industry leader because it invests in continuous improvement. Customers rely on the Authority's expert knowledge, industry insight, and technical capacity to anticipate issues impacting the Trinity and determine how basin communities should respond.

STRATEGIES

1. Explore new cost-effective technologies, models, and methods to meet industry demands and advance our understanding of the Trinity basin

The Authority continuously looks for opportunities to improve, investing in tools and technologies that further its own mission, as well as increases the capacity of the Authority's customers to serve their communities.

2. Continue to improve cost-effective, in-house technical capabilities

The Authority pursues every opportunity to deliver the highest quality product and excellent service to customers, efficiently and effectively.

3. Identify the opportunities and challenges resulting from regulatory changes and educate communities and partners

Customers rely on the Authority's expert insight into how regulatory changes impact the Trinity basin and its communities. The Authority embraces opportunities to serve as a convenor, educator, and leader on legislative and regulatory issues on behalf of its customers and other basin stakeholders.

4. Provide leadership on environmental issues

The Authority provides insight into the balance between the development of the basin's water-related resources and the need for a healthy ecological environment. The

Authority serves as an honest broker, collecting, analyzing, and sharing information through studies and partnerships that inform important policy decisions on environmental issues that impact the water industry.

PRIORITY 3:

EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

GOAL

Achieve greater internal and external awareness

The Authority is known throughout the basin as a reliable and trustworthy partner and subject-matter expert. Stakeholders are aware of the Authority through their consistent presence in, and communication with, the communities they serve. Likewise, the Authority's employees feel connected to the organization, with a sense of ownership in carrying out its mission.

STRATEGIES

1. Strengthen internal and external communications

The Authority values the role that communicating leadership updates, company news, and employee engagement opportunities plays in retention and development of its talent. Externally, the Authority prioritizes timely communications about its customer-facing operations, rates and availability of service, and improvements and maintenance across the basin.

2. Advocate effectively for basin priorities

The Authority is acutely aware of the regulatory and policy environment, and advocates for the basin and its stakeholders appropriately.

3. Build trust among communities

The Authority recognizes the importance of maintaining strong relationships with the communities it serves. To that end, the Authority proactively communicates relevant and timely information about rates and project prioritization to customers and strives to be an active participant in the communities it serves. The Authority also provides branded materials for natural resource education to its customers.

PRIORITY 4:

EMPOWERING THE MISSION

GOAL

Develop and maintain a deep bench of talent that enables the Authority to pursue its mission

Employees are highly satisfied due to the Authority's investment in benefits, and a work environment that is positive and collaborative. Looking toward the future, retirement of long-tenured employees and competition for top talent necessitate that the Authority continue to lead in providing best-in-class benefits and career paths for high performers to attract and retain the best employees in the industry. Ultimately, retaining top talent will enable the Authority to fulfill its mission and provide high-quality services to its customers.

STRATEGIES

1. Maintain a positive and collaborative work environment

Dedicated people are the foundation of the Authority's positive and collaborative work environment. Management's open-door philosophy and frequent visits to the Authority's various work locations promote communication and teamwork, providing employees with regular opportunities to help shape the future of the Authority.

2. Develop the next generation of water industry leaders

The Authority is passionate about helping Texas lead the nation in the management of water resources. The Authority provides industry-leading training and professional development opportunities to help employees obtain the skills and the experience needed to advance in their careers.

The Authority is preparing for the future with its commitment to the transfer of knowledge and experience from one generation of long-tenured employees to the next. Continuing to deliver customer service of the highest quality requires investing in recruiting, mentoring, and succession planning.

3. Enhance investments in employees

The Authority continually evaluates its compensation and benefits to compete for top talent in the industry.

EXIT



WHAT IS THE
SUPERVISOR

IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

The following considerations provide guidance on how the Authority could implement this Plan:

- ◆ This Plan provides guidance for executive managers in the development of their annual programs of work, budgets, and organizational performance metrics.
- ◆ Once programs of work are developed and approved, executive managers may communicate these plans to their respective teams to clarify their roles and the alignment to the Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Programs of work may be reviewed on a quarterly basis to track performance and be adjusted annually to reflect progress made and/or shifts in the overall operating environment.
- ◆ Organization and basin-wide communications should clearly articulate the Authority's priorities outlined in this Plan, how those priorities are reflected in current work, and how they contribute to the overall vision, mission, and values.





APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

STAFF SURVEY

STAFF PRIORITIES

The top-three priorities identified by staff were water and wastewater infrastructure, supporting the health of the Trinity and identifying new or innovative ways to source water and utilize wastewater byproducts. Overall, these results were similar to the 2018 survey results.

Which areas should be the highest priorities for TRA?

| | High | Medium | Low | Don't Know |
|---|------|--------|-----|------------|
| Improving water and wastewater infrastructure and facilities | 74% | 19% | 3% | 4% |
| Supporting the health of the Trinity River | 69% | 27% | 1% | 3% |
| Identifying innovative ways to source water and utilize wastewater byproducts | 50% | 37% | 4% | 9% |
| Improving customer service | 29% | 47% | 15% | 10% |
| Reducing costs to customers | 25% | 46% | 19% | 10% |
| Increasing community involvement | 21% | 47% | 25% | 8% |
| Developing new sources of revenue (ports, recreational facilities, etc.) | 17% | 48% | 19% | 16% |

Similar rank order to 2018 survey Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Overall, employees of the Authority rank the organization highly in terms of most organizational performance factors. The largest perceived weakness is communication within the organization, which was a consistent theme throughout stakeholder interviews as well.

How would you rate TRA's performance in these areas?

| | Strong | Neither | Weak |
|--|--------|---------|------|
| Facilities Management | 68% | 21% | 11% |
| Policy and Government Relations | 67% | 29% | 5% |
| Leadership Engagement | 64% | 22% | 15% |
| Use of Technology | 62% | 21% | 17% |
| Public Awareness and Perception | 61% | 30% | 10% |
| Financial Management | 58% | 30% | 12% |
| Employee Engagement, Recruitment and Retention | 51% | 23% | 26% |
| Communication Within the Organization | 48% | 21% | 31% |

Similar rank order to 2018 survey Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

STAFF FEEDBACK ON CURRENT PRIORITIES

The Authority’s staff are largely supportive of the organization’s strategic direction, with more than one-half of all employees surveyed reporting meaningful progress toward each strategic priority. However, several employees did not see a clear connection between their day-to-day work and the Strategic Plan. Some expressed a lack of bandwidth to carry out strategic priorities, further highlighting the importance of organizational communication and cohesion as the updated Plan is implemented.

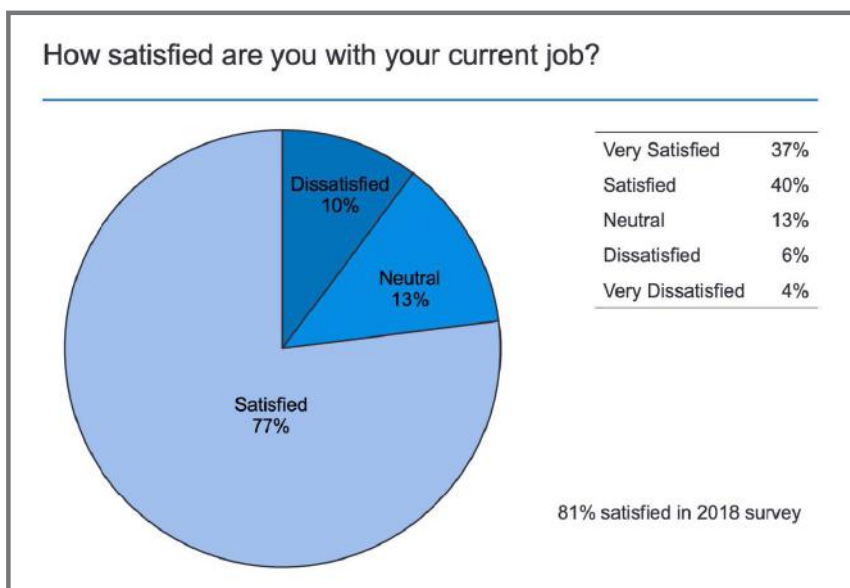
| Staff feedback on progress toward current priorities | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| | A Good Amount or A Lot of Progress | Some Progress | No or Very Little Progress |
| Foster Talent: The TRA proactively engages in initiatives that foster a robust talent pipeline. | 50% | 34% | 16% |
| Leverage Powers: The TRA leverages the full breadth of its powers for the betterment of the basin and organization. | 53% | 38% | 9% |
| Engage Team & Basin: The TRA strengthens its reputation and reach through stronger engagement with its team and the Trinity basin. | 54% | 34% | 12% |
| Culture of Excellence: The TRA stands for excellence in all things. | 56% | 28% | 16% |

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

"We don't have time for strategic planning." "I don't know how it applies to my department."

OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

The majority of the Authority’s 235 employees who participated in the survey expressed satisfaction with their jobs. 37% of respondents reported being “Very Satisfied,” 40% of respondents were “Satisfied,” and only 13%, 6% and 4% responded “Neutral,” “Dissatisfied,” or “Very Dissatisfied,” respectively.



JOB SATISFACTION BY AREA

Employees are most satisfied with the Authority’s level of competitive benefits, flexibility enjoyed with their jobs and the corporate culture the organization possesses. While all areas surveyed reflected satisfaction, the lowest scoring areas included the direction and support employees feel in their role, growth opportunities, and competitive salary.

How would you rate your job satisfaction in these areas?

| | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied |
|---|-----------|---------|--------------|
| Benefits | 94% | 3% | 3% |
| Flexibility | 77% | 12% | 11% |
| Company Culture | 72% | 15% | 13% |
| Overall Direction and Support in Your Role | 70% | 15% | 15% |
| Growth Opportunities (education/mentoring/training) | 70% | 16% | 15% |
| Competitive Salary | 62% | 15% | 23% |

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

CUSTOMER SURVEY

SATISFACTION WITH THE AUTHORITY’S SERVICES

More than one-half of respondents to the external survey were satisfied with each aspect of service that the Authority provides, especially with respect to wastewater treatment, raw water purchases and water treatment. While there were some who rated their satisfaction as “Neutral,” the only aspect of service with any responses of “Dissatisfied” was coordination on studies and regulatory issues. The overall satisfaction displayed by the survey responses is a testament to the core value of service that the Authority embodies in all areas of its work.

How satisfied are you with the following services?

| | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied |
|--|-----------|---------|--------------|
| Wastewater Treatment | 94% | 6% | 0% |
| Raw Water Purchases | 83% | 17% | 0% |
| Water Treatment | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| Coordination on Studies or Regulatory Issues | 77% | 18% | 6% |
| Recreation and Reservoir Facilities | 75% | 25% | 0% |
| Laboratory Services | 64% | 36% | 0% |
| New Project Development (e.g., inland port) | 60% | 40% | 0% |

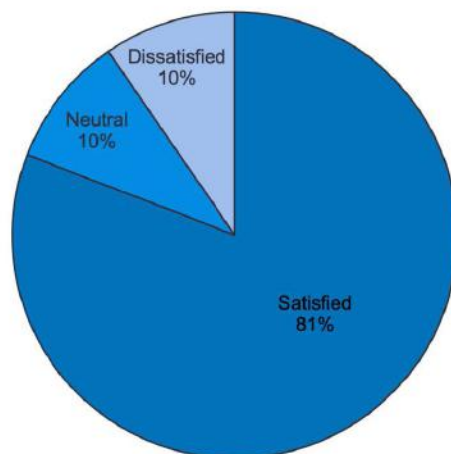
Improvement in wastewater treatment compared to 2018 survey (4th-highest to highest).

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

External stakeholders were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the Authority's communication, encompassing rate changes, maintenance and infrastructure improvements, community and economic development matters, and education about the importance of water use and conservation. 81% of respondents were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied," while 10% of respondents were either "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied."

How satisfied are you with TRA's communication?



| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Very Satisfied | 48% |
| Satisfied | 33% |
| Neutral | 10% |
| Dissatisfied | 5% |
| Very Dissatisfied | 5% |

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



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