

# Utah Watersheds Council Advisory Comments on the Fiscal Year 2027 Unified Water Infrastructure Plan (UWIP)

**Date:** 03/02/2026

**Purpose:** Legislative statute 73-10g-602 requires that a draft of the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan (UWIP) be provided to the Utah Watersheds Council (council) before it is adopted or amended. The council may advise on the proposed UWIP. To comply with this code, a draft was emailed to the council on 1/9/2026, briefly presented in the 1/12/2026 council meeting and had a comment submission deadline of 1/30/2026. The table below includes the received comments from the council and responses from the UWIP team. Please see [water.utah.gov/watershed-councils/uwc](https://water.utah.gov/watershed-councils/uwc) for a recording of the 1/12/2026 council meeting.

**Utah Watersheds Council Comments and Responses**

Comment	Response
<p align="center">UWIP should work with R6 with CIB</p>	<p>UWIP integrated its project collection process into the Utah Project Portal and continues to collaborate with R6 Regional Council and supporting partners.</p>
<p>I also feel that some weight should be put on the amount of funds that different entities are holding in reserve accounts drawing interest when they request grants and or State monies. Many entities continue to build very healthy fund balances and continue to look for State and Federal funds that should be prioritized for those with a greater need for financial assistance.</p>	<p>Part 73-10g-605 requires recipients to have a relevant Capital Asset Management Plan and a reserve study to qualify for water infrastructure fund money. The relevant agencies will review these plans and studies for each applicant. The initial provisional score does not weigh this factor as it requires an in-depth review.</p>
<p>I also wonder if it is worth considering the fact that many communities go out of their way to restrict and either limit or prevent future growth and I personally think that these actions should weigh into a score when considering how important the need is when they are attempting to shut the door to future residents.</p>	<p>This is another issue that can be considered by the individual agencies, but it will be difficult to include directly in provisional scoring. <a href="#">HB 280</a> and <a href="#">HB 285</a> legislation states that projects regarding both new growth and aging infrastructure should be funded.</p>
<p>Page 3- The Introductory paragraph states "the UWIP is intended to improve the process of funding water infrastructure in Utah by engaging in proactive infrastructure planning and increasing collaboration between funding agencies." Then, further down page 3, under the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan section, it states "the UWIP is a comprehensive initiative aimed at identifying and prioritizing water infrastructure projects as well as improving long-term funding for water infrastructure projects across the state." Then, further down again on page 3 (last paragraph) it states, "the goals of UWIP include: 1) creating a comprehensive prioritized list.... 2) centralizing the application process.... 3) enhancing coordination.... 4) increasing transparency...., and 5) aligning state funding assistance..." In each of these three examples, the document attempts to state the primary purpose of the UWIP. Yet, these three examples, at least in my mind, don't fully align with one another. I finished reading the Introductory pages and was left wondering what the primary purpose of UWIP is.</p>	<p>The language in the UWIP has been updated to more cohesively move between these thoughts.</p>
<p>We are all for funding of projects, but we've used Water Resources 'loan' program, so that we get money for projects, but then repay over time. Grants are nice but creates a large burden to all to generate the money, but only a few access said monies via a grant program.</p>	<p>A decision regarding whether funds will be distributed as grants or loans has not been finalized. The Fee Study noted that some decision makers have indicated that new funding may come as a grant. The goal of this report was to reflect this possibility. However, because this decision has not been made, the language in the text has been modified to reflect that this is a possibility not a final decision.</p>

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Our biggest concern is that [our] projects won't get prioritized. With the current process, you make application, meet requirements, and you are typically funded based on availability of funds. We have borrowed tens of millions of dollars from the Board of Water Resources and have paid many off and continue to pay our obligations to the state in the tune of \$2M/yr.	The UWIP will continue to follow a prioritization process similar to what has been used in the past. Those seeking funds will still make applications, meet requirements and be funded based on available funds as you have described. It is not expected that this process will limit any funding for quality and deserving projects. To the contrary, it is expected that it has the potential to expand access to funding for quality projects.
I've heard from one city that they were asked to submit projects to the UWIP, and it was a 'wish list', but they'd rather self-fund versus trying to charge/collect fees to residents and not see the money come back to them. If that is the case, charge/collect fees locally and spend directly to local project.	The UWIP process is moving forward in accordance with HB 280/285 which were passed in 2024 and 2025 but any final funding mechanism will need to be approved by the state Legislature. As noted in the text, a primary goal of the current process is to have as much funding come from local sources as possible.
Having entered projects, none are shown in Tables 2, 3, 4, or 5. I question if they were considered, when I see several sister agencies/companies listed. (Today I requested a new login/password link since I did not do so in that one week time period when it was open.) Then I kept scrolling, and see that in Tables A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4 , I see some of our projects in there. It would be best to understand ranking and scores. Will there be an opportunity to meet and discuss this further?	A publicly reviewed document has been posted detailing the UWIP prioritization process. This document is found in Appendix C of the UWIP report. It is further expected that applicants will be able to meet with and discuss projects with individual agencies as the process is further defined. Currently, having a project in the portal is a "pre-application" step and a tool for long term planning. When the entity needs to pursue funding, they will need to apply through existing agency processes.
Table A-5 is odd, if people were not seeking State funding, then why did they submit said projects to be considered/listed?	State legislation now requires projects to be on the UWIP list to even be considered for funding. These projects were originally included because, even if they don't need funding now, they might pursue funding in the future if the state Legislature passes a fee. However, based on this comment and further discussion, we have removed the tables from the document to avoid confusion. They are still available in the Utah Project Portal for transparency.
WRe Agency Plan: Table 5, if a project is in an area with above average MAGI and there are no 'critical' needs, then 40% of points are gone. True? How does one score high enough when those are out of their control? When it comes to secondary water projects, there is no 'health or safety' component (unless a dam/reservoir safety concern). Same with agricultural/canal projects (unless it's a flood hazard). I question many of the scores in Tables 6, 7, etc.	Key prioritization indicators were decided by legislation. Further details on the prioritization process are described in the prioritization document. Additionally, the project types mentioned - secondary, agriculture off-farm and dams - have been and will be managed and prioritized by the Division of Water Resources separately from other project types.
On the report formatting, it would be good to say Table 6 continued or something on the header, so you know what you're looking at as you scroll through.	The tables within the document have been updated to say "continued" past the first page.
On the MAGI component/Hardship score, projects may be located in one area, but serve another, so that number gets skewed either up or down.	This component will be clarified as part of the agency application process. The intent of the criteria is to tie the MAGI score to the population served by the improvements, independent of project location.