



ERCOT Regional Planning Group Charter

April 21, 2026

Introduction

ERCOT, as the independent organization designated by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) under the Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA), is charged with nondiscriminatory coordination of market transactions, system-wide transmission planning, network reliability, open access to transmission and distribution, and ensuring the reliability and adequacy of the regional electric network in accordance with ERCOT and North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) Reliability Standards. In addition, ERCOT, as the NERC registered Planning Coordinator, is responsible for assessing the longer-term reliability for the ERCOT Region.

ERCOT will supervise and exercise comprehensive independent authority of the overall planning of transmission projects of the ERCOT Transmission Grid (transmission system) as outlined in PURA and PUCT Substantive Rules. The PUCT Substantive Rules further indicate that ERCOT shall evaluate and make a recommendation to the PUCT as to the need for any transmission facility over which it has comprehensive transmission planning authority. ERCOT examines the need for proposed transmission projects based on ERCOT planning criteria and NERC Reliability Standards. Once a project need has been identified, ERCOT evaluates project alternatives based on cost-effectiveness, long-term system needs and other factors.

Transmission planning (60-kV and above) is a complex undertaking that requires significant work by, and coordination among, ERCOT, Transmission Service Providers (TSPs), Market Participants, and other stakeholders. ERCOT works directly with TSPs, stakeholders, and Market Participants through the Regional Planning Group (RPG). Each of these entities has responsibilities to ensure the appropriate planning and construction occurs.

The Protocols and Planning Guide describe the practices and procedures through which ERCOT meets its requirements related to system planning under Texas statute, NERC Reliability Standards, and PUCT Substantive Rules.

Revisions to the ERCOT Regional Planning Group Charter shall be approved by the ERCOT Board.

Regional Planning Group

Transmission planning affects many stakeholders and benefits from input of different ideas and perspectives. The RPG is the primary mechanism through which stakeholder communication related to planning activities in the ERCOT Region is accomplished. The RPG is a non-voting, consensus-based organization focused on identifying needs, identifying potential solutions, communicating varying viewpoints and reviewing analyses related to the transmission system in the planning horizon. While participation in the RPG is required of all TSPs, membership is open to all stakeholders. Representatives of transmission and distribution owners, generators (existing and potential), marketers, consumer groups, environmental groups, landowners, governmental officials, PUCT Staff and other entities typically participate in RPG meetings. The RPG is led and facilitated by ERCOT. Meetings are held on an “as-needed” basis and are open to stakeholders and the public.

Communication with and among RPG members is accomplished via these open meetings, as well as email and web postings. All stakeholders who are interested in RPG activities and information should register for the RPG email distribution list. The ERCOT MIS Secure contains a listing all projects and system planning-related data that is not considered protected or proprietary. Access to such information is controlled because some of this information may be considered protected ERCOT Critical Energy Infrastructure Information (ECEII).

The goals of the RPG are:

- Coordinating transmission planning activities to ensure that the ERCOT and NERC TPL Reliability Standards are met and that proposed projects are the most reasonable means of addressing planning requirements;
- Preventing inefficient solutions to regional problems through a coordinated effort and resolving the needs of the interconnected transmission systems while ensuring a reliable and adequate network;
- Planning the bulk transmission system with sufficient lead time and considering longer-term needs and impacts to avoid unnecessary upgrades to the underlying transmission systems;
- Allowing an opportunity for Market Participants, consumers, and other stakeholders to review significant proposed transmission project additions;
- Improving communication and understanding between neighboring TSPs on planning-related activities;
- Allowing for Market Participants to understand the scope and magnitude of all proposed, planned, and approved transmission projects within ERCOT, so that each can appropriately take into account the expected market impact; and,
- Identifying differences between actual operating conditions on the ERCOT Transmission Grid and planning assumptions and working with appropriate groups to reconcile the differences.

Categorization of Proposed Transmission Projects

ERCOT classifies all transmission projects into one of four categories (or Tiers). Each Tier is defined so that projects with a similar cost and impact on reliability and the ERCOT market are grouped into the same Tier. The criteria used to classify a specific project into the appropriate Tier are outlined in Protocols Section 3.11.4.3.

The flowchart below illustrates the general process used to classify projects into the four Tiers.

