



**Colorado Water and Growth Dialogue
CWCB 50% Progress Report
The Keystone Center
December 11, 2014**

Project Successes and Progress toward Achieving Goals and Objectives

The Keystone Center and Colorado Water Institute (CWI) spent almost three years carefully developing the project, meeting with key individuals, presenting the idea at water and land use conferences, and discussing it with technical and policy stakeholders. Keystone and CWI also formed a steering committee to help craft a well-conceived plan for conducting the project. As such, the concept was vetted, honed and well-received by the time we submitted proposals to potential funders. Other factors such as drought, devastating wildfire, and land development plans that could not guarantee water, pointed to a greater need to look more carefully at land use and land use decision making processes. As one committee member stated in his invitation to a potential Working Group member:

“This is right up your alley. It is the best game in town for integrating land and water planning. I hope you will join us.”

Another early success is the formation of a diverse Working Group to oversee the project and develop the Roadmap. Due to some delays and slight reorganization of the stages, described below, the Working Group met in August 2014 to orient itself to the project, identify gaps in group composition, and highlight the opportunity for input into the state water plan. The Working Group met in September to finalize group composition, review and approve the Charter (attached), discuss the Group’s collective knowledge of land use approaches, and introduce the research component. The Working Group is composed of approximately 24 individuals from the water, land use planning, land development, and economic development communities. We have been able to attract influential people who fully understand the water and growth dilemma we are facing and want to be part of the solution. The group will meet monthly for approximately 3 hours, and is expected to form subgroups to accomplish specific tasks.

A third early success was in overcoming initial barriers to collaboration between two significant players – Denver Water and DRCOG. This required Keystone and the steering committee members to convene several meetings between Denver Water and DRCOG technical staff to assess the compatibility of DRCOG’s modeling tool, UrbanSim, and Denver Water’s water use data. This was necessary to assure Denver Water that the research component in Stage 3 was doable. Reorganizing the stages to accomplish this goal has given the Working Group a head start on Stage 3.

Finally, the formation of the research subgroup and modeling subgroup has been quite a success. The research subgroup has written a Scope of Work and accompanying research outline. They then utilized Denver Water funding to hire a team from Clarion Associates to conduct the research. Phase I of this research is due out by the end of the year. The modeling subgroup has also met several times. DRCOG will be providing an initial 2040 UrbanSim model run to Denver Water so that the

Working Group can begin to understand the baseline water footprint of projected development in a no-change environment.

Obstacles encountered

The greatest early obstacle was a delay in the receipt of funds that kept the project from meeting the timeline. Keystone received a \$25k Walton Family Foundation (WFF) grant in December 2013, right on schedule. The grant covered partial funding for the dialogue, which was budgeted at \$125k for the first year. Additional funds were sought from the Gates Family Foundation (\$25k), Denver Water (\$25k) and Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) (\$45k). Gates funds were approved in December 2013; however, receipt of the funds was contingent upon full funding from the remaining funders. This overall delay in funding pushed our timeline but is not anticipated to have negative consequences.

A second obstacle is the disconnect between DRCOG's modeling tool UrbanSim and Denver Water's Demand model. UrbanSim is a software-based simulation system for supporting planning and analysis of urban development, incorporating the interactions between land use, transportation, the economy, and the environment (www.urbansim.org). DRCOG is using UrbanSim for land use forecasting and describes it as "a parcel-based model that helps better reflect the dynamic interaction of households, firms, real estate markets and the regional transportation system." The obstacle, however, is that the modeling tool is not currently compatible with water use data. In other words, the land use and water use communities have not developed systems that enable them to collaborate. Overcoming this obstacle is possible and will be explored in Stage 3.

Preliminary Findings & Accomplishments

The obstacle mentioned above, that the integration of DRCOG's UrbanSim model and Denver Water's Demand model is not currently possible, is also a preliminary finding. The full integration of these models may be costly and time-consuming but would provide an ideal model in which water and land planning were truly integrated. The development of this third integrated model is currently being scoped and would be a groundbreaking accomplishment.

Potential need for revisions to the scope of work or timeline

The project has not changed since the CWCB grant was received. One change occurred outside the project that affects the final outcome. The original proposal calls for consensus input into the State Water Plan by the Working Group by the end of 2014. This input will be delivered, but it will now be delivered as individual input and not from the group itself. At the time of the proposal, CWCB was strategizing how it would develop the draft plan and initially thought they would work through a collaborative process. They later decided to write the draft internally and take recommendations from individuals but not groups, other than the Basin Roundtables. Our CWCB liaison, who is on the Steering committee, believes the Working Group will have much more to offer in 2015, "when there is more to respond to" and before the plan is finalized.

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