



**Colorado Water and Growth Dialogue  
CWCB 75% Progress Report  
The Keystone Center  
February 6, 2015**

**Project Successes and Progress toward Achieving Goals and Objectives**

The Colorado Water and Growth Dialogue is now well into Phase I, the development of a set of recommendations for integrating land and water planning and reducing the demand from new and redevelopment in the Denver metro region.

As mentioned in the previous progress report, an early success was the formation of a diverse Working Group to oversee the project and develop the Action Plan. The Working Group is composed of approximately 28 individuals from the water, land use planning, land development, and economic development communities. The Working Group met in August, September and October 2014 to orient to the project, identify gaps in group composition, review and approve the Charter and introduce the research component. The Working Group also met via conference call in December to review the Action Plan.

A second early success was in overcoming initial barriers to collaboration between three significant stakeholders – Aurora Water, 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 achievable.

In January, the Steering Committee met and decided to integrate the research and modeling teams into one Technical Subcommittee. They also decided to postpone the monthly Working Group meetings until the Technical Subcommittee had developed a set of strategies and determined their relative water savings potential. This will allow the Working Group to narrow the strategies into a smaller set using apples-to-apples comparisons.

As an update, the research being conducted by Clarion Associates that will identify water savings strategies and their potential for implementation will be completed by February 15. The modeling subgroup has also met several times. DRCOG has provided 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. Aurora Water has since engaged in the Technical Subcommittee and their demand data will begin to feed into the process.

**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, 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](http://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. DRCOG and Aurora Water and Denver Water do not currently have data and modeling capacities that can speak directly to each other; they, with the support of the Desert City DC, are working to make these models compatible.

#### **Preliminary Findings & Accomplishments**

The communication that this project has spurred between DRCOG, Denver Water and Aurora Water is an initial accomplishment. These organizations are currently examining each other's models and determining how best to enable interaction. Denver water is also adjusting its demand model to be able to adapt to future uncertainties. This will allow the Working Group to better understand the implications of the recommended strategies they are developing.

#### **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.

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