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## CITY/COUNTY WATER AND WASTEWATER STUDY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**June 25, 2009**  
**Meeting Summary**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jim Barry called the June 25, 2009 meeting of the City/County Water and Wastewater Study Oversight Committee (Oversight Committee) to order at 5:18 p.m. at the Randolph Golf Course Clubhouse, Copper Room, 600 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson, Arizona.

**Members Present:**

Vincent Vasquez  
Bonnie Poulos  
Jim Barry, Chairman  
John Carlson  
Rob Kulakofsky  
Mark Stratton  
Marcelino Flores  
Bruce Gungle  
Christopher Brooks  
Joesph Maher

**Representing:**

CWAC  
County P&Z Commission  
Citizens Water Advisory Committee (CWAC)  
Wastewater Management Advisory Committee (WMAC)  
RWRAC  
RWRAC  
RWRAC  
County Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission  
CWAC (to be confirmed July 7, 2009)  
City Planning Commission (to be confirmed July 7, 2009)

**Alternate Present:**

Bob Cook

**Representing:**

County P&Z Commission

**Absent:**

Thomas Saylor Brown  
Tina Lee

**Representing:**

City Planning Commission  
CWAC

**City/County Staff Present:**

Nicole Ewing Gavin, City Manager's Office  
Sabrina Cotta, City Manager's Office  
Sandy Elder, Tucson Water  
Chris Avery, Tucson Water  
Ralph Marra, Tucson Water  
Nicole Fyffe, Pima County Administrator's Office  
Kathleen Chavez, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department  
Melaney Seacat, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department  
Greg Hitt, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department  
Mike List, Pima County GIS  
Eric Wieduwilt, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department  
Arlan Colton, Pima County Planning

Albert Elias, City of Tucson Planning  
Chris Kaselemis, City of Tucson Planning  
Jennifer Burdick, City of Tucson Planning  
Leslie Liberti, City of Tucson Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development

A quorum of the Committee was established.

2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Melaney Seacat announced that the Committee was receiving Phase II notebooks and also informed the committee about the Energy Policy and Water retreat that City and County staff attended.

Jim Barry introduced two new members of the Committee, Chris Brooks to replace Sean Sullivan from CWAC and Joseph Maher to replace James Watson from the City Planning Commission. Both are to be confirmed July 7, 2009 by the Mayor and Council and Board of Supervisors.

3. **APPROVAL OF APRIL 23 AND MAY 21, 2009 MEETING SUMMARIES\***

Marcelino Flores commented that the meeting summaries are not fully capturing the Committee's comments, are vague and abstract, and requests a better meeting summary so that the Committee can use it to help write the Phase II report. Jim Barry requested that staff be sure not to miss the Committee's colorful comments. Rob Kulakofsky stated that the Committee gets the papers ahead of time and should be able to discuss and come to consensus on ideas, and get these into the meeting summaries.

Approval of the April 23 and May 21, 2009 meeting summaries passed by a voice vote of 7-0.

4. **CALL TO THE AUDIENCE**

No one spoke.

5. **PHASE 2 SCHEDULE**

Nicole Ewing Gavin requested a proposed amendment to the Phase 2 schedule shifting some technical papers into September and using October-November for Committee report writing. Jim Barry mentioned that Mayor and Council and Board of Supervisors gave the Committee until November to complete Phase 2. Rob Kulakofsky stated that this makes sense given the Committee is being asked to do a lot and needs to do whatever it takes. Mark Stratton agreed stating that he would rather take the time to review the papers and give them the appropriate focus than gloss over some of them. The indication was that the Committee was comfortable with the change in the Phase 2 schedule.

6. **FOLLOW UP ON WATER CONSERVATION, STORMWATER AND RIPARIAN PROTECTION WHITE PAPERS**

Melaney Seacat distributed follow up documents on the May technical papers, which are intended to capture key themes from the Committee's discussion as well as respond to questions.

7. **PRESENTATION: LOCATION OF GROWTH, URBAN FORM AND COST OF INFRASTRUCTURE WHITE PAPER\***

Jim Barry reminded the Committee that population growth numbers were a part of the Phase I discussion. He stated that there are variations in and disagreements about projections and that this is important to remember during this presentation about growth. He suggested that most would agree there are inherent limits on how big Tucson can grow, and the question is how to manage the form and location of a population of around two million people.

Bob Cook brought up the long term trend of growth rates declining and requested an explanation from Tucson Planning/PAG/DES about why they project a population increase despite evidence otherwise.

Nicole Fyffe introduced the white paper by reviewing the Scope for the paper which stated that the City and County were to come to agreement on location and form of future growth. The Committee's themes and values from the Phase 1 Report also gave direction for the paper. Consultants Stantec and Curtis Lueck & Associates assisted in preparing the paper because of their past work with the County on SWIP.

Jim Barry disclosed his association with the consultant team but stated he had no involvement in this paper.

Arlan Colton spoke to the Committee stating that in his professional opinion this was very good planning work and was at a scale and depth as allowed by budget and time. Arlan stated that work like this had never been done before in the community. In the 1970s they tried to do something similar but not as this level of scenario visioning and benchmarking. There are many drivers of urban form and this paper is good food for thought as the City and County move forward in updating their General and Comprehensive Plans. He stated that this document is a 'what if' document, and that moving forward at the status quo is not acceptable for the future.

John Take from Stantec presented a powerpoint presentation on the white paper which looked at effects of urban form and at suitability of various growth areas. John made the point that design of the built environment is important and affects a variety of factors. Overall U.S. cities are less dense than other major world cities. John talked through benchmark data comparing Tucson to peer cities on a variety of factors.

Vince Vasquez stated that land values strongly affect density and asked if the paper took this into account. John Take answered that it did not.

John Carlson stated that water is a natural limit to population growth. He also asked John Take what is meant by the term "robust". John Take replied robustness refers to the quality of the study and whether conclusions are backed up by facts.

Marcelino Flores questioned if Tucson could go in a declining direction. John Take used the example of Flint, Michigan facing an economic decline and explained how the city was changing its form by tearing down homes and reclaiming open space. Marcelino Flores stated that economics are a big factor in how communities grow.

Bob Cook made the point that higher density areas use infrastructure more efficiently and subsidize low density.

Bonnie Poulos stated that she has a problem with the paper because the correlations aren't that strong and don't prove cause and effect. Over-simplification can lead us down paths we should not be on. She also does not agree with the correlation between potable water usage and density. Bruce Gungle stated that with so many data points there are correlations here. John Take stated that this is not meant to be causal.

Vince Vasquez stated that its only logical that smaller lots use less water.

John Take presented growth scenarios with varying affects on transportation, economy, water the environment, etc. He presented a status quo scenario, habitat protection scenario, infrastructure efficient scenario, and transit-oriented development scenario.

Bruce Gungle requested a set of maps that only showed the difference between the scenarios.

John Carlson questioned what date this scenario would be arrived at. John Take answered that these scenarios weren't date-specific, just population-specific (2 million).

Marcelino Flores commented that there was land that was undeveloped but not undevelopable and that growth would go to these areas unless we protect them.

Vince Vasquez stated that developers would be drawn to private land first and when and to what degree State Land comes to market will influence where development goes. With so many factors driving growth to different places, how would you realistically achieve these scenarios?

Jim Barry stated that a regional dialogue is clearly needed on this topic. He stated that this paper raises important questions and gives scenarios with rules and if the rules are changed, outcomes change.

John Carlson asked if we have enough water for 2 million people and stated that consolidating utilities or governments may be worth pursuing.

Mark Stratton stated that a blend of the scenarios might make the most sense. He also stated that taxpayer savings through more efficient growth should be invested in better infrastructure and amenities to serve more dense areas.

Rob Kulakofsky suggested that the peer cities chosen all had surface water and questioned whether they have habitat protection plans. The problem with the white paper is that we are quantifying suppositions. In addition, these are all things we already know and that have been looked at before. The disruption to existing neighborhoods through density increases and tearing down existing neighborhoods make these scenarios impractical.

Rob Kulakofsky asked how much money was spent on consultants for this paper. Nicole Ewing Gavin answered that it was in the \$30,000 range.

Jim Barry stated that he strongly disagrees with Rob's comments and that this paper is very useful.

Marcelino Flores questioned where was the analysis of the impact of the economy? Where are the job centers? Where are the areas of recreation? The benchmark cities Tucson was compared to have a lot more water.

Albert Elias continued the presentation stating he hopes the paper initiates dialogue and that it is written to be provocative. There are no easy answers and these issues are worth talking about. We need to help the community understand the issues. Do we want to target growth areas? Urban form? Reinvest in neglected areas? Provide more varied housing opportunities? We should strive to improve the quality of design and encourage better maintenance of aging housing stock. Is everyone going to have a voice? This takes a commitment to make choices a reality and that takes education, outreach and engagement, without these there are no choices. We need to approach this from a regional level and there is opportunity to engage those who have not been involved in the past. The youth of the community need to be

involved, it is their future. Albert Elias stated he is optimistic about dialogue and there is a sense of urgency and a price to pay if the community does not engage in discussion about these issues.

Nicole Ewing Gavin summarized the recommendations in the paper.

Vince Vasquez stated that he was not comfortable making an official statement about the paper until the end of the process. The Committee needs to consider this paper in the context of other papers.

Mark Stratton said it would be best to wait until the Committee hears all the environmental and planning papers over the next few months and blend issues for recommendations. There is some overlap and the committee should make a few solid recommendations.

Vince Vasquez stated that the white paper was a good starting point but should be the center of a real thorough study of the whole region and gains importance in that forum. He doesn't want to spend more than thirty minutes talking about density.

John Carlson stated that this was an incredible amount of information and that Tucson grew because people came here. The public needs to get educated and the scenarios need to be put out there for the public. Water cuts us off eventually.

Jim Barry said that during Phase I, population was one of the key variables that affect a sustainable water future, and that the most useful part of the paper was the raising of the question, "what does government have the most control over...how many people come? or what form growth takes?" This is why I disagree with Rob. This paper forces us to think of alternatives. Are there things we can do to make it go better? If not, we just throw up our hands.

Vince Vasquez questioned the policy of Tucson Water not to serve outside the obligated service area and if an area such as the southwest is labeled as a growth area what internal conversation would be had to determine if Tucson Water would serve the area. Nicole Ewing Gavin answered that the July technical paper will address this issue.

Mark Stratton stated that how much Marana and Oro Valley are expanding would have an impact on how the area looks and other areas are also looking at how to handle growth. Phase III and IV will become much more collaborative.

Rob Kulakofsky disagreed with Jim Barry. Rob doesn't think that we should just throw up our hands and not plan. We have been talking about these issues for years now and these scenarios have been considered. There is nothing new just a different way to put information out.

Arlan Colton agreed with Mark and it matters what Marana and Oro Valley and Sahuarita do. This paper assigned growth to those areas without planning for them. After doing this for thirty years, the planning options from 1970s are gone and the options are more limited today. It is interesting how much land actually has been taken up and what form. A lot of assumptions have been made, this is not a comprehensive plan and the study is based on a 30,000 foot view but it can inform the regional discussion.

Bonnie Poulo stated that we don't want to give the impression that these scenarios are mutually exclusive. We've seen an increase in density within the City without any benefits. An increase in population could mean a decrease in services when talking about density. Results

will only be achieved if many other things go along with an increase in density. There is no incentive to invest in transit. Legislature is thinking about revoking impact fees. These issues are not addressed in the white paper. There needs to be a holistic look. There needs to be a basis in reality.

Jim Barry stated we should do exactly this in our final report. We can take useful parts of the paper and put our own spin on it.

Vince Vasquez stated that the City and County should not be dictating density in terms of RAC. Instead, the City and County should put in new infrastructure in the growth areas.

Nicole Fyffe stated that the scenarios are not meant to be mutually exclusive and that staff hoped the Committee would pick the elements of each they like.

Rob Kulakofsky stated that upgrades in the existing built environment need to be looked at as well as investment in new growth areas.

Jim Barry suggested that the picture on the back page of the report be removed and some of the language within the report goes too far and damages the credibility of the findings.

Rob Kulakofsky questioned the CO2 emissions number on page 6, thinking it would be reduced by a lot more since multi-dwelling buildings cause a snowball effect in saving energy and requested to see the source of the number.

Bob Cook stated that this is a useful exercise and a good way to introduce smart growth. The bad news is in the implementation. The status quo is not economically sustainable. The most significant variables are the economy and energy costs. Bob Cook stated that keeping 2 million people a constant was not reality. Tucson is not growing and no one is talking about why and the economic factors that each scenario faces should be looked at.

Christopher Brooks stated that it is important to give the general public ideas on how to grow but as far as the committee, importance of urban form and how it affects constraints on water and infrastructure is what should be focused on.

Joseph Maher stated that in the past growth has been a four letter word. We've ignored managed growth. In the past there has been a fear of imposing zoning. In 25 years, he's never seen these things mapped. Portland is an example of a place with a growth boundary that forced growth within a certain area. There are disadvantages to this but it is a managed growth plan. Tucson still needs a plan. It is the chicken and the egg debate, is it transit first or higher density housing first? Maintenance is an important issue and can have a domino effect. We still have one of the ugliest streets in America. He hopes that Tucson's older neighborhoods can be revitalized.

8. **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING\***

Jim Barry reminded the Committee that the paper for the next meeting is Integrating Land Use Planning with Water Resources and Infrastructure.

9. **CALL TO THE AUDIENCE**

Margot Garcia stated that she appreciated the tremendous amount of work that went into modeling and the GIS gentleman (Mike List) should get a round of applause. We all learn from modeling and it was very interesting the constraints the Conservation Land System put on us. Other constraints should be tried for example a bond for a million dollars or how far water pipes are extended. What about the destruction of neighborhoods? There is a natural

evolution. Models give us ideas and raise questions. If we continue on the status quo, other people make decisions for us.

Donna Branch-Gilby stated that the scenarios had many unknowns and some knowns that were not included in the presentation. The scenarios need to include real experiences. For example we are past peak oil production and the source is finite. She hopes we can get realistic about what the valley can sustain and there are hard decisions to be made.

Colette Altaffer stated she appreciates the work that went into the paper but is disappointed at the City's refusal to plan holistically addressing global warming, long term drought, etc. This paper will get out as the example of what we can do and it is not realistic. It needs to be made clear that this is a tool and not encourage people to move here without enough water. Sam Hughes Place as an example of dense infill has insufficient parking and noise and is not a good example of mixed use to which we should aspire. We should not support the regional visioning process because SALC excludes and marginalizes neighbors.

Charles Cole wondered how many people will water support. We don't want to go beyond our means, need to go beneath our means to account for a climate change buffer. Where does the increased garbage go? Will it leech into water? We need the committee to interact with the landfill design folks.

Melissa Mosey stated that equity is missing. Higher density is not equitable. People in the foothills can use as much water as they want to water their lawns while others have to live in high density to make up for it. What about the increase in crime associated with high density?

John Carlson requested a new roster.

11. **ADJOURNMENT\***

The meeting was adjourned by Jim Barry at 8:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Graciela Schneier  
Wathalie Sevaux  
Samuel Leplus  
Melissa Mauzy  
Donna Branch-Gilby  
Corey Thompson  
Michael Curmon  
David Godleski  
Fred Ronstadt  
Sheila Bower  
Colette Altaffer  
Mary Hamilton  
Cris Hamilton  
Lilian Von Rago  
Kristen Zimmerman  
Charles Cole  
Kerri Jean Ormond  
Jan Gordley  
Margot Garcia  
Athena Garcia  
Mac Hudson

Summary of June 25, 2009 Comments on the Population and Land-Use White Paper

By Bob Cook

1. The relevant scenario comparison is between Status Quo and Smart Growth. What would be very useful for regional infrastructure planning is to have a detailed cost-benefit comparison between business-as-usual and a smart growth strategy.
  
2. To compare business as usual to enhanced open space, increased density and transit-oriented development scenarios may be informative in order to learn about these separate impacts on where growth will likely occur but it does not inform us about how to plan infrastructure under emerging real-world conditions.
  
3. Adding an additional one million people to the region under the Status Quo scenario would appear to be closer to impossible rather than “Most Easy” since business-as-usual has shown to be the most expensive and least efficient urban form in terms of total costs and benefits.
  
4. We are facing absolutely critical sustainability challenges in this region. This white paper did not address any other population growth assumptions except for “doubling our population.” We are seriously unprepared for any slower growth scenarios playing out.
  
5. The committee has heard many presentations from the local scientific and academic community. These presentations show that population growth in the future could decline because of:
  - Water shortages
  - Increasingly higher energy and water costs/prices
  - Increasingly hotter and drier climate
  - Grassification of our local Sonoran Desert ecosystems
  - Higher fire danger in mountains and newly formed grasslands
  - Growing unemployment due to slowdown of development industry
  - The “herd dynamic” to join others escaping increasing hardship