SOUTH MIAMI-DADE WATERSHED STUDY TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (TRC)

Summary Outline of TRC Comments: Meeting Four

The following outline summarizes the comments.

TRC Meeting Overview

The day began with a welcome, introductions, and review of the meeting agenda by Jim Murley, TRC Moderator and Director of the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University. The meeting, he noted, would consist of the following five components:

I. Updates on related planning and a review of the project consultant response to TRC Meeting Three comments

II. Keith and Schnars Presentation and Discussion, Part One – Assessment Methodology and Opportunities and Constraints

III. Keith and Schnars Discussion, Part Two – Planning Principles for Building the Land Use Scenarios and Upcoming Work Tasks and Focus of TRC Meeting Five

IV. Closing comments and next steps

V. Public comments

In other opening comments, Murley highlighted the materials that the TRC received for the meeting:

- Consultant response to TRC Meeting Two comments
- Assessment Methodologies Report
- Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

Murley also thanked TRC member Steve Nix who, although he will be leaving South Florida for the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, has agreed to continue on the TRC. In addition, he recognized TRC member Chuck Blowers, who, because of job responsibilities regarding the Watershed Study, will no longer be able to be a member.

I. Updates

Watershed Study Project Manager

John Hulsey, Watershed Study Project Manager and Senior Planner with the South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC), made the following points about the overall context for the Watershed Study.

Project Status: The 26-month study is in its fourteenth month. The project consultant has begun work on the Land Use Scenarios and is preparing to start work on the assessment of the scenarios next.

Related Events in the Study Area:

- The Watershed Study Advisory Committee has accepted the documents for Sub-Tasks 1.1-1.7 and will be reviewing the work products from Sub-Task 1.8 the week of the TRC meeting.

- Two Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) in the Study Area are under review and may be considered by the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners in February of 2005. The Commission has asked for a study of the developable land and affordable housing supply by this date.
- Since the Board of County Commissioners has not formally considered the report on the Agricultural Land Retention Study, it may not be possible to use the land use information contained in the report in the development of the scenarios for the Watershed Study.

Keith and Schnars' Response to TRC Meeting Three Comments

Speaking for the Keith and Schnars team, Michael Davis noted that the TRC had received a report summarizing how the TRC Meeting Three comments had been addressed. The TRC had no comments on how Keith and Schnars had addressed their comments.

II. Keith and Schnars Presentation and Discussion: Part One

Assessment Methodology

Keith and Schnars began the discussion by noting that this part of the discussion would focus on the Assessment Methodology Report, which is a compilation of assessment methodologies for the following topics:

- Water Resources
- Natural Communities
- Land Use
- Economy and Employment
- Infrastructure

Keith and Schnars also noted that this work product is at the mid-point and will be used later this year when the scenarios are evaluated. TRC comments should focus on the appropriateness of the assessment methodologies.

Water Resources

In their discussion of water resources, the TRC raised the following points:

- The data for assessing water resources should be synchronized with the data used by other similar studies. [Keith and Schnars responded that they are sharing data with the other studies, including the population data, and that the Watershed Study data are ahead of the schedule of other studies, such as the Lower East Coast study (LEC) and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP). In addition, the Watershed Study is in greater sub-area detail than the other studies. The software for these different studies is compatible.]

- The assessment methodology should compare pollutant loadings of water discharge on Biscayne Bay, starting with the threshold condition. [Keith and Schnars responded that they can compare models to a threshold model.]

In addition to the above, the TRC asked Keith and Schnars if there was any evidence of sanitary overflow, a point that Keith and Schnars representatives said they would look into.

Natural Communities

TRC comments about the natural communities' parameters and thresholds included the following.

- Address the extent and impact of invasive, exotic plans and animals in natural systems.
- Develop a map that shows all wetlands, so that it is possible to understand the extent (total percentage) of the Study Area that is wetlands. In addition, map exotic dominated wetlands, as well as disturbed wetlands, that can be restored. Do not assume that disturbed wetlands will be developed, as they could have other important wetland functions.

Land Use

The TRC had a number of comments on the building of the land use scenarios.

- Make a clear distinction between the impacts on the ground of rural, exurban, suburban, and urban development patterns. Population densities could be used instead to make these distinctions. [Keith and Schnars responded that they are making this distinction as part of the parameters and thresholds element.]
- Look at the impact of the scenarios on the character of rural communities and agricultural lands. [Keith and Schnars responded that they are assessing these impacts.]
- Round-off population numbers for 2025 and 2050, which would mean the population would be 1.2 and 1.5 million, respectively.
- Re-examine the assumption that the Urban Development Boundary (UDB) will not be moved. An adjustment, the TRC noted, may be necessary.
- Consider building the scenario data by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) versus census tracts. This approach would be of greater value for transportation plans. [Keith and Schnars responded that there were too many TAZs to use this approach.]
- The housing types in the census data could be used to help determine trends and to distribute the household types in the land use scenarios.
- The regional system, such as the eco and transportation systems, should be considered in the different scenarios.
- Develop consensus on the planning principles before developing the scenarios.
- Include a wish list of lands that should be protected in the scenarios. One scenario should be very aggressive and present the ideal depiction of what lands should be protected.
- The experience of the 2025 population scenario should inform the construction of the 2050 population scenario.

Economy and Employment

In response to a question from Keith and Schnars, the TRC confirmed that it would be appropriate to use less than full-county data sets when using the REMI model. The TRC also noted that although Keith and Schnars is using the same economic mix in the scenarios, the mix could change over time, which means that per capita costs will change.

Infrastructure

TRC members made the following comments about assessing infrastructure.

- Schools
  - Consider changes in the distribution of household types on schools; e.g., a more dense form of development generally results in fewer children, which can result in excess school capacity in urban areas. Families with children typically locate in lower density areas. That is, assume that when using a constant figure for population, the consequences on schools will be different under alternative spatial distributions.
  - Keep the total number of students fixed when assessing the scenarios.
  - Put education at the top of the list with the Bay and the Everglades when assessing the impact of the scenarios on the quality of life of the Study Area.
  - Consider Florida's capital and operating formulae for funding schools. These formulae will have an impact on the number of students in the different development forms.
  - Do not assume that there will be significant increases in density. Future development will most likely be at more modest density levels, such as townhouses and three-to-four story structures.
- Wastewater treatment
  - Recognize that the allocation of wastewater treatment will change under the different land use distributions. Also, recognize that although the Study assumes that economic mix will stay the same, the mix may change over time, which means that the costs will change on a per capita basis.
- Transportation
  - Consider giving a greater priority on improving traffic signalization, which is important to best management practices and the ultimate quality of life of the Study Area.
  - Compare the results of this Study to the Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) 20-year plan and assumptions on modal splits.
  - Ensure that all the scenarios assume a transit spine. The transit spine is funded and a unique asset to the Study Area, which means that the spine must be a constant in all the scenarios.
  - Analyze the 1,500 TAZs. This analysis will be important to obtain meaningful results.
  - Look at shortening trip lengths and increasing use of transit through shorter headways.

Opportunities and Constraints

Keith and Schnars noted that this work product is nearing completion. TRC comments should focus on if the opportunities and constraints are appropriate and if Keith and Schnars has properly identified how the opportunities and constraints will be used in developing the scenarios.

In the discussion of opportunities and constraints, the TRC first commented on the importance of identifying how the opportunities and constraints will address the five goals of CERP. [Keith and Schnars noted that this will be addressed by the Watershed Study Project Management Committee.]

Opportunities

The TRC made the following comments about the opportunities maps.

- Naranja Lakes has an active Community Redevelopment Agency that is promoting redevelopment based on New Urbanist planning principles.
- Put major canals on all the maps as locating features.
- Be sure to look at the opportunity maps as a guide. For example, it may be appropriate to decide that something which has been identified as an opportunity, such as a brownfield close to the Bay, should not be developed. Mapping brownfields simply shows where they are and not whether or not they should be redeveloped. Related to this point, it was noted that the SFRPC has a three-county program for brownfield redevelopment.
- Consider what is happening with the market on both sides of the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway ridge – the *Eastward Ho!* planning area.
- Map the location of community charrettes in the Study Area, which will help show opportunities for density and redevelopment, particularly along the transit spine.
- Check the transit map, which is confusing. [Keith and Schnars responded that they have already updated this map.]
- Look at the recent amendment to the Kendall Town Center Development of Regional Impact (DRI). In addition, look at the accuracy of the location of all DRIs and look at the un-built density in DRI areas. For example, there is a significant amount of un-built density in the vicinity of the Kendall Town Center DRI.
- Check the accuracy of the vacant, unprotected land map. Related to this, be sure to clearly define and label what this map means in terms of the land use designations. [The Miami-Dade County Department of Planning will check the accuracy of these maps.]

Constraints

TRC comments about the constraints included the following points.

- Make the borders of the CERP map fuzzy to denote the lack of specificity.
- Check to see if all the Environmentally Endangered Land (EEL) sites are on the EEL map. In addition, add the environmental sites acquired by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).
- Show on all maps what land has been acquired and what land has not been acquired.
- Examine the parks map for accuracy.
- Map the rises in sea level from CERP.
- Add a map showing wetlands as a constraint.

III. Keith and Schnars Presentation and Discussion: Part Two

Planning Principles for Building the Land Use Scenarios

Keith and Schnars kicked off the discussing by noting that the principles provide guidance for

determining the distribution of future growth in the alternative land use scenarios. TRC comments should focus on:

- If the appropriate planning principles that will be needed to properly evaluate the scenarios have been included
- How to best to apply the planning principles in the evaluation of the scenario

TRC comments on the scenarios assessment tools included the following.

- Ensure that the process leads to a point where the quality of life of the Watershed Study Area is sustainable.
- Consider reassessing or adjusting the use of the program Community Viz, which has some limitations for the intended use in this study. First, it may not work at the level of detail planned for this phase of the work, particularly when looking at shifts in households into different development patterns. Second, Community Viz is good for assessing visual impacts, but not the fiscal impacts. Third, if Community Viz will not evaluate the impact of land use scenarios on environmental and water resources, develop an alternative methodology to evaluate these impacts. Community Viz, is, however, a malleable tool. Keith and Schnars should talk to Community Viz about how they want to apply this tool in the Watershed Study, so that it can be adjusted to meet the study needs.
- The data for the east-west and north-south minor statistical areas are not there to measure the movement of population within sub-community areas. Data should be developed that measures the movement of the population within sub-community areas. In addition, recognize that it is incorrect to assume population movement will take on the same character of a sub-area--e.g., that that larger families will move to urban areas.
- Be careful not to treat Biscayne Bay as an island when assessing impacts of the land use scenarios. What happens to the Bay has significant regional economic impacts in the Study Area. In addition, look the economic impacts of the Bay on the Study Area. [Keith and Schnars responded that they were using surrogates for assessing impacts on the Bay, as it was not in their scope of work to study the impacts on the Bay. They also are looking at the economic impacts of the Bay.]
- Recognize the number of annexations pending in the Watershed Study Area.
- Look at the fiscal costs of mitigating different scenarios on natural and ecological resources, as well as on water quality and availability. This should be in addition to looking at impacts of the land use scenarios on physical infrastructure. In addition, develop a concurrency for environmental impacts.
- Look at the fiscal costs of mitigating the different scenarios on natural and ecological resources, as well as on water quality and availability, and develop a concurrency for environmental impacts. Do not limit the fiscal cost analysis to physical infrastructure.
- Develop the costs for each “silo,” such as habitat or water resources, and then combine the silos into a comprehensive, aggregate view, if possible at the sub-basin level. This will be important for the public to understand the costs of mitigation.
- Apply the same level of detail being used to assess urban impacts to environmental impacts.

Upcoming Work Tasks and Focus of Meeting Five

The fifth TRC meeting will focus on the following topics:

- The alternative scenarios
- Outputs from the impact assessment of the scenarios
- Lead-in information on the cost-benefit analysis and initial information on the alternative actions needed to mitigate the impacts of the scenarios

IV. Closing Comments and Next Steps

TRC Concluding Observations

TRC Moderator Jim Murley thanked the TRC members for contributing their time and insights. He noted that TRC comments on the methodology for assessing fiscal impact should be submitted to Keith and Schnars by August 3. He also noted that a representative of Keith and Schnars might be contacting individual TRC members prior to the next meeting to discuss the planning principles and alternative future scenarios. It is up to the TRC members contacted whether or not they provide additional assistance between meetings.

Murley then asked each TRC member to make any closing comments about the study process and work products. These comments are summarized below.

- Reduce the number of scenarios from six to three.
- The work products are appropriate and on the right track.
- Keep the focus on Biscayne Bay. At this point, it is not clear that any of the scenarios will demonstrate a significant difference in terms of the impact on the Bay, as well as on ground and surface water. Also look at the human use (current and future) impacts on the Bay.
- Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management data on the relationship between surface water and land use should be analyzed.
- Keith and Schnars should add their observations and opinions to the study analysis, so that the analysis is not all numbers.
- At the end of the day, the plan should include a definition of what the study should achieve. To do this, it will be necessary to open the now separate information silos to see what is required in order to have a sustainable result or what course correction is needed. Key is that planners do not open the individual silos and find out that they hurt the Bay. Models from other areas would be useful to help inform this process.
- The Watershed Study can help inform other regional system studies and plans. For example, the study could provide a context for transit plans and for the agricultural lands study.
- Be sure to consider the nuclear power plant in the Study Area. One impact is that it creates a large land area that cannot be used for development.

Next Meeting Dates

The next TRC Meeting (meeting five) will be on November 4, 2004. The sixth and final TRC meeting, which will be held in 2005, will focus on the preferred scenario.

V. Public Comments

No public comments were made during the TRC meeting.

APPENDIX A: Participants in Meeting Four of the Technical Review Committee

Technical Review Committee (TRC)

Jerry Ault
Liz Abbott
Bill Anderson
Dave Barth
Robert Burchell
David Chin
Tom Daniels
Gerrit Knaap
Susan Markley
Steve Nix
Donald Pybas
Roy Rogers
Joel Trexler
(Absent: Joe Kohl, John Volin, Mahadev Bhat, and Ed Stacker)

Other Meeting Participants

Catanese Center for Urban and Environmental
Patricia Bryk
Angela Grooms
Jim Murley (TRC Moderator)
Jean Scott

Miami-Dade County
Subrata Basu
Cindy Dwyer
Maria Valdes
Alissa Turtletaub

South Florida Regional Planning Council
John Hulsey

Keith and Schnars
Michael Davis
Marie Ecton
Samantha Horowitz
Ian Miller
Michael Phelps
Eric Silva
Marc LaFerier
Fadi Nassa
Bryan Piersol
Richard Punett
Robert Cruz