

November 10, 2010 STF WATER Work Group Summary

The Water Recommendation Work Group met for the second time on Nov 10, 2010. Sustainability task force members were asked to volunteer for the water management recommendations workgroup.

Attendees:

Task Force members:

Kevin Cochran
Wynne Coleman
Robin Hammond
Sherry Johnson

Sara Robertson
Michael Sanera
Suzanne Harris

Private sector guests:

Mary Brice - Dewberry
Leila Goodwin – Town of Cary

Staff:

WECO:

Patrick Beggs
Christy Perrin

Wake County:

Matt Roylance
Britt Stoddard
Dale Threatt-Taylor

Meeting Objective: Provide feedback on each of the draft strategies to guide revisions that will go to full Sustainability Task Force

The Group continued discussing the strategies listed in the document dated Oct 7, 2010. The group began with strategy G, and then continued with B, C, etc. in alphabetical order. They were asked to consider, “How can the strategy better meet your interest while meeting others’ interests, too?”

In the following summary of the discussion, *edits suggested by Task Force members are in italics*, edits that enjoyed consensus from all members are in **RED BOLD UPPERCASE**.

Question: How will staff use these recommendations?

Response: Staff won’t change your recommendations, but we may have to evaluate costs, resources for implementation.

Concern that the implementation (ordinances) may not reflect our desire if our recommendations are too general, for example, when discussing incentives, new development, current development. If it is too vague, I’d have to vote against it

Strategy G:

Extend current supply through reuse, efficiency, and conservation.

- What is the scale? Are we talking residential or system-wide lines (reclaimed). Efficiency and conservation would be low-hanging fruit for homeowners. What about stormwater?
- Do as much system wide re-use and reclaimed water re-use as economically as possible. For example: Reuse/reclaim – treated wastewater, Harvested stormwater, Grey water – from sinks/washers in houses

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- Greywater has issues – require state law changes for public health – possible but requires thought change.
- Their will need to be discussion about voluntary vs. involuntary and the expense of retrofits.
- Are we talking a new regime, or just suggestions?
- If they get the water pricing right, there will be economic incentive to conserve.
- Need comparative cost analysis to find cheapest supply.
- Concern that septic systems contaminating groundwater.
- Underground storage tanks that are not inspected.
- Spills would have serious impact.
- Question about semantics of ‘extend supply’. What does it include? Is it just potable water?
- What is different between efficiency and conservation?
- Do we need to specify between the 3 methods in the strategy? (**reuse, efficiency, and conservation**) Or is it sufficient to emphasize all three to be separate from a new reservoir?
- These 3 are often considered as “reduction demand” not new supply
- Pricing – higher rates or tiered? Not tiered, but likely will be higher to reflect full pricing. We don’t have market so we don’t know costs.
- Efficiency = technology (toilets, washers)
- Conservation = choices people make (less irrigation)
- Specify life cycle cost analysis (agree w/ analysis)
- Growth – are we anticipating something we don’t really know will happen? Seems nebulous if it doesn’t say what will happen.
- Agree w/ pricing as a tool. But not the only tool. Pricing is not a panacea. We need to look at a *hybrid model of pricing and other tools*.
- Public health can change the rules, for example, forcing conservation. Can’t put in a system that is too restrictive as to cause problems with needs in public health. Must also consider equity.
- Incentives vs. mandates
- Recs need to be broad reaching, and not just target specific audiences such as new development. There needs to be a fairness to all.
- Don’t want to be sustainable if that means it costs way too much.
- We need a comparable cost analysis. This will be part of Strategy A.
- In the past Wake Task forces, we met for 18 months, etc. – met longer. We started out big picture, but staff helped whittle it down.
- Some of these strategies are too broad and we may not be ready to support this.
- Maybe we have to meet for longer time period. We don’t have enough time to do what we’ve been given. Commissioners specified how long TF would meet.
- Staff: We will tell Commissioner Bryan this.
- We can have interim recommendations. Concerned we don’t have anyone from planning dept here. What about conservation design and other developments we’d like to see done and we need their buy in. We may need a 2nd stage of this TF. Concerned that people said “nothing will come out of this committee”
- But we have opinions and specialties and should tell our concerns too.
- We should have a recommendation that there is a Phase 2 of the TF.

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- We need to think twice about extending STF since we have underlying values that are different, so we haven't had time to fully discuss.
- Tendency in county to feel that we will be completely urbanized, but we want more than that, including rural.
- Not sure planners have the same views we have.
- Some of what has been said belongs in other strategies, like DEF
- When staff fleshes things out, in past, they have put it together in a more cohesive format.
- I'd like to see the changes we've suggested written down in a new format
- Some of this is government intrusiveness.
- These should be constitutional, not simply pragmatic.
- I don't want to see it get watered down.

Addition to G (above) or D,E,F (codes and ordinances):

Wake county should work with DENR to modify regulations to further encourage stormwater collection and reuse.

Strategy B:

Implement a water resources monitoring and reporting program to continuously assess the quality and quantity of water resources in the County

- Local watershed planning (at a 14-digit HUC level)
- Identify groundwater recharge areas for Wake County's aquifer
- Review Wake County's Watershed Plan to identify missing elements and revise it

Q: Does Wake water quality report include strategies and costs for recommendations and what additional data is needed. A: There are already reports on this.

- Definition: 14-digit HUC (hydrologic unit code) refers to a watershed drainage area that is approximately 3-5 sq. miles in size- this is considered by the US EPA to be a manageable sized watershed to work on.
- Isn't this an administrative task? There is already a level of monitoring. Change to *Increase*. Who is doing this? If it is already being done, does it have to be done more.
- *Put the monitoring results and plans online* so we can all see what is being done.
- Maybe it is implement a formal monitoring plan. Work toward *increasing monitoring and formalizing it*. It also requires more than just administrative work. Is there a way for different entities to work together or to gather all this information in one place. To identify gaps.
- Maybe the answer is *coordination*. County has produced 1st Water quality report this year, which basically comes from many different sources. Overall, there seems to be agreement in the field that there is not enough monitoring and also that there is a need for coordination. What about non-required data such as UST. There is no mandate or rule, so then nothing gets done. That puts groundwater at risk.
- There is *increase monitoring, coordinate, implement new*

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- What does water resources define? We should *specify surface and ground*
- We may all be able to get behind this.
- Ground water in County has some contaminants and I'd like to know if residents have been told and what is being done. County does not test for Radon.
- If we are monitoring anyway we need to include other, *non-regulated items, such as Radon*. As compared to Arsenic which is regulated.
- **ASSESS EFFORTS, INCREASE WHERE NEEDED, DETERMINE WHAT'S MISSING, COORDINATE. IMPLEMENT OTHER THINGS, NEEDED.**
- Conduct a comparable cost analysis to weigh new data against cost of new data.
- I'd like to see the *subpoints crossed off*.
- There is a cost, but what cost is greater? The data collection or the results of not doing it?
- It is cheapest is to prevent it.
- There is a cost to cost analysis – we have to trust staff at some point. We can't have analysis paralysis.
- There should be a reason to collect data.

Strategy C:

Rehabilitate and replace aging water resource infrastructure

- This is a city service, so it is a duplication of city service.
- In reference to Raleigh increasing capacity, there isn't a good financial structure in place to address aging infrastructure. So they are looking at water rates, and there may be an infrastructure fee in the future to address this absence. We recognize the need for it and the need for money for it.
- *Recommend, support, encourage*

Strategy H:

Develop new water resource supply

- *This will refer to currently unused, untapped resources, NOT a supply created via conservation*
- What about the upstream of Falls Lake source via the Neuse (Franklin County Area?)
- *Evaluate opportunities to increase capacity.*
- *Identify and evaluate alternatives to*
- *Identify water rights and weather they should be changed (including state regs)*
- *Identify impediments to increasing supply.* Much of this may have been done via Little River Reservoir EIS.
- An alternative to Little River reservoir is offline storage.
- *Further encourage analysis of increasing water supply*
- There is a study of water allocation law (via Holman & Whisnant) Maybe they could come and talk to us or we can find out more.

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- Secure current groundwater resources for current users and for agriculture. The state talks about working with farmers, but does it work with residents on groundwater, no matter what they use it for.
- Need to *add in Ag needs, whether it is here or in another strategy*. Ag is a part of Wake County.
- What is most cost effective? Should new supply be prioritized over conservation? This could be answered via comparable cost analysis.
- Can we incorporate this into G? It should be a part of A (econ analysis).

Strategy I:

Preserve and conserve headwater and groundwater recharge areas

- Fee simple purchase
- purchase of development rights
- conservation design
- low impact development techniques

- Do we know where recharge areas are? Can use gross estimates to determine GW recharge. *Recommend determining where they are.* Which is also part of B (monitoring)
- Preserve and conserve *through voluntary and incentive means*, not regulatory means.
- Do we have data that shows preserving headwaters is a recommended strategy to protect water. Yes there is data.
- AWWA & Trust for public land has imprinting (?) data
- It should be *voluntary and/or incentive based*.
- *Identify headwaters and groundwaters and determine best to preserve.*
- Concern that private property owners will lose the right to do what they want or to diminish their ability to sell. Need more info on this. Misinformed property owners who sell conservation easement and then lose rights.
- Protecting headwaters is already done by state law. *Clarify- we are talking about protecting the land, not just the water.*
- *I would cross off the iii and iv since they aren't voluntary, they tend to be mandatory.*
- *I disagree with that.*