



ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP Meeting #3

**Tuesday, August 21, 2012
10:00AM – 12:00PM
Cansler YMCA, Community Room
616 Jessamine Street, Knoxville, TN 37917**

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Berny Ilgner, Environment Working Group chair and Principal Scientist with ARCADIS, introduced himself, thanked meeting attendees and asked the group to introduce themselves.

Parties Present

Roy Arthur, (Knox County Stormwater Management), Paul Berney (Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center and Knox Housing Partnership), Cathy Elliott (Army Corps of Engineers), Ben Epperson (Knox County Health Dept.), Betsy Ford (Knoxville Utility Board), Tiffany Lynn Foster (TVA - Watershed Team), Parci Gibson, (Knox County Stormwater Management), Tracy Jones (Knox County Stormwater Management), Neva Kitts (Union County Chamber of Commerce), John Lamb, (Blount County Planning Dept.), Carol Montgomery (Green Village Green LLC), Kim Raia (Little River Watershed Association), Ellen Smith (Oak Ridge City Council), Chris Thompson (Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation - Knoxville Office), Emily Woodle (City of Knoxville Community Development,) Wolf Naegeli (Foundation for Global Sustainability), Athanasia Senecal Lewis (City of Oak Ridge Community Development) Berny Ilgner (Working Group Chair, ARCADIS), Liz Albertson (MPC–PlanET Staff), Amy Brooks (MPC/TPO–PlanET Staff), Sherith Colverson (City of Knoxville – PlanET Staff), Mark Donaldson (MPC–PlanET Staff), Rob Kerns (WRT– PlanET Consulting Team), Kevin Tilbury (GS&P–PlanET Consulting Team), Alex Zendel (MPC–PlanET Staff), Ann Coulter (A. Coulter Consulting–PlanET Consulting Team, Facilitator)

Introduction to Scenario Development

MPC Executive Director Mark Donaldson provided an introduction to the scenario planning process. Particularly how scenarios are developed for our region and what they mean in looking at possible futures for our region. Below are the bulleted points from the presentation.

- Scenarios show how the region COULD absorb expected population growth
 - Provide examples of what the region’s development patterns and transportation system might look like
 - Different scenarios show the same amount of growth for a given time period, but distributed in different ways
 - Analyzing differences allows results of policy, regulatory, and investment decisions to be understood
- Trend scenario: first scenario to be developed
 - Provides the best estimate of how the region will develop if no changes occur in development practices or plans, market forces, or transportation investments
 - Provides baseline against which to measure other scenarios
- Alternative scenarios: Depict what could happen if particular policy, regulatory, or investment changes are made
 - Show different ways in which homes, jobs, roads, transit, and open spaces could be spread out or concentrated
- Scenarios are compared against the baseline (trend) scenario using indicators
 - Quantitative measurements applied to each scenario and measure spatial aspects of growth only
 - Comparing indicator values of alternative scenarios shows differences between scenarios

Presentation of Trend Scenario

Kevin Tilbury with the PlanET Consulting Team presented the trend scenario, the first to be developed for our region, and that will be used to compare to other scenarios. The trend scenario answers, “What’s happening today? If we keep doing things the way we’re doing, what will happen by 2030-2040? What will our region look like?” The trend scenario:

- Allocates the next 30 years of population and employment growth using the following projections.
 - By 2040, the population is expected to grow by 298,163 persons
 - By 2040, employment is expected to grow by 240,274 jobs

- Using the “Business as usual” approach for our region, the following current development patterns are assumed to continue for the next 30 years.
 - Strip commercial and regional centers
 - Industrial and Office parks and strip office
 - Mix of suburban housing and rural residential

The demand for land in the trend scenario for 2040 is based on the projections noted above for population and jobs, as well as development drivers that were established through a survey of the local development community, including, bankers, developers, planners, economic developers, and city/county officials. These drivers are outlined in the [Livability Report Card](#) on pages 40-43 and reviewed and commented on at the previous working group meeting. The supply of land is considered to be unconstrained vacant land in the PlanET Region. The intensity and regularity of the trend scenario is based on current practices and market desirability.

The regional development pattern for 2010 was shown, as was the estimated development pattern for 2014, 2024, 2034 and 2024. (Images are contained in the PowerPoint presentation shown during the meeting.) By 2024, the trend scenario for the region is expected to yield:

- 115,000+ acres of greenfield development
- 112,000+ new homes consuming 98,000+ acres (0.88 dwelling units per acre)

Kevin listed the benchmarks/indicators currently under consideration for use in monitoring progress toward achieving a regional vision for the environment. Participants will be asked to react to this list (below) in their small group discussions.

- Annual water use
- Acres of environmentally sensitive land or critical habitat lost to development
- Acres of new impervious surfaces

A brief Q & A period followed and a participant asked how the trends were developed.

Kevin Tilbury responded they are based on existing projections for jobs and population growth for the region. Projections were developed as part of the update to the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization’s traffic demand model. He noted that jobs will grow faster than the region’s population.

Presentation of Draft Regional Vision Statement

Rob Kerns presented the Draft Regional Vision Statement, noting that this draft arose out of public participation since the project's kickoff in October 2011. Input was collected in large community forums, meetings in a box, leadership dialogues, stakeholder interviews, Mindmixer, and the community survey. It is written from a 2040 perspective.

The small groups were asked to focus particularly on the clean and natural section of the draft vision statement as it is most closely aligned with the Environment focus area. The vision statement for the clean and natural section follows.

We understand and act on the assurance that the protection of our resources and our legacy of parks, greenways, and natural areas directly contributes to the health of our regional economy and our people.

We have protected and improved our region's air and water quality through an array of initiatives.

- We have been selective in recruiting "clean industries" into the region.
- Greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced through shifts in mobility patterns, lessened reliance on the automobile, and lower emission vehicles.
- Our streams and other waterways are protected by riparian buffers and other means of reducing sedimentation and introduction of contaminants.

We have retained our farmland through initiatives to promote economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture.

- New innovative and profitable forms of agriculture occur throughout the region on land previously underutilized, reducing pressure for development.
- Innovative rural development practices such as conservation (cluster) development allow land owners to sell and develop lots while continuing to farm.
- Profitable farming and programs promoting farming as a desirable career choice have attracted a new generation of farmers.

Small Group Discussion

Ann Coulter asked participants to break into three groups to discuss the following questions:

- Do you agree with the components of the draft Regional Vision Statement? Are any important vision ideas missing?
- How does the trend scenario compare to the Regional Vision? Do they align or are there major differences?

- What are the most important scenario benchmarks/indicators for your focus area?

The following is a summary of comments from each group.

Group #1

- Trend Scenario as it compares to the Draft Regional Vision
 - *Sprawl has an amebic pattern*
 - *Water supply will be limited*
 - *Bedrock will prohibit growth in many areas*
 - *Contrasts with vision statement in regard to lack of public transportation, loss of agricultural lands, and increase in real estate and utility costs*
 - *Political environment would not turn down an interstate*
 - *Economic development will take precedence over environment*
 - *Political will to promote clean industry?*
 - *Increase forest cover to offset increased emissions*
 - *Current trend is to move streams*
 - *No groundwater recharge*
- Draft Vision Statement Comments
 - *“Clean industries” also needs to address cleaning of existing industries, new industries need to be clean*
 - *Protection and renewal of forested areas in addition to agricultural lands*
 - *Protection and addition of open space*
 - *Reduce flooding should be added*
 - *Add water quality improvements*
 - *A changed political environment that places more importance on environmental and citizen values*
 - *People as the object of protection from environmental damage and degradation*
 - *Improved quality of life through innovative strategy to protect property*
 - *Infrastructure (storm and sanitary sewer) aging*
- Missing Indicators and Comments on Indicators
 - *Impervious surfaces important (captures water quantity and water quality)*
 - *Can we add impervious surface reductions to the indicators? (Reductions from the trend)*
 - *Quantity of runoff*

- *Can we measure peak flows?*
- *Can we measure improvement of current 303(D) streams?*
- *Water consumption of households*
- *Measure riparian buffers?*
- *Measure direct stormwater lines to streams*
- *Reduction of solid waste*
- *Include air emissions beyond just autos*
- *Reduced rate of sprawl from the trend*
- *Housing density of existing and new developments*
- *Urban core areas redeveloped into high density housing*

Group #2

- **Trend Scenario as it compares to Draft Regional Vision Comments**
 - *Urban sprawl is inconsistent with vision statement*
 - *Little room left for natural areas and viewsheds*
 - *Fragmented greenspace*
 - *Development has made available greenspace unusable and disrupted natural processes*
 - *Skeptical about data behind projection*
 - *Push-pull between visions of the future*
 - *Access to farmable land will be limited*
 - *Trend will work against clean air, water, etc.*
- **Draft Vision Statement Comments**
 - *Connect vision statement to a regulatory/policy framework*
 - *Vision statement needs to strike a balance between unlimited choice and a clean environment*
 - *Over emphasis on “voluntary” collaboration*
 - *Inhabitants have developed a strong sense of regional community and a shared destiny*
 - *Conserving habitat for ecosystem/biological preservation*
- **Missing Indicators and Comments on Indicators**
 - *Greenhouse emissions from built environment*
 - *“Cradle to Grave” waste generation*
 - *Mileage of impaired streams*

- *Watershed protection status*
- *Index of biological integrity*
- *Ozone and particulate matter*
- *Protected ridgetops-mileage*
- *Invasive plant species*
- *Diversity of fauna*
- *Index of viewshed quality.*

Group #3

- **Trend Scenario compared to Draft Regional Vision Comments**
 - *The trend scenario is going in the opposite direction of what the vision states (walkability, better water quality and air quality)*
 - *We need to build up, not out*
 - *Reuse brownfields*
 - *Address water quality by making impermeable surfaces pervious*
 - *Choice is limited in the trend scenario because connectivity is limited (livability and small town charm, land consumption pattern are not achieved in the trend scenario).*
 - *How do we create clusters/nodes of development while keeping small town charm? How does this address sprawl?*
 - *Collaboration is technological connectivity as well as physical connectivity*
- **Draft Vision Statement Comments**
 - *In regard to the mention of “voluntary partnerships,” the group discussed the need for regional leadership and that this should be noted in the vision statement, it can mean grassroots leadership too, not just top-down. There is a need for leadership at all levels.*
 - *Need to also work with existing companies to be more clean and green, not just in the recruitment of new companies/businesses.*
 - *A need for “responsible development” should be noted*
 - *In the first statement of the clean and natural section of the vision statement there should be a point added about the need for equitable access for everyone to resources (particularly access to water and greenspace)*
 - *Use of the word “legacy” may need tweaking to reflect the need for maintenance, protection and furtherance of park and natural resources.*

- *Need better standards overall, and better enforcement of standards and incentives for low-impact development*
- **Missing Indicators and Comments on Indicators**
 - *Light trespass or pollution*
 - *Number of electric or hybrid cars*
 - *Number of green developments, including LEED, EarthCraft, etc.*
 - *Annual water use may not be as big of an issue for this region, currently.*
 - *Tree canopy density*
 - *Per capita accessible greenspace*
 - *Gallons of stormwater runoff*
 - *Number of rain gardens*
 - *Population density (increases)*
 - *Waste disposal/waste streaming*

Group Report Backs

A spokesperson for each group shared the items that were discussed and recorded. The small groups saw that the trend scenario is very different than what is imbued by the vision statement. John Lamb, a member of the environment working group that also participates in the workforce and economy working group noted that the consultant team should consider “how is this related to competitiveness now and in the future?”

Next Steps

Rob Kern went over the next steps in the PlanET process that will develop alternative scenarios for feedback and evaluation, leading to the selection of a preferred scenario for the region.

Next Meeting

There will be a joint meeting of all Working Groups in early October. At that meeting, the Working Groups will be able to learn about the alternative growth scenarios. Bernie Ilgner closed the meeting with a quote by the late Phyllis Diller, “*Aim high, so you don’t shoot yourself in the foot.*”