

myregion.org Phase III Priority:

To Develop a Regional Water Strategy

“How Can We Provide a Sustainable Supply of Potable Water to Achieve our Regional Growth Vision?”

The inexpensive groundwater that we have traditionally relied upon as a primary source of potable water may not be adequate to meet all our future needs in the Central Florida Region. For that reason, at the first 2009 meeting of the *Congress of Regional Leaders* held Friday, February 6, 2009, elected officials representing 93 local governments and school boards reviewed the progress being made toward implementing Central Florida’s Regional Growth Vision and adopted the issue of “Water” as one of the priorities that would shape our shared vision of growth. As stipulated on Page 20 of *How Shall We Grow? – A Shared Vision for Central Florida*, preserving and enjoying our natural resources is what matters most to our citizens and is the foundation of the Regional Growth Vision:

“Plan for future water needs. The region also should develop strategies for providing sufficient water and ensuring that water supply is in place to support new development. A regional water resources plan should include strategies for reducing consumption, sharing available water sources and developing alternative water sources.”

The goals of the project are simple: to create a Regional Water Strategy and avoid the use of public money to litigate over water. It will be conducted in conjunction with ULI Central Florida and the following strategic partners:

- St. Johns’ River Water Management District
- Southwest Florida Water Management District
- South Florida Water Management District
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- University of Central Florida Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies

The development of the Regional Water Strategy will have two components:

- **Water Supply/Demand/Conservation.** This part of the program will look at water supply with regard to its three major sources: groundwater, surface water and desalinization of seawater. Because of the rapid population growth, it is essential to consider balancing these water supply sources in order to develop an environmental and economically sustainable water supply system. Water conservation options will be considered and prioritized for implementation based upon their benefit and cost effectiveness.
- **Governance.** During this part of the discussion, best practices on regional partnerships, incentives and cooperative approaches will be examined and recommendations will be provided for achieving multi-jurisdictional utility arrangements necessary to insure sustainability of the water supply and its cost effectiveness to the public.

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The timeline to complete this 18-month project is as follows:

- **Water Supply/Demand/Conservation**
 - July – December 2009 Regional Water Problem/Issues Identification
 - December 2009 Presentation to *Congress of Regional Leaders*
 - January – February 2010 "Briefing Book" Preparation
 - March 2010 Technical Assistance Panel Forum
 - April – May 2010 "White Paper" Preparation
 - May 2010 Presentation to *Congress of Regional Leaders*

- **Water Governance**
 - June – August 2010 "Briefing Book" Preparation
 - September 2010 Technical Assistance Panel Forum
 - October – November 2010 "White Paper" Preparation
 - December 2010 Presentation to *Congress of Regional Leaders*

The ultimate goal of creating a Regional Water Strategy is to assist our elected officials that are looking for direction as they design and implement policies across the region. It will provide the information and input necessary in order to make the best decisions. This effort is not event-driven and will follow a 5-step process:

- **Identify a Regional Water Strategy Steering Committee.** The Steering Committee will have representation from the three Water Management Districts (St. John's River, Southwest and South Florida); Florida Department of Environmental Protection; local utilities; public officials; civic leaders; environmental community; land owners and developers; engineers and hydrologists; and will meet on a monthly basis in the facilities of the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- **Convene Stakeholder Meetings in Each of the Seven Counties.** *myregion.org* will host meetings in each of the seven counties represented by the *Congress of Regional Leaders* to identify and reach consensus on the issues.
- **Final List of Issues.** Using input from the meetings, a final list of issues will be assembled by the Regional Water Strategy Steering Committee.
- **Technical Advisory Panels (TAPs).** These issues will be the basis for development of "Best Practices" recommendations by the ULI-Central Florida "Technical Assistance Panel" (TAPs). The TAPs Panel will consist of technical experts in each subject area that are, or have experienced similar water issues.
- **White Paper Preparation.** ULI-Central Florida will compile a written report on the TAPs Panel and its findings for submittal to the Steering Committee and the *Congress of Regional Leaders* for their review and consideration.