

Meeting Summary WHATCOM COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

September 3, 2008
3:00 to 5:00 pm
Ferndale Annex (City Council Room)
5694 Second Avenue
Ferndale, WA

Welcome and Introductions

Jack Louws welcomed participants. The following Growth Management Coordinating Council (GMCC) members were present:

Whatcom County

Pete Kremen, County Executive
Sam Crawford, County Council
Seth Fleetwood, County Council

City of Bellingham

Daniel Webster, Chief Administrative
Officer
Barbara Ryan, City Council

City of Blaine

Bonnie Onyon, Mayor

City of Everson

Andy Rowson, City Council

City of Ferndale

Gary Jensen, Mayor

City of Lynden

Jack Louws, Mayor

City of Nooksack

Scott Bodven, City Council

City of Sumas

Bob Bromley, Mayor

Minutes Approval

The August 6, 2008 GMCC meeting minutes were approved without changes.

2009 Budget Request

Whatcom County Planning Director, David Stalheim, led this discussion and reviewed upcoming budgetary needs. In 2009, the following tasks are expected in order to complete the urban growth area update by June 30, 2009:

- Allocate population and employment to urban growth areas
- Complete analysis of urban areas land demand and supply based on adopted methodologies
- Adopt and implement land monitoring methodology
- Review and revise county-wide planning policies

The Planning Directors recommend that Whatcom County and the cities contribute to this effort as follows:

- Total cost** \$60,000
- Cost sharing** 80% Whatcom County and city of Bellingham
20% Small cities
- Consultant** Consider using WCOG and/or consultant to support this effort

County staff asked if formal letters were needed to initiate the funding request at each city. The GMCC members indicated the packet materials were enough to start the process.

Draft Public Involvement Plan

Meg O’Leary, ICF Jones & Stokes, reviewed the draft Public Involvement Plan (PIP) objectives, structure and format, audiences and outreach tools. The PIP was distributed to GMCC members in advance of the meeting and posted on the County’s Web site for interested community members. All future GMCC meeting materials will be available online prior the meeting.

Following the PIP overview, Meg requested GMCC comment and recommendations on three elements:

- **Whatcom 2031:** the County has settled on a 20-year planning horizon, so the consultants recommended incorporating the “Whatcom 2031” identity in all outreach materials to establish a consistent theme. GMCC members agreed and approved this tagline with no further comment.
- **Regional Workshops:** The consultant scope and budget includes four workshops at least two of which are oriented to alternatives. The team is assigning two workshop dates in October (visioning) and two in November (alternatives). One thought to stretch hours and increase the number of meetings would be to hold more than one meeting on the workshop dates. For example, we can hold an evening visioning workshop on day 1 and a morning and evening workshop on day 2. This would increase the total number of meetings to six and provide more opportunities for involvement. GMCC members generally indicated that evening is preferred, but Bellingham may be a good location for a morning meeting.
- **Other Initiatives:** The project team will keep track of other regional planning efforts and coordinate when appropriate. The initial list includes the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan rural element update; Birch Bay Watershed Characterization project; Agriculture committee work; and the Legacy Partnership.

Lisa Grueter, ICF Jones & Stokes, led a discussion about a community survey, reviewed the project schedule and upcoming workshop dates.

- **Community survey:** The consultant gathered cost estimates for Survey Monkey and two statistically valid telephone surveys. Random phone survey costs ranged

from \$9,500 to \$20,000, depending on sample size. GMCC members discussed the pros and cons at length and finally agreed the survey was not an appropriate investment at this time. Instead, a key topic questionnaire (with 5 or 6 questions) will be developed and broadly distributed throughout the county via GMCC members, county and city Web sites, workshops, and public agency offices. GMCC members felt the feedback gathered from the questionnaire would be more useful and cost effective than a survey. The Technical Advisory Group will be meeting to discuss potential key questions.

- **Visioning workshop dates:** One evening workshop will be held in the north county. Morning and evening workshops will be held in two south county locations. Workshops are proposed for mid-October.

Additional GMCC member comments included:

- Add project key message related to the Comprehensive Plan Update process. For example, “it is designed to comply with the State Growth Management Act, the goal of which is to guide population growth into urban areas and to protect agricultural and forest lands, critical areas, and open spaces.”
- Key Topic Questionnaire should include questions about where the commenter lives and perhaps their age.
- Please edit Appendix A.
 - Add Ferndale Record-Journal to the Media outreach list.
 - Add Northern Light (Blaine newspaper)
 - All Point Bulletin is a Point Roberts newspaper, not Blaine.

Other Business

No other business was conducted during this meeting.