

# Meeting Summary WHATCOM COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

February 4, 2009

Whatcom Educational Credit Union (WECU)  
5659 Barrett Road  
Ferndale, WA  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

## Welcome and Introductions

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

*Whatcom County*

Sam Crawford, County Council  
Seth Fleetwood, County Council

*City of Bellingham*

David 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*

Marshall Judy, City Council

*City of Sumas*

Bob Bromley, Mayor

## Minutes

The minutes of January 21, 2009 were approved with a correction to identify Marshall Judy as the City of Nooksack representative.

## Discussion of Alternatives Map

A brief agenda item was added to address a preliminary alternatives map that had been discussed by Ferndale City Council and Planning Commission members recently; the map was a preliminary draft “bubble map” showing urban growth area concepts. David Stalheim explained the map originated from early County staff work for discussion with Planning Directors. The “bubble map” approach was dropped after discussing it with the TAG and as a result of GMCC discussion in mid-January. It was intended to present some initial ideas for discussions with staff at the cities. The current approach is the “suitability approach” which identifies study areas for UGA analysis.

## Initial Land Capacity Results

David Stalheim and Gary Davis presented the initial land capacity results included in the GMCC packet. GMCC questions included: What do the allocations mean? When will decision-makers go “line by line”? How will we get from a “paper allocation” to a “policy based allocation”? How do the results reflect current housing/jobs imbalances?

David described next steps including:

- Don't draw conclusions from preliminary results
  - Results can be affected by changes to:
    - Technical assumptions
    - Methodology changes
  - Policy choices, such as:
    - Assumed densities
    - Growth forecast and allocation
- Use results to identify issues to be addressed in public process
- Begin public dialogue through EIS, city and county public workshops

## Growth Alternatives

Lisa Grueter, ICF Jones & Stokes highlighted the January 30, 2009 memo regarding proposed no action and action alternatives. Based on GMCC direction at the January 21, 2009 meeting to come up with a different approach to alternatives, the TAG reviewed the suitability analysis approach and agreed that it should be presented to the GMCC. This suitability analysis approach does not require identification of specific UGA boundaries or land use at this time, but does allow for that level of detail to be developed through the findings of the SEPA process.

GMCC comments included a request for more elaboration on the definition of the “suitability analysis”, preference for the GMCC recommended preliminary forecast of 251,490, and particular concerns about the schedule and its impact on cities ability to provide proposals. A majority of GMCC members passed a motion which requested that the County Council work to extend the GMHB deadline of June 30, 2009 by six months. The County Council members abstained from the vote.

## Review Schedule

Schedule issues were addressed while discussing alternatives, and no further comments were made.

## Other Business

No other business was conducted during this meeting.