

**Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary- March 7, 2007**

Committee members in attendance:

Richard Banel
Jan Eskola
Amy Mower
Norma Otto
Cindy Purdy
Alan Seid

Phil Cloward, Vice-Chair
Gary Gehling, Chair
Bill Coleman
Sean Wilson
Lou Piotrowski

1) Determination of Quorum

Gary Gehling called the meeting to order; a determination of a quorum was made.

2) Public Comment – First Period

The committee invited comments from the public.

- Dennis Balcom of the Deming Water Association- Commenting on Policy Choices Matrix:
 - The Goal on page 2, Preserve the natural beauty, open spaces and slow, rural pace of life in the Foothills, prized by long-term residents and newcomers alike—Important to recognize rural character is not just 5, 10 and 20 acre parcels it also includes cluster communities .
 - Page 6 Goal, Enhance the small towns of Deming, Kendall, Maple Falls, and Glacier as vital, vibrant and distinct areas, within which the community can meet, mingle, shop and take care of daily errands-Historically there is a connection between Nugent’s Corner and Deming with a lot of commerce and development between those communities already happening. He asked that the committee to also consider that when forming policies. On the Housing component-Encourage development of higher density housing within easy walking distance of small town commercial districts- Your land use decision of keeping zoning at 2 acres in Deming does not support that so the committee will want to look at that.
 - Page 8 Goal, Provide for increased employment opportunities in the Foothills-The choices you make tonight with projects will affect this goal and the policies you make. Under Capital Facilities- Ensure water supply and wastewater treatment are adequate and appropriate for likely industrial or office development. We’ve got those kinds of developments in the Deming area. Obviously our project addresses that policy decision. The Deming area needs to recognize the tribal component. We can’t predict and we can’t control it but for non-tribal areas we can develop policies that encourage cooperation with the Tribe regarding developments. A policy to recognize the tribal aspect would be good to have in the Deming policies.
 - Page 10 Goal, Celebrate and retain a high level of cultural and social diversity in the Foothills- This kind of addresses the long history with the Nooksack Tribe interaction. This type of policy may be the kind of policy that would work for Deming.
 - Page 11 Goal, House Foothills residents in safe and comfortable neighborhoods affordable to a variety of incomes – The housing element policy specifically speaks to the UGA. The committee may want to consider

that the UGA isn't only place that needs affordable housing. Small town communities need this also.

- Page 12 Goal, Improve reliability of utility service in the Foothills- Work with utility providers to increase network diversity, providing alternate routing or looped system design to make it less vulnerable to failure- Again this policy impacts decisions that will be made tonight.
- Page 15 Goal, Protect surface and ground water quality and sensitive habitat areas throughout the subarea-Under Utilities specifically, Columbia Valley is again recognized for groundwater, and sanitary sewer. At this time with new septic system laws that were enacted this year the committee may want to encourage the County to re-examine the sewer systems. Right now sewer systems are not allowed in rural communities as a recognized service. Perhaps a policy to encourage the County to pursue GMA amendments to allow sewer services in these communities should be adopted.
- Rob Staveland discussed policies that address low impact development standards, zoning swaps, clustering, and green built policies among other topics. Additionally, he discussed the idea of Master Planning for small communities.
- Phil asked Rob to submit his written comments from tonight and also the last meeting so that the committee can take a look at them.
- Gary Gehling read letter from Rick Gantman, Superintendent of Mt. Baker School District dated March 7, 2007, thanking the committee for their work in the community. Mr. Gantman also informed the committee about two projects of importance to Mt. Baker School District's children:
 - A. Safe, secure access from Columbia Valley to and from Kendall Elementary School and
 - B. A safe pedestrian access from Kendall Elementary School to the selected library site next to the Kendall Fire Hall.

Mr. Gantman suggested that these two projects be combined so that children and adults could have bike/pedestrian access from Columbia Valley to the school, to the library, and the stores in the commercial area at Kendall Junction.

3) **Meeting Summary**

The February 21, 2007 meeting summary was accepted with the following changes:

Richard Banel asked to include a sentence that reads "Richard Banel responded that the committee had voted to move the south boundary of the UGA north to exclude Kendall from the UGA to preserve its rural character."

4) **Non-agenda items**

- Alan Seid discussed local living economy as opposed to corporate chain economy. He gave the committee a website address relating to the Port Townsend Code, which will provide information regarding "formula" stores. He suggested that they research Chapter 17.54 and Chapter 17.2.
www.codepublishing.com/wa/porttownsend.html
- Phil suggested that George Swanaset Jr. may want to attend the subcommittee meeting which will be held on Wednesday, March 14, 2007 at Peaceful Valley Club House (8225 Kendall Rd., Maple Falls) at 7pm to review the current Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Policies as they pertain to the Foothills Subarea Plan Update.

- Jan announced that a subcommittee of the Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee will hold a meeting, which is open to the public, on Monday, March 12, 2007, at 4:30 P.M. at the Glacier Water District Office (9973 Mt. Baker Highway) to review the 1988 Foothills Subarea Plan to recommend which goals & policies from the 1988 Subarea plan should be included in the updated 2007 Foothills Subarea Plan. An additional meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. at the Glacier Water District Office.
- Jan read a document that addressed the rationale for a public value analysis that was taken from a Comprehensive Plan in the Midwest. Alan thanked Jan for bringing forward a criteria for choosing projects and would like the focus to be community based in addition to public and private.
- Matt discussed the varying degree of Whatcom County's role in these projects. The most important aspect of this process is what is important to the community as expressed through the representatives on this committee.
- Gary pointed out that just by listing some of these projects in the Subarea Plan there may be a way to get other funding.
- Phil voiced concern with prioritizing the projects at this time when all the projects had not yet been identified. Matt assured the committee that this is an on-going process and should there be other needed projects that they could be added when the committee reviews the draft Subarea Plan. At this point the objective is to provide community input via the committee to the consultant, Bill Grimes.
- Jan commented that water districts have more funding resources available to them than water associations or co-ops. Jan encourages the Deming Water Association to form a district.
- Dennis Balcom, Deming Water Association, agreed that districts have more funding sources and that is definitely something that they will be looking at more in the future. Some other issues that other districts may not be faced with, is the water source that Deming Water Association has. They do not own the land that the water is on, they have an easement and there is a clause in that easement that says if the water association ever ceases to exist they lose that easement. They have to be very careful. Dennis stated that he has a long range goal of establishing a district.

5) Committee prioritization of potential implementation projects in the Foothills Subarea (dot exercise).

- Matt had posted large sheets with the 57 potential projects that the committee will prioritize. Each committee member is limited to placing 4 dots on an individual project. Depending on the color of the dot they were worth either 1, 2, 3, or 4 points.
- The committee then spent time prioritizing the projects. Once this was done Sean Wilson and Any Mower tallied the point total for each project listed. The top 10 projects are as follows:
 - East County Regional Resource Center in the Columbia Valley UGA
 - Incorporation study for the Columbia Valley UGA
 - Conduct a study to prepare a Master Plan for industrial in UGA
 - Town park and community gathering place in Kendall
 - Cell phone coverage for entire Foothills Subarea (tied for 5th)
 - Study best practices for local living economy/buy local (tied for 5th)

- Interfaith Community Health Satellite Clinic in the Columbia Valley UGA (tied for 7th)
 - Town park with public restrooms, ball fields and a place for the Farmers Market in Maple Falls (tied for 7th)
 - Study road/pedestrian/bike/safety from SR 542/547 intersection to just past the Kendall Elementary School.
 - Create a bike/pedestrian path east of Glacier to developments.
- Matt said the prioritized list will be listed in the Subarea Plan. Sean suggested that the projects be listed in the specific areas.
 - Lou commented that the item “County enforcement of blighted properties” should have been listed on the entire Foothills Subarea rather than just under Glacier. The committee agreed that blighted properties are actually a County -wide problem.

6) Committee consideration of potential goals & policies for the Subarea Plan (review Studio Cascade’s “Foothills Subarea Plan Policy Choices Matrix”).

- Sean stated that he didn’t understand why the committee has to re-address a policy issue that had already been decided on by a subcommittee and brought to the committee as a whole. He feels that the Policy (Pg. 1 Policy Matrix, 2/20/2007): *Preclude Permit additional commercial zoning at a town center location within the Columbia Valley urban growth area until to complement the Small Town Commercial district in Kendall is fully developed and a land supply study demonstrates a need for additional commercial land.* should be deleted in entirety. After an extended period of discussion other members of the committee suggested that this section not be deleted at this time and instead be flagged and later question Bill Grimes as to his intention of re-inserting the policy.
- Alan suggested adding a Policy that reads: Discourage up zoning of commercial forestry zones. The committee adopted this policy by consensus.
- The committee agreed by consensus to change the Goal on pg. 2 of Policy Matrix, 2/20/2007 to read: Preserve the natural beauty, open spaces, rural character and slow, rural pace of life in the Foothills, prized by long-term residents and newcomers alike. In addition to this change the committee also agreed by consensus that the Land Use Element Policy on pg. 2 read: Discourage residential development on steep slopes and in forestry and agricultural areas.
- Alan suggested that the committee consider an element that deals with full spectrum transportation choices. He said that this type of recommendation could be considered a land use element and not just a transportation issue.
- Matt suggested that words and phrases that the committee uses should be readily and easily definable. Gary suggested that the committee keep these policies very simple, compound statements have in the past caused problems.
- Matt asked committee members to write up their policy ideas and bring them to the next meeting. Sean suggested that the information be distributed to the committee members (one way informational only emails) to give them time to consider it.

7) Public Comment Period- Second Period

The committee invited comments from the public.

- Rob Staveland commented on the struggle between rural character and property rights. He suggested using the TDR and PDR programs to help deal with that type of situation.

- Larry Duncan said in reading through the document saw that some of the same issues were sprinkled throughout the documents. He suggested that the committee be aware that some of the issues they spend time hashing over may be mentioned on other pages of the document.
- Ellen Baker from Glacier. Alarmed with number of items on the project list that seems to favor development rather than rural character. She stated that the special interests seem to be well represented in the projects list.
- Kevin Zender would like to see the DNR administer forest practices rather than the County. He feels that Federal and State regulations should override any County regulations determined in the Comprehensive Plan. Gary responded that several of those issues will probably come up in the formation of the Policies.
- Lisa Cable asked Alan to include the term open space in the policy that he submitted. Alan asked Lisa to meet with him after the meeting so that they could discuss her request.

8) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:
Pam Brown