

**Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary- April 23, 2007**

Committee members in attendance:

Gary Gehling, Chair
Jan Eskola
Amy Mower
Cindy Purdy

Richard Banel
Phil Cloward, Vice Chair
Norma Otto
Sean Wilson

1) Determination of Quorum

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

2) Continued committee consideration of potential goals & policies for the Subarea Plan (review Studio Cascade's "Foothills Subarea Plan Policy Choices Matrix").

- Policy on page 7 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) ~~Create and adopt a set of small town design guidelines that provide clear direction on the design and allocation of transportation rights of way.~~ *Create and adopt a set of small town design guidelines, in conjunction with WSDOT and Whatcom County that provide clear direction on the design and allocation of transportation rights of way.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 7 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) ~~Reduce off-street parking requirements for housing developed above retail storefronts in the small towns.~~ **AND** ~~Reduce off-street parking requirements for housing developed above retail storefronts in the small towns and encourage joint use of parking facilities for both housing and retail land uses.~~ *Promote parking nodes to accommodate housing, retail, and community cultural events and encourage use of permeable surfaces.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

Committee discussed at length issues related to traffic, parking, and impervious surface area. Dennis told the committee that he is currently in the process of writing an ordinance for events in the County. The ordinance is about 75-80% done and falls heavily in the transportation arena. There will soon be some requirements for such events. The committee discussed the various events that are held in the Foothills throughout the year.

- Policy on page 7 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) ~~Facilitate community cultural events.~~ *Encourage multi-modal transportation facilities, including options such as park and ride.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 7 of Policy Matrix- (Recreation) *Provide public spaces in which residents and visitors can gather near town centers.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

The committee spent time discussing the need of restroom facilities in conjunctions with public spaces where people gather. The decision was made to address restroom facilities under capital facilities.

- Policy on page 6 of Policy Matrix-(Capital Facilities) *Provide public spaces (which include restrooms) in which residents and visitors can gather near town centers. Approved by consensus of committee with added language.*
- Policy on page 7 of Policy Matrix- (Community Facilities) *Encourage a mix of civic and cultural structures and land uses in small town centers. Approved by consensus of the committee.*

Committee members asked Dennis to bring back information as to what constitutes designation as a township, a hamlet or a burb. Discussion as to RTD, rural taxation district and whether the Foothills should become an RTD.

- Policy on page 7 of Policy Matrix- (Community Facilities) ~~Encourage law enforcement presence in small towns.~~ *Encourage law enforcement presence in small towns through the neighborhood deputy program and daily patrols. Approved by consensus of the committee.*

Committee spent time discussing the lack of law enforcement presence in the Foothills area. Neighborhood deputy programs, precincts, and substation options were discussed.

Bill Coleman reported that Tribal officers are required, at a minimum to have the same training as County sheriffs. The Tribe has offered to have these tribal officers drive through the area which would show a law enforcement presence. The County sheriff has declined the offer.

The committee modified/added the following language to the Policy Matrix:

- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Community Facilities) ~~Encourage provision of a satellite sheriff's office in or near the Columbia Valley area.~~ *Encourage provision of a satellite sheriff's office in a centrally located area within the Foothills Subarea. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Community Facilities) *Encourage interagency coordination between the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office and Nooksack Tribal Police. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Goal on page 8 of Policy Matrix- *Provide for increased employment opportunities in the Foothills. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) ~~Encourage development of industrial or business park land uses in the Columbia Valley UGA.~~ *Encourage development of light impact industrial or business park land uses in the Columbia Valley UGA in areas planned for light industrial uses. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.***

Committee agreed to revisit this policy once Grimes submits an estimate of a 20 year demand for industrial and commercial.

- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) *Coordinate with local and regional economic development agencies to foster job creation and job training in the Foothills. Approved by consensus of the committee.*

- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) ~~Upgrade access to and utility services for potential industrial or business park sites.~~ *Encourage the availability and connectivity to utility services for potential light impact industrial or business park sites.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**

Committee had discussion as to what kind of access the original policy referred to, whether it was physical road access or access to the utility service or whether it was meant to expand the utility services.

- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) Match residential zoning in the Foothills to provide for the range and type of housing consistent with a subarea economic development strategy. **Defer consideration of this policy until later. Discuss with Bill Grimes on May 7th.**
- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) ~~Develop a comprehensive housing rehabilitation program focused on the Columbia Valley UGA to remediate substandard housing.~~ *Develop a comprehensive housing rehabilitation program to remediate substandard housing.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**

Committee discussed concerns for the people that live in substandard housing. Where would they live while the homes are being upgraded? If they are renters will the people still be able to afford to pay the rent once the landlord has upgraded the house? Dennis discussed the HOME program and other types of programs that financially assist in upgrading substandard housing. Dennis suggested that this committee begin a dialogue about programs such as Community Development Block Grants Program (CDBG) which can assist in getting resources to address a wide range of community housing needs. Typically the funds tend to be focused on denser, more populated areas.

- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) ~~Support code enforcement efforts to abate housing code violations in the UGA.~~ *Support code enforcement efforts to abate violations.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Capital Facilities) *Provide adequate roadway and multimodal access to likely employment sites.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Capital Facilities) ~~Provide public parking to support increased public use of small town commercial districts.~~ *Provide public parking nodes to support increased use of commercial areas, encouraging the use of permeable surfaces.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Capital Facilities) ~~Ensure water supply and wastewater treatment are adequate and appropriate for likely industrial or office development.~~ *Ensure water supply and wastewater treatment are adequate and appropriate for likely light impact industrial or commercial development.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**

Committee had discussion as to exactly types of businesses would be considered commercial development.

- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix- (Utilities) *Facilitate investment in the communications infrastructure to provide cellular service and high-speed Internet access. Approved by consensus of the committee.*

Bill Coleman handed out posters and asked that they be posted at various locations by the committee members. The posters announced that a half-size replica of the Washington D.C. Vietnam Veteran's Memorial would be coming to Whatcom County. It can be seen May 3rd through May 7, 2007 at the Deming Log Show.

Lunch Break

- Policy on page 9 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) ~~Encourage road improvements to serve development of industrial or business park land uses in the Columbia Valley UGA.~~ *Encourage road improvements (including all-weather roads) to serve development of light impact industrial or business park land uses in the Columbia Valley UGA. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 9 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) ~~Upgrade multimodal access to potential industrial or business park sites.~~ *Encourage development of multimodal access to potential light impact industrial or business park sites in the Columbia Valley UGA. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 9 of Policy Matrix- (Natural Resources) ~~Recognize that the Foothills' natural setting is a big asset in local economic development and that it should not be compromised in search of economic prosperity.~~ *Recognize that the Foothills' natural setting is a major attribute of the area's quality of life. Incorporate this value into the planning process when considering future economic development. Approved by consensus of the committee.*

The committee spent time discussing the natural resources found in the Foothills and the value that should be placed on those natural resources.

- Policy on page 9 of Policy Matrix- (Community Facilities) ~~Match services and facilities to increasing demand, particularly to the increase in daytime population resulting from successful economic development efforts.~~ *Match services and facilities to demand resulting from successful economic development efforts. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 9 of Policy Matrix- (Environment) ~~Assure stormwater runoff from industrial sites is managed effectively.~~ *Assure adverse environmental impacts from industrial and commercial sites are managed and enforced in accordance with state law and County ordinances. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) Provide for a variety of housing types in the Foothills. *Note: Policy moved to the housing section.*
- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) *Provide public squares and other similar types of public gathering spaces in or near the centers of the small towns and in the town center of the Columbia Valley UGA. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) *Use zoning to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing is provided in the UGA. Approved by consensus of the committee.*

- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) *Provide for a variety of housing types in the Foothills.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) ~~Locate higher density housing in the UGA and small town commercial centers.~~ *Locate higher density housing in small town commercial centers, consistent with small town design guidelines, and in the Columbia Valley UGA.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Capital Facilities) ~~Invest in trails and making them accessible to the public.~~ *Encourage Whatcom County to invest in public parks and trails with appropriate accessibility to the public.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

The committee discussed at length the various costs and liabilities associated with park and trail management and access to those properties.

- Policy on page 10 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) *Encourage bicycling and walking as a way to invite ~~more~~ of Foothills residents into public spaces and commercial enterprises.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 11 of Policy Matrix- (Transportation) *Provide convenient access to public squares and other similar types of public gathering spaces in or near the centers of the small towns and in the town center of the Columbia Valley UGA.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 11 of Policy Matrix- (Recreation) *Invest in public plazas and other places for the public to meet.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 11 of Policy Matrix- (Recreation) ~~Provide for urban style parks in the UGA.~~ *Provide for parks in the UGA.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 11 of Policy Matrix- (Recreation) *Develop and fund cultural recreation programs, tapping local talent as a source for leadership and participation.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

Sean brought forward a subcommittee's recommendation in regard to cultural and historical sites. With George Swanaset Jr.'s input the committee drafted language for the policies addressing both culturally and historically significant sites.

- **Policy on page 10** of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) *Support the recognition and preservation of culturally significant sites within the foothills and encourage collaboration with the indigenous Cultural Community in developing a process for identification, management and protection of these sites within the Foothills subarea.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- **Policy on page 10** of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) *Support the recognition and preservation of historically significant sites within the foothills and encourage federal, state, county and local collaboration in developing a process for identification, management and protection of these sites within the Foothills subarea.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

- Goal on page 12 of Policy Matrix- *House Foothills residents in safe and comfortable neighborhoods affordable to a variety of incomes.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 12 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) *Collaborate with local and regional foundations and agencies, such as the Kulshan Community Land Trust, to provide or facilitate provision of affordable housing units, primarily in Deming and in the Columbia Valley.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

Committee had a discussion as to whether or not to cite Kulshan Community Land Trust in the wording of the policy. Based on the questionnaire results the committee left Kulshan Community Land Trust in the policy.

- Policy on page 12 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) ~~Reward builders who dedicate a certain percentage of housing units to low or low-moderate income or other special needs households.~~ *Provide incentives to builders who dedicate a certain percentage of housing unites to low or low-moderate income or other special needs households in Deming and the Columbia Valley UGA.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 12 of Policy Matrix- (Housing) ~~Use zoning to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing is provided in the UGA.~~ *Use zoning to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing is provided in the Columbia Valley UGA.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Goal on page 13 of Policy Matrix- *Improve reliability of utility service in the Foothills.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 13 of Policy Matrix- (~~Capital Facilities~~ *Utilities*) ~~Review and revise tree maintenance policies in County rights of way near overhead power lines.~~ *Use an arborist and forester to review and revise tree planting and maintenance policies in state and County rights of way near overhead utility lines including, but not limited to, wind screens, silviculture, replacement plantings, and preserving visual buffering.* **Note:** [Approved by consensus of the committee on 4/23/07 and moved to utility section.](#)

The committee spent some time in discussing other jurisdiction's handling of trees located within road right-of-ways.

- Policy on page 13 of Policy Matrix- (Utilities) ~~Work with utility providers to increase network diversity, providing alternate routing or looped system design to make it less vulnerable to failure.~~ *Work with utility providers to increase network redundancy, providing alternate routing or looped system design to make it less vulnerable to failure.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 13 of Policy Matrix- (Utilities) *Facilitate provision of alternative power sources, including wind, solar, propane, fuel cell or other means as either a back-up or primary source.* [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

The committee discussed that each of these energy resources has both a positive issues and negative issues that have to be dealt with.

Break

- Goal on page 10 of Policy Matrix- ~~Celebrate and retain a high level of cultural and social diversity in the Foothills. Recognize and encourage a high level of cultural and social diversity in the Foothills.~~ *Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 13 of Policy Matrix- (Utilities) ~~Collaborate with communications providers to increase the system's tolerance to weather extremes. Collaborate with communications providers to decrease the system's vulnerability to weather extremes.~~ *Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 13 of Policy Matrix- (Utilities) *Facilitate emergency planning among utility providers. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Goal on page 14 of Policy Matrix- *Enhance resident and visitor access to the Foothills' recreational opportunities. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) Require dedications of open space in all subdivisions, linking dedicated open space into a trail system where feasible. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix- (Land Use) *Invest in identified parks improvements. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix-(Capital Facilities) *Invest in the acquisition and maintenance of trails in the subarea. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix-(Transportation) ~~Collaborate with local businesses to provide public parking near trailheads in the UGA and small town commercial districts. Collaborate with local businesses, landowners, and home-owners associations to provide public parking near trailheads in the Columbia Valley UGA and small town commercial districts.~~ **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix-(Recreation) Identify likely trailhead locations and encourage private investment in compatible land uses and facilities nearby. **Defer consideration of this policy until later. Discussion: Should "private investment in" be deleted?**
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix-(Capital Facilities) Locate community facilities near access to recreational opportunities. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix-(Capital Facilities) Collaborate with the community and local cultural groups to plan and develop interpretive trail sites. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**

Tim with WSDOT will email Matt with suggested language for the transportation policy on page 4 of the Policy Matrix. Matt will distribute the suggested language to committee members.

- Goal on page 15 of Policy Matrix–~~Provide a network of recreation and transportation-oriented trails interconnecting the UGA and small towns and linking populated areas to recreational open spaces.~~ *Provide a network of recreation and transportation-oriented trails interconnecting the Columbia Valley UGA and small towns and linking populated areas to recreational open spaces.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Land Use) *Encourage open space dedications to link into a coordinated trail system.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Transportation) *Designate trails linking the communities in a comprehensive trails plan and prioritize and program their improvement.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Transportation) *Collaborate with the community to confirm trail alignments and acquire necessary rights of way.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Transportation) ~~Ensure trails are accessible to the disabled, pedestrians, and bicyclists.~~ *Identify and designate accessible trails for the disabled, pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Recreation) *Designate recreational trails in a comprehensive trails plan and prioritize and program their improvement.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Recreation) *Collaborate with the community to confirm recreational trail alignments and acquire necessary rights of way.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix-(Recreation) ~~Ensure recreational trails are accessible to the disabled, pedestrians, and bicyclists.~~ *Identify and designate accessible recreational trails for the disabled, pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- **Goal** on page 16 of Policy Matrix– Protect surface and ground water quality and sensitive habitat areas throughout the subarea. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Land Use) Require dedications of open space in all subdivisions, linking dedicated open space to respect and enhance continuous habitat corridors where feasible. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Utilities) Encourage water districts to implement conservation programs. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Utilities) Encourage provision of sanitary sewer in the Columbia Valley UGA to protect the ground water resource. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**

- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Transportation) Encourage appropriate storm water best management practices in street and trail design to protect surface and ground water. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix-(Transportation) Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces by constructing narrower travel lanes or implementing other, more creative roadway design techniques. **Defer consideration of this policy until later.**
- Goal on page 17 of Policy Matrix- *Ensure the Foothills subarea remains a safe place in which to reside, operate a business, and visit.* **Approved by consensus of the committee.**
- Policy on page 17 of Policy Matrix-(Land Use) Incorporate proper design in commercial and multi-family developments to reduce the fear and incidence of crime, such as installing appropriate nighttime lighting and orienting windows and doors to facilitate casual viewing of public spaces in the Columbia Valley UGA. **Some language was changed - Defer consideration of this policy until later.**

3) Adjournment

Submitted by:
Pam Brown