

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

Committee members in attendance:

Gary Gehling, Chair	Richard Banel
Jan Eskola	Lou Piotrowski
Amy Mower	Alan Seid
Sean Wilson	Norma Otto
Phil Cloward, Vice Chair	Bill Coleman

1. Determination of Quorum

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

2. Public Comment

- Committee discussion on whether to allow public comment during a meeting. The committee decided address the issue as it comes up. The committee also decided to hear public comment for this meeting even though it was not an agenda item.
- Susan Sloan with Whatcom County Health Department stated that she was in attendance as an observer. The Health Department is working on a comprehensive plan concerned with long-range issues and she wanted to see the process that this committee is using.
- Larry Duncan read and submitted a letter by Karen Reich wherein she voiced her support for the proposal to place the Foothills Library in Kendall under #4 of the Project Implementation list. She also stated her opposition to proposed policy #5, submitted by Rob Staveland: "Require all plats in rural zoning to be clustered". Karen's letter also stated opposition to the policy even if the committee replaced the word *require* with *encourage*.

3. Meeting Summary

The April 23, 2007 meeting summary was accepted as written.

4. Consideration of a Foothills Subarea Plan vision statement

After discussion committee members approved the following Foothills Subarea Plan Vision Statement:

Whatcom County's Foothills are and will continue to be rural in character, preserving open spaces and natural habitat. Foothills' residents value river and stream corridors, lakes, wetlands, and hillsides, forests, fields, wildlife corridors, and clean air & water. Subarea residents value the Foothills beauty, slow-paced quality of life and the sense that they know their neighbors. The Columbia Valley will become a fully-served urban area set within this rural context, providing a range of shopping, housing, and employment opportunities for those who reside ~~there~~ and accommodating the majority of new Foothills residents. The small towns of Deming, Kendall, Maple Falls, and Glacier will continue to thrive without expanding, serving nearby residents and tourists alike, and securing their positions as civic, cultural, and activity centers for the rural community. The small towns ~~They~~ will become increasingly complementary as well, working together to meet resident needs. The Foothills will continue to rely on other ~~metropolitan~~

areas in Whatcom County for those services not provided in the subarea, and transportation and communication linkages to those areas will be improved as a result. In order to build a robust sustainable local economy, traditional resource-based industry will continue, supplemented by value-added and cottage industries and home-based businesses that will provide local, export-oriented employment and a population of diverse, productive residents who live in the Foothills by choice. [Approved by consensus of committee.](#)

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

- The committee discussed a definition of “incentive programs” with Studio Cascade consultant, Bill Grimes. The committee decided to leave the language as it is: Policy on page 3 of the Policy Matrix (Housing)- *Mix housing types through a variety of zoning and development incentive programs to facilitate development of housing for all income sectors in the UGA.*
- Policy on page 4 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)-~~Protect the Mt Baker Scenic Highway Corridor from encroachment by the Columbia Valley UGA.~~ [Deletion of this policy approved by consensus of committee.](#) The committee spent time discussing language proposed by Tim Hostetler, WSDOT that referenced the Mt. Baker Corridor Management Plan. The following was decided:

Policy on page 2 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)- Protect the intrinsic qualities of Mt. Baker Highway and other arterial and collector roads in the subarea, including scenic, historic, archaeological, recreational, cultural and natural features. [Approved by consensus of committee.](#)

- Policy on page 3 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- Densify and revitalize the Columbia Valley UGA before considering expansion of the UGA for non-industrial land uses. **Note: This policy was discussed at committee on 5/7/07, but will not be considered for approval until the industrial policy is finalized.** Bill Grimes explained that the Foothills Subarea Plan text could give insight and provide context as to how the committee arrived at the goal and policy statements.
- Policy on page 2 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- *Encourage urban levels of development only in the Columbia Valley UGA.* [Approved by consensus of committee to indicate there wouldn’t be other UGAs in the Subarea.](#)
- Policy on page 8 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- *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 until Studio Cascade submits the 20-year demand projection for industrial land.](#)
- Policy on page 1 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- Recognize the need for light impact industrial land uses within and bordering on the Columbia Valley/Kendall Urban Growth Area. Consider establishing a light impact industrial zone ~~within the long term planning area~~ located on the north side of Limestone Road and in the parcels zoned RF and R10A on the east side of Tilbury Road. Retain the existing zoning ~~within this long term planning area~~ until a master plan has been completed to identify traffic impacts and infrastructure/utility/service needs, and appropriate mitigation

measures. Consider modifying the Columbia Valley UGA boundary in appropriate locations north and east of the existing UGA to allow for the allocation of only light industrial land in sufficient acreage to attract and maintain business opportunities. Ensure the UGA is not expanded in acreage as a result of the modification. Assure an adequate supply of master-planned prime light industrial sites to meet future market demands for light industrial development. Note: This policy (which is a modification of existing Policy 2AA-12) was previously approved by the committee on January 17, 2007. It was further modified by the committee on May 7, 2007. Studio Cascade will: 1. Draft a policy relating to building out industrial lands prior to designating additional industrial lands. 2. Prepare an overlay map to show the locations considered for industrial development.

- 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. The committee agreed that unless the Foothills had an economic development strategy this policy might not be needed.
- Policy on page 9 of Policy Matrix (~~Natural Resources~~) (Land Use Element)- *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.
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- ~~Require dedications of~~ Encourage open space in all subdivisions, linking dedicated open space into a trail system where feasible. Approved by consensus of the committee.
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)- *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.* Approved by consensus of the committee.
- Policy on page 14 of Policy Matrix (Recreation) *Identify likely trailhead locations and encourage private investment in compatible land uses and facilities nearby.* Approved by consensus of the committee.
- Policy of page 14 of Policy Matrix (Community Facilities)- Encourage ~~Locate~~ locating community facilities near access to recreational opportunities in or near the UGA or Small Towns. Approved by consensus of the committee.
- Policy of page 14 of Policy Matrix (Community Facilities)- *Collaborate with the community and local cultural groups to plan and develop interpretive trail sites.* Approved by consensus of the committee.
- Policy on page 15 of Policy Matrix (Recreation)- Provide, where appropriate, for the location and maintenance of restrooms and trash receptacles when planning and constructing trails. Approved by consensus of the committee.
- **Goal** on page 16 of Policy Matrix- *Protect surface and ground water quality and quantity and sensitive habitat areas throughout the subarea.* Approved by consensus of the committee.

- Bill Grimes stated that the County's Critical Areas Ordinance addresses many of those issues. Amy suggested that even though the County's CAO does address many of these issues it may be a good idea for the committee to voice support of items such as natural resources, wildlife habitat, conservation, agricultural land, wetlands, salmon habitat and others. The committee spent some time discussing whether or not the committee should endorse a specific organization.
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix (Environment)- Work with public and private agencies (such as the Whatcom Land Trust, Audubon Society and Nature Conservancy) to conserve wildlife habitat, salmon habitat, wetlands, river and stream corridors, agricultural land and unique natural features. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- ~~Require dedications of~~ Encourage open space in all subdivisions, linking ~~dedicated~~ open space to respect and enhance continuous habitat corridors where feasible. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix (Utilities)- Encourage all public water providers ~~water districts~~ to implement conservation programs. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix (Utilities)- Encourage provision of sanitary sewer in the Columbia Valley UGA to protect the ground water resource. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)- Encourage appropriate low impact development storm water best management practices in street and trail design to protect surface and ground water. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 16 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)- Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces by designing and constructing lower impact and narrower travel lanes or implementing other, more creative roadway design techniques. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 17 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- In the Columbia Valley UGA, 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.~~ [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 17 of Policy Matrix (Land Use)- Impose impact fees for roads, parks, and schools on new development within the Foothills Subarea commensurate with Whatcom County ordinances. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)
- Policy on page 17 of Policy Matrix (Utilities)- Collaborate with communications providers to expand cellular telephone service and high speed internet service in the Foothills. [Approved by consensus of the committee.](#)

- Policy on page 17 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)- *Coordinate with WSDOT to design and install roadway improvements to enhance traveler safety and mobility, such as pullouts. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Policy on page 17 of Policy Matrix (Transportation)- *Resist pressure to increase roadway width to accommodate increased automobile demand. Expand roadway ~~widths and shoulders~~ or construct trails as necessary to accommodate increased ~~automobile~~, pedestrian and bicycle use using safe and pervious surfaces where possible. Approved by consensus of the committee.*
- Norma stated that at their last board meeting a majority of the board members agreed to work with the Deming Water Association in any way possible to assist them in getting water district status. Their management has appropriated time to work with Deming and they know what's needed because they just went through the same thing themselves. Also, if it looks as if the Deming Water Association might be eligible for grants it might compromise their ability to get State funding.
- Sean questioned whether the Policy on page 5 of the Policy Matrix (Natural Resources) might be in conflict with the policy on Light Industrial in UGA. The committee did not feel that the Policy on page 5 of the Policy Matrix was in conflict. Sean agreed with the committee after looking at the map.

6. Consideration of potential goals & policies for the Subarea Plan that were submitted by the public.

The committee began review of the Staveland: Item #1-Master plan small communities:

- Bill Grimes, Studio Cascade consultant, stated that master planning small communities varies depending on the community. It's more or less a site plan for a community. It takes a process to go through. We could invest in doing a master plan or say hold off on development until the master planning is done. There are elements that would be very beneficial for the small towns. The content of the master plan will be based on issues you want addressed. Different communities have different needs. Bill stated that he would be reluctant to write in regulatory language in a master plan because you already have several layers that you need to negotiate.
- The committee discussed that master planning may be appropriate as long as the master planning is done by the people that live in the communities. Each community has different issues. What is unique about each one of the communities in the Foothills area.
- The committee discussed whether the direction would be master planning or developing design guidelines and whether it would be appropriate for all the communities at large or specific to the UGA?
- Bill gave the committee a general guideline as to what would be involved in completing design guidelines for communities in the area. Bill stated that master planning would cost in the ball-park of \$15,000 per town depending on the scope.
- Gary suggested that the topic of master planning be listed as an agenda item for the next meeting.

The committee began review of the Staveland: Item #3-Allow for Rural development rights to be consolidated through purchase or exchange (PDRs and TDRs) subject to conditions:

- Bill Grimes discussed TDRs with the committee and what the Foothills community would want to achieve, for instance densification in the Columbia Valley UGA.
- The Staveland proposal addressed the option of exchanging development rights on property with development rights on another property not necessarily in the UGA.

7. Discuss time-line for draft plan rollout meeting.

- Matt questioned as to what the committee sees as a timeline in completing this project.
- Sean suggested that the subcommittees give Bill Grimes their work directly. He can then work it over and give it back to the committee to review and possibly adopt.
- The subcommittees agreed to send their work to Matt; he will then forward those documents to Bill Grimes.
- The committee was unable to come up with a rollout date at this time.

8. Adjournment

Submitted by:
Pam Brown