

## **Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Summary, December 20, 2006**

Committee members in attendance:

Richard Banel

Phil Cloward, Vice-Chair

Jan Eskola

Gary Gehling, Chair

Amy Mower

Norma Otto

Lou Piostrowski

Cindy Purdy

Sean Wilson

### **1) Determination of Quorum**

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

### **2) Public Comment – First Period**

- Rick Gantman, Mt Baker School District Superintendent, thanked the Committee Members for their work. He pointed out that the school district is 600 square miles and that the buses travel in total one-half million miles a year.

Rick said that either he or Tim Yeomans, the Assistant Superintendent, want to be available at the rest of the meetings. He extended an invitation to the Committee to attend the regional transportation meetings (that are required by state law) that take place at the Council of Governments on the first Wednesday of each month from 4:30 to 6:30. He said the group would be glad to hear from a member for the Advisory Committee.

### **3) Meeting Summary**

The December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting summary was accepted by consensus.

### **4) State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development – Dick Larman**

Dick was not able to attend the meeting.

### **5) Non-agenda items**

- Sean handed out and read a memorandum from Tim Yeomans dated November 9<sup>th</sup> 2006, identifying five areas of concern to the operation of the school buses in the Foothills subarea. They are 1. The highway 542/547 interchange, 2. Shoulder widening on 542 and 547, 3. The ninety-degree turn on 547 in front of the Kendall school, 4. The 547 “S” curves, and 5. Lack of sidewalks in Peaceful Valley and Paradise for bus approach and exit.
- Amy asked Tim Hostetler from the State Department of Transportation (DOT) to respond. Tim talked about roundabouts and that the design engineers have taken it to the next level. He said DOT is addressing the issue of pullouts for the Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) and school buses. He said the DOT could help with looking for funding for a pedestrian/bicycle trail in Columbia Valley. Tim emphasized the competition statewide for the limited state transportation funds, which makes it difficult to get projects done.
- Lou asked about the cost of roundabouts. Tim said they cost between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000, which is more than a signal. However, the maintenance cost is nil compared to a signal.
- A member of the public asked about speed bumps to slow traffic down in front of the school. Tim said that the DOT doesn't put speed bumps on state highways. He said that

slowing traffic doesn't help. DOT studied a section of highway 547, which has a speed limit of 55 mph. He said they had two speeders identified from 8 different sites. This was within the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and doesn't meet DOT standards for a need to slow traffic.

- Amy asked when the Committee would discuss the analysis of the questionnaire. Matt said Bill Grimes will be attending a meeting to present the draft plan, but is not scheduled to come before that to discuss the questionnaire again. Committee Members may however email him. Amy stated some questions about extrapolation of answers.
- Jan noted that a lot of the questionnaire respondents were in the 40-60 age ranges, which was not the same as ECONorthwest. Jan wondered where all the people with small children were – this group not being a large participant in the questionnaire. Gary responded that the correlation is not direct.

## **6) Population Projections and Land Use Alternatives Discussion**

Gary suggested looking at the population projections for the different areas in the Foothills and the land use alternatives at the same time. Jan asked if population projection levels could vary for each area. Matt responded they could.

Deming:

ECONorthwest's 2027 population projection for Deming is for an increase of 24 people at the low level, 42 at the baseline level and 87 at the high level. There have been 2 residential building permits issued in the past 6 1/2 years. The Committee reviewed the alternatives and decided by consensus to recommend alternative one, with the modification that the Small Town Commercial zoning boundary was moved to the western edge of the Mt Baker School District's property. Six members voted for a baseline population projection; 3 members voted for a low projection. Note: Amy does not agree with the ECONorthwest projections and supports John McLaughlin's projections. Her voted is included in all low projections.

Glacier:

The 2027 population projection for Glacier is for an increase of 30 people at the low level, 54 at the baseline level and 113 at the high level. There have been 156 residential building permits issued in the past 6 1/2 years. The Committee reviewed the alternatives and decided by consensus to recommend alternative one. Five members voted for a high level population projection; 3 members voted for a low projection and 1 abstained.

Maple Falls:

The 2027 population projection for Maple Falls is for an increase of 23 people at the low level, 41 at the baseline level and 84 at the high level. There have been 15 residential building permits issued in the past 6 1/2 years. The Committee reviewed the alternatives and decided by consensus to recommend alternative one. Six members voted for a baseline level population projection; 3 members voted for a low projection.

Welcome:

There are no population projections specifically for Welcome. The Welcome population is included under the category of "remaining subarea". The Committee reviewed the alternatives and decided by consensus to recommend the status quo alternative.

The Kendall/Columbia Valley area will be considered at the next meeting.

## **7) Roland Middleton, Whatcom County Projects Manager**

Roland summarized some of the projects he is working on that are the outgrowth of the Birch Bay Subarea process. He encouraged Committee Members to clearly identify and prioritize projects in the subarea plan. The projects will be embedded in pertinent chapters of the plan. He emphasized that the community needs to stay involved after the subarea plan is completed to help shepherd projects through the system.

Phil asked if the ratings should reflect the whole subarea. Roland said the priorities could be on an area-by-area basis. Amy asked about seeing a summary of the Birch Bay projects online. The Birch Bay subarea plan can be found online and the projects are listed in the appropriate chapters. Richard asked about the timeframe for completion of projects. Roland said that it is project dependent, but that he would try to hit the quicker projects first.

Lou asked about Roland's prior work in the Foothills subarea. He has worked some on the East County Resource Center and the Welcome Center.

Matt asked if a subcommittee would be appropriate to create a list of projects. Studio Cascade would like upfront a list of projects, which could then be refined at a later date.

Hal suggested the chapters might spur ideas of projects. Projects that solve more than one problem at a time will be more likely to be funded.

Gary said a subcommittee would be chosen at the next meeting.

#### **Public Comment – Second Period**

- Joan Airoldi, Director of the Whatcom County Library system, made reference to the two-day charrette, of which there is a video, and said that the priorities that came out of that workshop should be incorporated into the subarea priority list.

The next meeting will be January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 at the Kendall Elementary School from 5:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. **Note the change in time.**

Submitted by:  
Sharon Digby