

**Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary**

Kendall Elementary School Library
Wednesday, September 19, 2007

Committee members in attendance:

Richard Banel
Jan Eskola
Amy Mower
Lou Piotrowski
Alan Seid

Phil Cloward, Vice Chair
Gary Gehling, Chair
Norma Otto
Cindy Purdy
Sean Wilson

Determination of Quorum

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

Public Comment – First Period

Karen Reich discussed the October 15, 2007 meeting. She has been talking to a few people, calling them and asking them to come to the rollout and when she told them that there is going to be a meeting on October 15th and the adoption of the plan two days later they wonder how the committee is going to take comments that are given at that meeting and incorporate them. Maybe you could answer this question.

Gary responded that he wished we had more time in between. Phil responded that the committee has been doing this for 18 months and people have had numerous opportunities to make comment on the process. We can't keep this thing going forever.

Karen asked if they should come up to the meeting anyhow and make comments?

Amy stated that this is the roll out of the plan and we have only seen one draft of it and one set of comments on it. The meeting on the 15th is when the public gets to see the actual plan and they should be in a position to have a meaningful public comment that could get incorporated into the draft.

Matt stated that they were trying to have the meeting the week before but it did not work out due to a conflict of dates and other things. We moved it to the 15th and the theory was that would give the committee some time to digest the comments and be able to come on the 17th and make any changes that they wanted based upon those comments. The other thing is that is not final adoption. It would be this committee's recommended plan but it does have to go for hearing at the Planning Commission also for County Council adoption.

Karen asked if people would have the opportunity to go to the Planning Commission and comment further.

Gary noted that this was just the first stage of the adoption process; the plan rollout. There is public comment throughout.

Karen asked if it was already scheduled for the Planning Commission.

Matt noted that there were tentative dates in November but it is not finalized.

Gary stated that was part of the issue that they need to have time to review the document as well. We need to get it to them as soon as possible. In a more perfect world, we would have more time.

Advisory committee review and approval of meeting summaries

Matt noted that staff has not yet completed the meeting summaries.

Review Preliminary Draft Foothills Subarea Plan (August 2007 version)

Gary noted that a number of items for consideration had been received.

No Shooting Zone was discussed. Norma provided a copy of WCC ordinance that speaks to no shooting zone exemptions - WCC 9.32.090 and noted that there are currently 9 exemptions and no language regarding "Grandfathering". The Committee decided no action on No Shooting Zones would be taken at this time.

Page 82 (Utility Policy-U4C) revise: Facilitate provision of ~~alternative, power sources including wind, solar, propane, fuel cell or other means as either a back-up or primary source that are in alignment with the community's vision and rural character, emphasizing small scale renewal energy. Strongly discourage large scale projects that primarily provide energy to areas outside the Foothills Subarea that are detrimental to the natural resources and rural character of the Subarea.~~

Page 171 (New Policy CV1-F) A planned Urban Residential comprehensive plan designation for an approximately 120-acre area within the eastern portion of the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area. Consider an associated policy that would support rezoning this Planned Urban Residential area from Rural Forestry to Urban Residential 4 dwellings/acre. This would be on the Columbia Valley urban growth area map (p.173) similar to the planned industrial or town center, we would have a planned urban residential designation on the rural forestry area and an associated policy supporting rezoning from rural forestry to UR4.

Vote: In favor of the policy CV1-F: support rezoning the Planned Urban Residential comprehensive plan designation within the Columbia Valley UGA from Rural Forestry to Urban Residential 4 dwellings/acre, UR4.

Vote to add language and approve the Planned Urban Residential map designation: In favor-5, opposed-3, and abstain-2. Richard Banel wanted it reflected in the record that he was one of the committee members who abstained.

Also add language to map: planned town center

Page 201 (Implementation Tasks) ~~Amend the Small Town Commercial zone in the Foothills Subarea for all buildings except municipal or County public service building to: a) limit height to a maximum of 27' (except for Deming); and b) limit the building footprint to 2,000 square feet in Glacier, Maple Falls, and Kendall and 2,500 square feet in Deming.~~ Note: Jan and Amy would like it in the minutes that they are not blocking consensus.

Page 196 (Implementation Projects #13) add: Develop design guidelines for each individual small town including square footage and height limits for buildings. The design guideline committees will be composed only of residents and property owners in and around each small town.

The Advisory Committee reviewed and made changes to WSDOT's proposed language for Chapter 6, as follows:

Page 84 (Transportation-Automotive Movement) . . . Whatcom County and the border crossing at Sumas. As the Foothills Subarea grows in the future, there will be a need to make changes to the highway system to accommodate the new vehicle trips which will occur with this growth. These changes could take the form of traffic signals, roundabouts, turn-lanes, auxiliary lanes, or other improvements (excluding 4 or more lane highways).

Page 92 (Proposed new roads and facilities) New facilities and improvements may be paid for through a number of funding mechanisms provided by the County, Regional Transportation Planning Organization, ~~and~~ WSDOT, and private development including:

Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Program
Safe Routes to Schools
Surface Transportation Program — Enhancement

Impact Fees

Page 83 (Transportation) Mt Baker Highway (SR 542) and Kendall Road (SR 547) are the two main routes through the Foothills. Of the two, Mt Baker Highway is busier, accommodating approximately ~~4,000-5,000~~ 8,000-9,000 average daily trips at Deming. The highway accesses all four of the subarea's small towns, acting as "Main Street" for Maple Falls and Glacier. It dead-ends at Mt Baker Ski Area the base of Artist's Point, Milepost 57.26. SR 547 links Kendall to Sumas, running north through the Columbia Valley and exiting the planning area north of Sumas Mountain. State highways in the subarea are two-lane roads, and generally have speed limits ranging from 40-55 miles per hour (20 mph in a school zone). There are numerous intersections with these highways, from private driveways to County road and State Route intersections.

Page 90 (Transportation-Automotive Movement). . . highways over four-lane highways. Specifically identified developer contributions and/or improvements will be required to mitigate the impacts on the system that result from growth.

Page 88 after Public Transportation section

Access Management

Access management of state routes in unincorporated areas of the State are the responsibility of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) under RCW 47.50. This law requires regulation of access to state routes in order to protect the public health, safety and efficient movement of people and goods. There are two basic sections of the law: Access Permits (WAC 468-51); and Access Control Classification System (WAC 468-52).

Any new access to State Routes 542 or 547 will require an access permit from WSDOT. Additionally, changes in use to an existing access point will require a new permit. New development may also require developers to provide traffic mitigation measures and/or safety improvements to the highway system. To accommodate future growth, it will be necessary to ensure that all development fully mitigates their traffic impacts.

Page 88 (Level of Service Standards) New development has the potential to impact the transportation system. Specific mitigation appropriate to development will need to be identified as growth occurs.

Page 91 (Consistency with Regional Plans). . . with current regional transportation planning. Transportation impacts will be evaluated and mitigated as growth occurs.

Page 93 (Goal T1-D) . . . deceleration lanes and similar features required to accommodate safety and growth.

Page 202 (Establishment of an Implementation Committee)

Implementation Committees

Community based implementation groups should be formed to facilitate implementation of this plan, supported by County staff and monetary resources.

Page 128 (Standards of Adequacy and Proposed Facilities) follows Solid Waste Management section

Community Health Center

As of fall 2007, the Interfaith Community Health Center (IHC) proposes to establish a satellite location within the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area. The initial site will likely consist of a 5,000 square foot modular facility which will host primary care medical, behavioral health, dental, pharmacy, and other enabling services to all members of the community without regard to ability to pay. The target date for opening this facility is currently set at April, 2008. Funding for operations and furnishings will come from a variety of sources including federal funding (already secured), fees for patient services, state, local, and other private sources as well as in-kind contributions already committed from within the community for site preparation. IHC proposes to utilize this facility for these services until such time as they can be permanently housed in the planned resource center. IHC will also ask for participation from community members in planning and development of the satellite as well as two representatives who will be users of the facility, to serve on its governing Board of Directors.

Page 54 (Land Use Foothills Subarea Plan Policy LU11-F) ~~All statutory and regulatory concurrency requirements must be met at the same time as the issuance of any building permit.~~

Vote to strike language: In favor-6, opposed-3, and abstain-1

All committee decisions were by consensus except those decisions voted on by the committee.

Public Comment – Second Period

Rob Staveland asked for clarification on the policy regarding the 120 acres. He was not sure where it ended up. Was the recommendation that it is zoned UR4 or what was the recommendation – short term overlay or long term overlay.

Matt clarified that it was a comprehensive plan designation of planned urban residential with an associated policy supporting rezone from rural forestry to UR4. It doesn't actually rezone the parcel.

Rob restated, a policy that supports the rezone to UR4. Is that short term?

Matt stated that it did not address short term or long term. No conclusion was reached on that. He also noted that there is an application in to rezone the western 80 acres to short term planning area and UR4.

Rob stated that he thought it was a great idea. The GMA says that urban growth areas are supposed to be UR4. That was one of the results of the Goldstar decision saying that UGA has to be, at a minimum density, UR4. So the way the County has handled that is to put an overlay on top of the UR4, which is a long term planning overlay, which is still R5 until such time as the sewer and demand is established. In essence, this long term is an overlay over an underlying zoning. Typically an underlying zoning, in our case, is a UR4 and then there is long term planning area until certain criteria are met.

Rob continued that while he is personally in favor of the idea of recognizing the intent of the GMA that a UGA should be UR4, whether or not it has a long term planning overlay is up to the committee. If the committee recommendation is that there is not a long term planning recommendation, then I have to object in the sense that my application, which is already UR4, has two long term planning areas that we are asking to be removed on the basis of need. If the committee moves forward with this and clarifies this and says this is going to be, UR4 short term planning I really would like to be included in having a recommendation to lift the long term planning overlay off of our application.

Matt responded, the committee didn't decide or make a recommendation on long term or short term planning area.

Rob stated that this is an important clarification.

Daniel Cohen spoke regarding Page 30 of the plan. Heading – overall. In the third or fourth sentence down, the plan says the two positions appear to be contradictory. I don't think they are contradictory and they are not equal, preserving rural character and open space and then some of these other services of transportation improvement and communication capabilities. My personal opinion is that they are not equal. They are not contradictory and are not equal. I do work from home using the computer and I would love to have high speed but I wouldn't trade the rural character where I live to get high speed. They are not contradictory; they are not in opposition.

Larry Duncan objected to the timeline that was set for the rollout. He feels that the committee has not really given full weight to the gravity of the situation for what you are going to present for County Council. That's been given the full weight of comment period from the citizens of our community. First of all, as we get closer to the time of the rollout, it appears that there is going to be a very short period between public comment and what is going to be given to the County Council to review. He feels that the time period given is inadequate. He would like to now put out his opposition to that because he does not feel that you have given enough time between the last comment period by the public and when you are going to present the rollout. Another item that he has a problem with is that you guys are rushing this. This is going to be a long term plan. It is going to take the next 15 to 20 years to come to fruition and, at this point, you are trying to shove it into somebody's timeline. Bill Grimes is on the clock, he is on the payroll and his time and his company is coming to the point that they are going to run out of the dollars that were allocated to them to bring this plan forward on behalf of the foothills. You are pushing really hard to meet this arbitrary deadline of October something. I feel that you are really leaving out the public input. You have worked really hard on this. Crash course right at the end to push this thing out of here. Disregard the last comment period by the public.

Gary stated that he did not think there was any attempt to disregard the public.

Larry noted that what he heard earlier was that one of the committee members said earlier this evening that perhaps, if people wanted to have any comment, they should have already been here. This is right at the end, somebody may show up and have comments.

Committee member identified himself as making the comment and still standing by it. And, he respects Larry's opinion.

Next meeting – October 3, 2007

Meeting adjourned:

Submitted by: Penny Harrison, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services