

**Foothills Subarea Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary, December 6, 2006**

Committee members in attendance:

Richard Banel

Phil Cloward, Vice-Chair

Jan Eskola

Gary Gehling

Amy Mower

Norma Otto

Lou Piostrowski

Cindy Purdy

Alan Seid

Sean Wilson

1) Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order by Gary Gehling and a determination of a quorum was made.

2) Public Comment – First Period

- There was no public comment.
- Gary announced a biodiversity workshop in Olympia on Jan 5th. It is sponsored by American Farmland Trust, the Cascade Land Conservancy and Defenders of Wildlife, amongst others. Gary urged someone from the Planning Department to attend.

3) Meeting Summary

The November 1st meeting summary was accepted by consensus with the following change suggested by Phil:

Page 7, last public comment: The Center is very interested in the Columbia Valley, and

Page 8, public comment: Add this sentence to Linda Dorset's comments – She does support a general commercial zone in the Columbia Valley.

4) Revised 2006 Population Estimates

Matt handed out the latest version of the population estimates for the Foothills Subarea.

After some discussion the Committee Members agreed to accept the population estimates.

The 2006 estimate of year-round population for the Foothills Subarea is 6,722 people. Gary thanked the sub-committee and staff.

5) Presentation by Bill Grimes, Studio Cascade

a. Questionnaire tabulations/results

Bill said that four main topics stood out in which there was strong support amongst the questionnaire respondents: 1. Rural Character, 2. Gathering, 3. Affordable Housing and 4. Water Quality.

Gary asked about written comments. Bill said there were a lot of written comments. Bill will put together a comprehensive report after waiting a while longer for more Russian questionnaires. Bill said that it was an excellent return of questionnaires. Richard wondered if Bill would provide a map of the respondent locations. Bill said they got a lot of location indication and he will be providing this information. Gary asked when Bill would have a report completed. Bill said a draft plan would be available in January.

Gary asked if the Committee Members felt comfortable with the public outreach to date. A discussion of the low response from the Russian community (3 questionnaires) ensued. It was decided that Cindy would make one more attempt to reach the Russians by contacting Reverend Bezugly. Matt pointed out that there will be more public meetings throughout

the process, as well as the Planning Commission public hearing and possibly a County Council hearing.

b. Population Forecast

A Foothills Subarea Population Forecast handout from ECONorthwest was distributed. They presented a low growth, a baseline growth and a high growth assumption. Under the low growth assumption, the population of the Foothills Subarea would grow to 8, 445 by the year 2027. Under the baseline assumption, the subarea would grow to 9,900 by 2027. Under the high assumption, the subarea would grow to 13,090 by 2027. Bill suggested looking at land use alternatives to help guide a decision on which growth assumption to choose. Lou pointed out the land for growth in Glacier is minimal, but the potential for growth is large as the seasonal dwellings become permanent dwellings. Some areas may be able to accommodate growth better than others. Bill suggested determining a target figure, then looking at the land use alternatives. The big question is the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area (UGA) and how to provide urban levels of service.

Jan suggested using the baseline growth assumption. Alan asked about pacing of infrastructure – did Bill think it was better to over anticipate infrastructure or under anticipate. Bill said it would be hard to find a community that over invested in infrastructure due to the expense. He said it is not linear. Often communities in the early stages of development are chronically under developed in infrastructure and then can have a sudden increase. Bill said he will be putting together a capital facilities plan. He said often it is better to put off infrastructure as it defers the pain of the expense and better technology may be available at a later date. Alan said that in the end his bias is toward preserving options.

c. Land Use Alternatives

The three land use alternatives are status quo, alternative 1 and alternative 2. Alternative 1 reflects the recommendations of the Committee Members for their geographic locations. Alternative 2 uses the Limited Area of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD) criteria. Bill presented a slide show with alternative 1 and 2 for each small town. He also presented an alternative 2 for the Welcome area.

For the Columbia Valley Bill presented the concept of a model city at the request of some Committee Members. The model depicts a city located along a transportation corridor; which has a business district; a first-tier residential district located next to the business district with frequent access between the two; an industrial district which is close to the transportation corridor; a second-tier residential district with larger houses; a waste/water treatment area; and at the outskirts an agriculture or open space area. Bill then presented a slide that overlays this model city concept on the Columbia Valley.

He also presented an alternative 1 and 2 for the Columbia Valley. Bill said that existing zoning needs to be evaluated and new policies may be necessary to create something close to a model city in the Columbia Valley.

Gary requested a copy of the slide show which Bill will provide. He said that Bill needs a recommendation from the Committee in order to proceed with a draft plan. The Committee decided to put off a recommendation till the next meeting on December 20th. They also decided to meet an hour earlier, from 5:30 to 8:30.

Amy asked if a summary of the draft plan could be prepared prior to the public comment period, so that it could be distributed to residents prior to the public comment hearings, as

part of the community outreach plan. This would give residents the opportunity to more accurately comment on the draft plan. She mentioned that in the town where she lived previously, the community distributed to residents a summary of its comprehensive plan, which was printed on newsprint, to save costs. Several Committee were in agreement with this proposal.

6) Non-agenda Items

Alan handed out a document entitled Whatcom Futures Choosing Our Tomorrows. This document was put together by the Whatcom County Council of Governments, the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Sustainable Connections.

7) Public Comment Period – Second Session

- Dennis Balcom of Deming stated that Deming is unique in that much of land is owned by the Nooksack Tribe and the Tribe doesn't have to follow zoning rules. He requested that the Committee keep the potential development of the Tribe in mind when considering Deming. Matt pointed out that the Tribal land will be recognized on the map with cross hatching. Dennis said that what the Tribe does impacts other areas. He said that the rural character will not be preserved if a large hotel is built by the Tribe.

The next meeting will be December 20th, 2006 at the Kendall Elementary School from 5:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. Note the change in time.

Submitted by:
Sharon Digby