

1) Introduction and signup sheet

2) Matt opened discussion of 4 Options for adjustment to Subarea boundaries. He pointed out that the Foothills Subarea is the largest in the County, approximately 200 square miles, with 25% of the nonfederal land in the County.

Matt stated that County Council Resolution 2005-062 anticipated addition of Deming to the Foothills Subarea. So the question becomes, where should the boundary be drawn? Four options, with advantages and disadvantages of each option were presented.

Option 1a – Add only Deming to the Subarea.

This option adds Deming without otherwise altering the Foothills boundary. It maintains the boundary generally on the ridge of Sumas Mountain, which was intentionally done in the previous subarea plan for watershed management purposes. This option would not add any designated Agricultural lands to the subarea. However, this boundary may be perceived as irregular.

Option 1b – Add only Deming and the area directly south of Deming to the Subarea.

This option is similar to option 1a, except it would add the land directly south of Deming to the Subarea. This option includes the portion of the Nooksack River south of Deming.

Option 2 – Add Deming and the area north and south of Deming to the Subarea.

Matt pointed out that this option would add 7,690 acres to the Subarea. This option would provide a more regular boundary and would add the portion of the Nooksack River south of Deming to the subarea, but would not maintain the Subarea boundary on the ridge of Sumas Mountain.

Option 3 – Add Deming, Nugent's Corner and the western portion of Sumas Mountain to the Subarea (2002 UW Student proposal).

This option would add 15,472 acres (about 24.2 square miles) to the Foothills Subarea. Assuming no area is deleted from the current Subarea, this would constitute about a 12% increase in the size of the subarea. Analysis of this area would take resources of the planning consultant away from the existing Subarea to address this additional area. Option 3 would add a fair amount of designated Agricultural lands to the Foothills Subarea, injecting a new issue to

be addressed in the Subarea Planning Process. There is no official representation from this area on the committee.

Discussion then ensued amongst all Committee members about the various options.

Alan – Did the County Council suggest including Deming in the resolution approving the process?

Amy: Asked Matt to describe the County Council’s decision making on the addition of Deming.

Matt – General factors that support inclusion of Deming include the presence of the Mt. Baker High School, and the School District Offices, as well as the perception that Deming is the ‘gateway’ to the Foothills.

The Council anticipated addition of Deming (by approving Resolution 2005-062).

Gary – Keep the boundary the same with Deming included.

Phil C – Property owners desire to be on Foothills. Otherwise their property would be split. Supports option # 2

Phil – Spoke with 4 owners within the Sumas Mt. area who own a majority of the land. They felt commercial forestry zoning should be consistent with the needs of the area.

Alan – Keep it simple, likes # 2.

Motion from Phil for Committee to approve option # 2.

Gary seconds

Amy – Given all the discussion about options on boundaries, would it not make sense for the vote and recommendation by the Committee to be reviewed by the County Council to make sure that the vote conformed with the Council’s intent when they added Deming to the Subarea? It would make sense to do that sooner than later so as not to waste the Consultant’s time and money should this vote be rejected by the Council.

Matt - Good point. He will take the recommendation of the Deming boundary to Council Planning & Development Committee for consideration.

The Committee unanimously voted to recommend boundary option # 2.

3) **Review Consultant's Draft Participation Strategy**

Discussion was had about minor changes and Amy's email suggestions, although the suggested Questions for the Community Survey were tabled for the next meeting. Matt said that generally speaking, Planning would try to incorporate comments to the extent possible.

Matt - Mailing out to voters has issues beyond dollars – Precincts do not line up with the subarea boundary; accomplishing that would be time consuming.

Amy – There is a problem with mailing to real estate property owners only; otherwise business-owners which rent may be missed as well as long term residential tenants.

Lou – Largest distribution possible even renters should be included.

Matt – It would cost about \$1,400.00 for mailing postcards to 5,000 Foothills property owners.

Gary – More opportunities for comment from Committee prior to mailing(s).

Amy – Will look into postal options for distribution to mail boxes within the Post Offices and Residential Post Office street mailboxes, besides sending to the real estate property owners and to e-mail.

Amy – Advisory Committee review flyers and community surveys before mailing? How about using newspapers such as the Foothills Gazette to distribute information with flyer inserts.

Alan – Encouraged by committees desire for public outreach. We may be limiting the committee by opening up the money issues. Recommendations from general public.

Lou – Middle ground is necessary for surveys, etc. (Keep it simple)

Rick Nicholson – WTA had a survey prior to service. Good response.

Phil – Contact Russians through the church is best means.

Julie suggested, again, using the newspaper, especially the local newspaper as a means to communicate with the general public. Possible inserts and or ads.

Amy – Amy asked if Matt would list the stakeholders currently on the list.

Matt read the list of currently identified stakeholders: Sierra Pacific, DNR, Nooksack Tribe, Deming Library, Mt. Baker School District, Mt. Baker Ski Area,

Cowden Gravel, Kendall Fire District 14, Clauson Quarry, Water District 13, Glacier Water Dist., Glacier Fire Dist., the Glen at Maple Falls & Snowater Association. The committee recommended adding the Port of Bellingham, Post Offices, Evergreen Water & Sewer District (Tyler Van Loon) and Puget Sound Energy.

4) Presentation by Tim Hostetler, Washington State Department of Transportation

Tim discussed safety, congestion and access as DOT's focus. He also mentioned that WSDOT does not have land use authority and follows closely what the local governments plan for, and approve, on use of land. In the case of Kendall, the proposed major rezone, if adopted, and location of proposed Resource Center has implications on SR 547 and SR 542.

Traffic counts have been conducted within the last 2 years; likely won't redo yet. Projects already underway include paving jobs. A major safety issue will be the 90-degree turn at 542 and Kendall Road, designated as a high accident location (HAL). Criteria found in WSDOT Design Manuals will be followed; a specific process is required for deviations from the Design Manual. DOT will be looking for forecasting for traffic numbers, and will work closely with Whatcom County on traffic models.

Phil – Asked Tim, WSDOT, as to configuration and capacity to SR 542.

Tim – the capacity is dictated by: specific standards found in WSDOT design manuals and the specifics of a locale; also accidents; cost and land use. As previously stated, WSDOT must react to the land use decisions made at County level to look at the capacity and safety impacts.

Roland – Land use decisions very important. WSDOT must react to our decisions on land use.

Julie – spoke of concerns about children going to and from school on Kendall highway and being unable to safely get to and from after-school activities. Would like bike/walking trails, lower speed limit, and/or other options for keeping people safe. She asked DOT to drop speed limit to 35 mph, and to add separated trails, controlled traffic for children to bike from Columbia Valley to the Kendall School.

Tim – Issue with obtaining State Funding sources, benefit cost and injuries all help determine what should and can be done. Hopefully through this planning process alternative locations of bicycle and pedestrian needs can be explored (e.g., old RR right of ways).

Roland – Gives as an example of changes to local traffic on Birch Bay Drive. Just like this Subarea Planning Process, the important aspect is to have the local desires placed in these GMA updates.

Alan – Chain Trails could be included in subarea plan as a priority.

Gary - Impacts to the Nooksack River should be included.

Tim - For funding, the Transportation Partnership Account is funded for a new Bridge for Boulder Creek that will include a separated bicycle and pedestrian portion connecting the Chain of Trails trail. New aerial photos and will be taken to assist in design.

Phil – Bridge improvements at Warnick Bridge (at the mouth of Canyon Creek) and SR 542.

5) Rick Nicholson – Whatcom Transportation Authority Update

Prior to the fall of 2002, the only WTA service to the east County was dial a ride. A person had to call up and request a ride. This service only went just east of Deming. Since November 2002, there has been scheduled bus service to Kendall and other areas in the east County. The 1st trip and last trip of the day are fixed routes, and the middle 3 trips are flex routes, where a person can call and the bus will go off the fixed route to the person's home.

Between November 2002 and March 2006, ridership has doubled to 120 passengers per day on a weekday (60 going in and 60 going out). About 2/3 of the riders come from Kendall.

At some point, there will be additional service to the east County, but they don't know when. As of August 2005 the route out Mount Baker Highway (72X) jogs down to serve Van Zandt in both directions.

The bus service to Kendall is quite direct (except for the jog into Van Zandt). Navigating through Paradise and Peaceful Valley however takes about 20 minutes and would make an extension of service to Maple Falls or Glacier very time consuming for riders in those farther out communities. However, WTA has a park & ride at the 76 Station in Kendall for people in the Glacier and Maple Falls area.

Gary asked about WTA bus service to Mt. Baker ski area

Rick – This issue comes up often but falls under the realm of charter service. State law prohibits transit from providing charter service (except in very specific cases) and thereby competing with private providers.

6) **For the Comprehensive Planning process, information from Advisory Committee members on historical and current issues is needed as the consultant develops a draft of chapter 1, Introduction and Population Projections.**

Matt requested historical and current issues from Advisory Committee.

Alan asked how that information should be provided, would email be okay? Matt said, that actually, he would like suggestions at today's meeting; then he agreed that he would accept suggestions until Monday April 3.

Gary – Rural character has been greatest draw. Maintain that!

Norma – Combine that with a great growth in the Peaceful/Paradise urban area, however it does not have structure or infrastructure.

Phil – Have to think about those that have been here, not only newcomers. Columbia Valley's growth, along with Maple Falls, was primarily resource extraction. This should be continued as much as possible.

Gary – Protect resources, but not to simply be subdivided.

Phil – Concern about loss of forestry industry. The Council needs to again appoint a Forestry Committee, like was done by the County Council in the past.

Norma – Non-supporting income basis (i.e., no property taxes) because of Federal ownership. She also would like to hear the Nooksack Tribe's perspective and point of view.

Bill – Urban growth could affect the historical sites of the Nooksacks. Nooksack will share its history with the Advisory Committee.

Roland – Whatcom County has a special relationship with the State Historical Protection Office. This will be included with the Subarea plan.

Lou – Last 8 - 10 years have seen great changes in Peaceful Valley, Paradise Lakes and Glacier in property ownership. At the Snowater Annual General Meeting in December 2004, an announcement was made that condo ownership had now shifted from 70% Canadian and 30% US ownership to 70% American and 30% Canadian over last decade or so.

Gary – Going from seasonal homes to permanent.

Cynthia – 30% of students in Kendall Elementary School are Russian

Gary – They gain equity and move on.

Amy – In addition to the Columbia Valley and Kendall points for the historical and current issues for the consultant, Maple Falls has its own issues to be included. It wishes to preserve its small town character, surrounded by forests and mountains, and does not want to change. History of Maple Falls – surrounded by National Parks and US Forest Land.

Cynthia – Peaceful Valley’s history

7) Closing Comments.

Matt indicated that he would take the historical and issue information to the Consultant.

Gary – Population projections questioned, as indicated in Item 6 of the agenda.

Amy – How will Studio Cascade deal with the population issue and what is the status of discussion of alternative projection modeling?

Matt – ECONorthwest is proceeding with the low, medium and high population projections per the contract. In addition, Amy Mower and a group came in to County Planning with Professor McLaughlin several months ago and asked if an “alternative” population projection could be utilized for the Foothills Subarea. In an e-mail of March 23, 2006, Planning Director Hal Hart stated he is trying to obtain funding for review of the McLaughlin methodology to see if it is appropriate for this situation and, if it is suitable, to utilize the methodology to provide additional projections for the Foothills planning process.

Cynthia – Could we possibly begin the meetings at 3:30 p.m. It’s difficult for me to get here by 3:00.

Lou – We should consider changing meeting location to Kendall School rather than Deming.

General agreement to both items.

Matt: Committee should discuss further at the next meeting.

Next meeting will be April 19th 3:30 – 5:30 at School District Office in Deming. The committee will also meet on April 26th 3:30 – 5:30.

Adjourn