

**Whatcom County
Transportation Concurrency Management and Impact Fee Programs
Project Steering Committee
Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: March 6, 2007, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Whatcom County Northwest Annex – 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA

Attendees:

Steering Committee:

- Michael Abendhoff, BP
- Rick Nicholson, Whatcom Transit Authority
- Rick Gantman, Mt. Baker School District
- Gary Gehling, East County Foothills
- Blair Murray, Trillium
- Doralee Booth, Birch Bay Steering Committee
- Tim Hostetler, WSDOT – Mt. Baker Area

Project Team:

- John Everett, Whatcom County
- Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group
- Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues

**Welcome and
Introductions**

Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues, welcomed the group on behalf of the project team. She asked each attendee to introduce themselves and share what organization they are representing, where they are originally from, an interesting fact about themselves, and their main interest or goal for the committee.

Kristine then briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The purposes of the meeting is to learn more about each other's interest in the project, define the role of concurrency and impact fees in development review, discuss potential objectives and identify policy issues with each program, answer the committee's questions, and to set the schedule for future committee meetings.

Kristine also went over the expectations for conduct at each steering committee and asked the group if they had any comments, changes or additions to the expectations. The group did make a few clarifications and additions. The final list of meeting expectations are as follows:

- Raise your hand to ask questions or make a comment.
- Save questions or comments until a designated question/answer time, unless it is a clarifying question about the information being presented.
- All committee members will have an opportunity to speak.
- The facilitator will keep time and the group will stay on task and follow the agenda.
- Conflicting opinions are a part of this process and members do not need to defend their point of view.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices will be silenced during meetings and only answered in a personal emergency or because of professional obligations.
- The facilitator can "table" discussions to keep the group on task and on time.

- Homework assigned to the project team or committee members will be complete before meetings and the project team will provide ample review time prior to meetings to complete any committee assignments.

Purpose Goals and Expectations of Program and Committee

John Everett, Whatcom County, thanked the committee members for their time and willingness to participate in Whatcom County's efforts to update their concurrency management program and develop an impact fee program. He explained the purpose of the steering committee which is to provide feedback to the project team as it moves forward with the development of these two programs and to help the County better understand the implications of different policy decisions for each interest at the table.

Overview of Concurrency Program Development

Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group, provided an overview of transportation concurrency and its relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA), level of service (LOS) standards, and the development review process. He also explained that there is an interim transportation concurrency program in place for Whatcom County that will be replaced by the result of this project.

Larry reviewed the steps the project team will take to develop the new transportation concurrency program, including the development of the program objectives and framework and defining the level of service standards and methodologies.

Larry provided a list of preliminary concurrency program objectives for the committee members to review. He then asked the committee if they had any reactions to this preliminary list and/or additions to it (*responses shown in italics*):

- How much weight will be given to different types of travel? Multi-modal travel vs. travel by car?
- The development in east county is quite spread out and there may be different objectives for concurrency and different LOS standards in different areas of the county.
- Safety is a major priority in some areas, regardless of capacity and concurrency. This should be a major focus of the program.
- Seasonal populations, and as a result seasonal traffic, should be considered.
- WSDOT does not have control over land use and WSDOT must react to local development. When local comprehensive plans call out their objectives, this helps WSDOT identify and find funding for projects needed to address congestion without the usually necessary safety warrants.
- Should we assume the current high level of car use as it is today, or think of a mode shift? If we do consider a mode shift, what amount will we assume will shift?
- Are we locked into the definition of a "failing" facility, if the facility only fails during a peak hour or period?
- We should be in favor of working toward a mode change for travel. But, is it realistic to promote mode change through a concurrency program?
- What influence do we have on land use? For example, we may want to consider advocating for more small town commercial zones in order to reduce the need to drive long distances for services or errands.
- Tying concurrency to land use planning is important.

- We should clarify how projects get on or are removed from the current capital improvement lists for the County.

Larry then explained the next steps that the project team will follow to establish the framework for the concurrency program and to define the level of service standards and methods. The final step will be to implement the concurrency strategy and process, including replacing the interim concurrency ordinance currently in place.

Larry then asked for any final questions or comments on concurrency (*responses shown in italics*):

- From the project team's experience with concurrency, have they found that jurisdictions that have strict concurrency programs lose developers? Is there a "leap-frog" affect? *Impact fees may discourage developers but this is not as much the case with concurrency. Specific areas may not be "available" because the concurrency program will not allow more growth in that area, but other areas of the County will likely be "available" for development.*
- *In Seattle, you can not fail the city LOS standards (which dictate concurrency), because Seattle allows over-capacity. However, Seattle uses SEPA and other mitigation to accommodate for this growth.*
- What impact will changing the concurrency program and the LOS standards have on other County policies?

**Overview of
Transportation
Impact Fee
Program
Development**

Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group, provided an overview of impact fees and its relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA), level of service (LOS) standards, and the development review process. Under the GMA, impact fees are an optional element and they must be used to mitigate development impacts and can be used for system improvements.

Larry reviewed the steps the project team will take to develop the new transportation concurrency program, including the assessment of fee eligible projects and costs, identification of service areas, and the calculation of impact fees and rate schedules.

Larry provided a list of preliminary impact fee program objectives for the committee members to review. He then asked the committee if they had any reactions to this preliminary list and/or additions to it (*responses shown in italics*).

- There is no state legislation that allows WSDOT to implement impact fees. WSDOT can only use SEPA to mitigate for project impacts and is dependent on local jurisdictions to acquire and use fees for impacts due to a development.
- Impact fees can be pooled to pay for high priority and more expensive projects.
- How does one decide what impacts are addressed with fees or through SEPA?
- Are impact fees are tied to plat applications or building permits? *In many communities, the fees for residential improvements are tied to plat applications and fees for commercial improvements are tied to permit applications.*
- Are there different types of impact fees?
- Impact fees should be assessed based on the number of trips generated.

If an improvement is made to a facility, but that improvement does not increase the number of trips made to that facility, then an impact fee should not be assessed on that improvement. Impact fees should also be equitable between residential and commercial improvements.

- Will there be temporary trip impact fees assessed, such as on construction? *Temporary trips, as a part of a construction project, are typically dealt with through SEPA and temporary mitigation for those trips.*
- Are impact fees used to support multi-modal projects? If they are, it is important to determine whether this is feasible, as transit systems benefit in different ways from a one-time investment, such as a new transit station, or an ongoing investment to add and maintain a new transit route.
- We need to stay aware of other plans in the comprehensive plan and tie the impact fee program to those (Capital Improvement Programs, transit improvement plans, etc.)

Larry then explained the next steps the team will follow to establish the impact fee program, based on the objectives. He also explained how impact fees will be assessed based on the origin and destinations of the trip (using the WCOG model) and whether or not the trip is from existing or "growth" traffic. Larry also provided a chart to show how the impact fees of other cities and counties for comparison.

Larry then asked for any final questions or comments on impact fees (*responses shown in italics*):

- What percentage of real estate taxes go into transportation projects?

Integration of Concurrency and Transportation Impact Fee Programs

Larry then provided an overview of how the concurrency and impact fees are similar and different. Concurrency and impact fees both address transportation impacts of new development and are based on service standards. Both also work with other development review processes, such as SEPA. Both programs also focus on "system" not "project" transportation needs.

However, concurrency is a requirement under the GMA and impact fees are optional. Concurrency requires denial if not met and impact fees can only be used as a mitigation tool, not project denial. Impact fees are also related to a proportional impact of a development and can be pooled to fund improvements, where concurrency is either met or not met and is directly related to the potential traffic impact of a development project at one or more locations. Existing deficiencies also affect concurrency approval where impact fees can not be used to resolve existing deficiencies in the transportation system.

Larry then asked for any final questions or comments on the relationship between concurrency and impact fees (*responses shown in italics*):

- There is a large landscape of planning affected by the concurrency and impact fee programs. The committee should develop a matrix of plans and planning horizons that may be affected (CTAG, WTA, STP, bike/ped, etc.)

Next Steps and Action Items

- Kristine Edens will provide a brief summary of the meeting. The purpose of the summary will be to provide an overview of what was presented at the meeting and to document the committee's questions and comments.

- John Everett will work with other agencies to develop a matrix of planning documents, with their planning horizons and update deadlines that may be affected by the concurrency and impact fee program development.
- Committee members will review the list of preliminary objectives for the concurrency and impact fee programs and identify their top two and their bottom two objectives for both programs. These objectives will be sent to the project team two weeks in advance of the next committee meeting.
- The project team will email electronic copies of the lists of objectives to the committee members
- Tim Hostetler will provide the project team with a list of Nickel-funded, TPA-funded and legislative-funded projects in the region.

Next Committee Meeting

Committee members decided that the first Thursday of the month worked well for meetings.

The next Project Steering Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 7th from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The meeting location is still to be determined.

**Whatcom County
Transportation Concurrency Management and Impact Fee Programs
Project Steering Committee
Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: June 7, 2007, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Whatcom County Courthouse, Conference Room 514 – 311 Grand Avenue,
Bellingham, WA

Attendees: **Steering Committee members in attendance:**

- Rick Gantman, Mt. Baker School District
- Gary Gehling, East County Foothills
- Blair Murray, Trillium
- Doralee Booth, Birch Bay Steering Committee
- Tim Hostetler, WSDOT – Mt. Baker Area

Project Team members in attendance:

- John Everett, Whatcom County
- Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group
- Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues

**Welcome,
Introductions
and Agenda
Review**

Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues, welcomed the group on behalf of the project team. She asked John Everett to provide some opening remarks. John thanked the committee members for their continued participation. He also addressed the recent staff changes at the county, and said that the county is still committed to completing and implementing the concurrency management and impact fee programs on schedule.

Kristine reviewed the meeting expectations established at the last meeting, went over the agenda and explained the purpose of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting, and of the committee's participation in this process, is to share their ideas and opinions regarding policy decisions that need to be made related to both the concurrency management and impact fee programs. The focus of the evening's meeting was the concurrency program objectives.

Before moving on with the agenda, Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group, asked if the committee had any initial questions or comments (*responses shown in italics*):

- What is the role of the committee? It seems like there are limited opportunities to discuss as a group, given the full agendas and the amount of discussion time at the last meeting. *The purpose of the committee is to provide the project team feedback on certain policy decisions that will need to be made related to the concurrency management and impact fee programs. Whatcom County wants to be responsive to the different interests and regions throughout the county. Therefore it is important for you to share your thoughts, preferences and priorities to help shape the programs as they are developed and implemented. It is not necessary that the committee reach consensus on any of the issues and different opinions are a part of this process.*
- The committee does need more time for brainstorming and discussion during the meetings. If the committee reviews the materials sent by the project team in advance of the meeting, the committee spend less time discussing the materials

at the meeting and more time discussing and exchanging ideas, when all parties are in the same room.

- Can we convene as a committee outside of the regularly scheduled meetings?
The project team encourages you to talk amongst yourselves between meetings and if you have thoughts before, after or between meetings, please share those with the project team by contacting John Everett by phone or email.

Recap of Last Meeting

Larry provided a brief recap of the last meeting. At the last meeting, the team provided an overview of concurrency as a required element of the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the steps that will be taken to develop a new concurrency management program to replace the county's current interim program. The team also provided an overview of impact fees and how they can be used as an optional element under the GMA to mitigate for impacts due to a development. The team also explained how concurrency management and impact fees interrelate and how each program can address "system" improvements, but are not applied for "project" improvements.

Concurrency Program Objectives

Larry had provided a list of concurrency program objectives for the committee members to review prior to the meeting via email. The list of objectives was based on the review of the County's Comprehensive Plan, discussions with County staff about the goals of the concurrency management program, and a study session with the Whatcom County Council. Along with each objective, the team provided a few discussion questions, to get the members thinking about potential tradeoffs between objectives, and the relative importance of these and other possible objectives for the concurrency management program.

Larry reviewed each objective, discussed different scenarios and examples related to each objective and then asked the committee for their comments, following the discussion questions provided for each proposed objective (*responses shown in italics*):

Legally defensible:

- The concurrency management program should have a broader purpose for the county and help implement a long-range vision for the transportation system.
- Concurrency for highways of statewide significance should involve negotiations between the state and local jurisdictions. *Yes, for example, SR 203 is a main street through the City of Duvall, but it is also a state route. The city did not want to see the roadway widened to four or five lanes, which could be required to meet concurrency standards for the city. WSDOT indicated that they did not have the funds to widen the highway and it would be a low priority for future funding. Other roadway and intersection improvements identified in their transportation plan and incorporated into their traffic impact fee program to help mitigate the impacts of growth on SR 203 without widening the roadway.*
- According to House Bill 1487, the 1998 Level of Service Bill, the level of service on highways of statewide significance is set by the state in consultation with local jurisdictions. Concurrency does not apply to highways of statewide significance.
- Allowing a developer to mitigate to pre-project conditions is a good idea, but at some point, safety could be compromised. *Intersection type improvements can work best for this kind of requirement.*
- Along Mt. Baker highway, spot improvements may cause drivers to pass on even more dangerous locations, where there may be more traffic and pedestrians. It may be best to use the "pre-project conditions" requirement in only urban areas, not rural areas.
- The county should match the concurrency program to the long-range vision.

Instead of implementing improvements project by project, or intersection by intersection, the program should support projects that build toward the long-range vision to address more than just roads, but also pedestrian improvements and/or transit improvements.

- If pre-project conditions are currently unacceptable, those conditions should be and need to be considered before a development is allowed to mitigate to pre-project conditions for their impacts.
- Mitigation should also include less-tangible investments such as increased enforcement for dangerous areas.
- It is unjust to require a developer to pay for more than pre-project conditions. Developers do agree that growth should pay for growth, but not more. A development should also not be denied if an area is waiting on the county or state to make an improvement to address poor pre-project conditions.
- If fees from a developer can be better used in combination with city, county or state funds, then it should be done where possible to mitigate to pre-project conditions and to address insufficiencies in pre-project conditions at the same time.
- Concurrency or SEPA should stop any new development project that may exacerbate poor pre-project conditions that already exist.
- A developer can not control when the county or state improves an existing bad situation. The developer is then put in a position of waiting for these improvements to be made before it can develop a piece of property already zoned for that use. Cities, counties or states need to plan for infrastructure to support their growth goals and land use policies.

Supports the County's Comprehensive Plan:

- Are transition areas not addressed by concurrency? *Yes, they are addressed but there are different standards in the county urban growth area (UGA) and the city UGA.*
- There is a UGA established in east Whatcom County. Development is expected to happen there in the near future, but there will be not be places these new residents to work. They will be commuting to other areas of the county to work. It is important to look at travel patterns based on land use, and how that is addressed in the concurrency management program.
- With gas prices going up and transit ridership going up, Whatcom County needs to think ahead about how to make transit options more appealing and more available as a part of the new programs.
- Should the basis for concurrency be measured during only the PM peak hour, or should other periods be used such as daily trips or even weekend congestion in some areas.
- In areas that the county would like to encourage growth, the concurrency program should allow more congestion.

Supports Alternative Travel Modes

- Many other communities are relying on transit and safety improvements to fulfill concurrency requirements. Most communities do not want policies that will encourage wider roads.
- As a developer, I would much prefer to see our impact fees go to transit. As gas gets more expensive and transit is more subsidized by development fees, the public should experience safer, less congested roads.
- The focus of the concurrency management program should be more on other modes of transportation than roads. Drivers do like the "winding" character of the Mt. Baker highway as it is, and most would not want a concurrency management program to call for the widening of that roadway.
- You just can't build your way out of everything.

- The main focus of the concurrency program should be alternative modes of transportation and improving safety.
- The Sound Transit Sounder train is a good forward-thinking example of an alternative transportation mode that really works. This kind of transportation network can drive land use and encourage developers and businesses will want to establish and invest.
- Whatcom County needs to use these programs to encourage the type of transportation system it want to see for our society in the future that does not support the status quo. The county needs to move toward a multi-modal system with increased safety that is more environmentally friendly.
- The county cannot count on commitments that are not already made, paid for or planned for. The county needs to bring the transit agencies on board with these ideas.
- Whatcom County is interested in moving people, not just cars.
- San Luis Obispo, Eugene and Portland all experience a high percentage of daily trips on bicycles or other forms of transit. The project team and the committee should pay attention to these successful examples and see how the county can plan for a similar system.

Tie to Transportation Improvement Program:

- Regardless of the types of modes required or supported by the concurrency management program, Whatcom County will need to make improvements. Let's make sure that the planned improvements are supported by the concurrency management program and that planned improvements support the policies outlined in concurrency management program.
- The more integrated the various planning efforts are in policy the better.
- The county should look at current road improvement plans as they exist today and make sure that planned improvements support the objectives of the future concurrency management program.

Easy to Understand and Administer:

- Safety is the number one priority. If the program is simple, but it doesn't protect people, then it is not a good policy.
- Predictability for applicants, in terms of how much the fee will be and what will be expected of them to meet the concurrency standards, is important.
- If the county tries to simplify the policy too much, it may create more problems in the long run. Concurrency is complicated and therefore the policies and programs will need to be somewhat complicated to accomplish the goal of the program.
- Will the burden of proof be placed on the developer, or on the county to verify that a development is concurrent?
- The program needs to clearly show how it fits into and supports the future vision of the county.
- There may be insufficient county resources to verify whether or not a development is concurrent and/or to administer a complicated program.
- It may be possible to use student resources at Western Washington University or other resources to help with this issue.

Program Examples and Relationship To Objectives

Larry provided a handout with a table showing different types of concurrency program structures, how each type of structure can meet the objectives discussed during the meeting, and the tradeoffs between the different objectives.

The types of program structures included:

- The current Adopted Whatcom County interim program
- Street Standards
- Multimodal Index
- Travel Time with Multimodal Adjustments
- Intersection Operations

Transportation Impact Fee Program – What projects will be considered?

Larry also provided a map of currently planned improvement projects that may be eligible for the impact fee program. The discussion at the next meeting will focus on the types of projects to include in the program and the objectives and tradeoffs for the impact fee program. The committee will be asked to provide the team feedback on whether or not state highways, sections of state highways, or intersections along state highways should be included in the program, and if city roads that serve county traffic should also be included. The map does not include all transportation projects that are currently planned by the county, WSDOT or other cities. Maintenance and projects that address environmental issues (such as fish passages) were not included because they will not likely be eligible for inclusion in the impact fee program.

The map provided at this meeting was intended to get the committee members thinking about the types and locations of improvements that should be considered for the impact fee program.

Next Steps and Action Items

Kristine invited the members to the upcoming public open house on June 12th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Birch Bay Bible Open House in Birch Bay. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a public forum to discuss areas where transportation improvements are needed and the types of projects that may be implemented and supported by the community in the Birch Bay UGA. Kristine also provided copies of the press release for the open house event for members to distribute to help advertise the meeting.

Action Items:

- Kristine Edens will provide a brief summary of the meeting. The purpose of the summary will be to provide an overview of what was presented at the meeting and to document the committee's questions and comments.
- Committee members will provide any follow up ideas from the meeting via email to John Everett.
- Larry Toedtli will make sure that all communities and urban growth areas in the county are represented on the project map distributed at the meeting, and on future maps developed for the project.
- John Everett will email the handouts distributed at the meeting to all committee members after the meeting for their records.
- John Everett will schedule the next committee meeting via email in the next couple of weeks, to maximize the number of members that can attend.

Next Committee Meeting

John Everett will email the committee members to determine the date and time of the next meeting.

**Whatcom County
Transportation Concurrency Management and Impact Fee Programs
Project Steering Committee
Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: August 2, 2007, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Whatcom County Courthouse, Conference Room 514 – 311 Grand Avenue,
Bellingham, WA

Attendees: **Steering Committee members in attendance:**

- Rick Gantman, Mt. Baker School District
- Gary Gehling, East County Foothills
- Blair Murray, Trillium
- Doralee Booth, Birch Bay Steering Committee
- Tim Hostetler, WSDOT – Mt. Baker Area
- Becky Kelly, WTA

Project Team members in attendance:

- John Everett, Whatcom County
- Jon Pascal, The Transpo Group
- Patrick Lynch, The Transpo Group
- Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues

**Welcome,
Introductions
and Agenda
Review**

Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues, welcomed the group on behalf of the project team. She asked John Everett to provide some opening remarks. John thanked the committee members for their continued participation.

Kristine reviewed the meeting expectations established at the last meeting and went over the agenda. The meeting will include a review and discussion of the impact fee program objectives and a continued discussion on the concurrency program

**Transportation
Impact Fee
Program**

Jon Pascal, The Transpo Group, directed the group to the handout that was provided to each member at the meeting and via email for their review prior to the meeting. Jon provided a brief review of the transportation impact fee program and what role it plays in coordination with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), developer requirements, and the concurrency management program. The main purpose of the transportation impact fee program is to provide one alternative way to help fund necessary transportation projects identified in the County's comprehensive plan. Transportation impact fees are an optional element under the Growth Management Act (GMA), unlike the concurrency management program which is required. Transportation impact fees can be used to fund projects throughout the County and do not need to specifically relate to a specific development; although they reasonably relate to the impacts of new development. Specific projects related to the impacts from a development are typically not funded by impact fees and are usually funded through SEPA mitigation requirements.

Jon then reviewed the types of improvements that can be funded in part by the impact fees. Projects identified in the County's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) can be funded if

they are needed to serve new growth, not just resolve existing deficiencies, are necessary to meet the level of service (LOS) standards set by the County, and are not maintenance or retrofit projects. WSDOT projects can also be funded by transportation impact fees if they are important to the County's transportation system and an agreement is in place between the County and WSDOT to fund these projects. WSDOT projects can also be funded through SEPA. Local improvements can also be funded by the impact fees if an interlocal agreement is in place between the local jurisdiction and the County on funding and LOS standards.

Jon encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions during his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- Where are the impact fees spent? *The impact fees collected can be used collectively to fund the identified projects throughout the County.*
- It will be important for the committee to have input on the types of projects to include in the impact fee program.
- What portion of County assessed taxes goes towards transportation projects? The County needs to make sure it is not double billing for the same projects. An exemption to pay the impact fee should be given for development foregone on a property. It is important not to encourage development through the impact fee program. *Impact fees are not assessed until a proposal for a project is submitted to the County and approved.*
- Impact fees only pay for a portion of a project? *Yes, impact fees can be established to pay for a percentage of the identified capital improvement projects. Other funding sources are typically necessary to fund the remaining cost of those projects. Impact fees are also established based on what is achievable to receive from other funding sources to ensure that the combination of funds will cover the cost of necessary projects.*
- Whatcom County needs to be able to show where the impact fees are spent and how those projects are reasonably related to growth in the County. Otherwise, they may need to pay the fees assessed back, plus the interest earned on those fees. *The impact fee program will address this.*
- At the end of a comprehensive plan cycle, and all projects identified are completed, does that mean the County can not charge any additional impact fees. *Yes, in theory, but this situation will never arise if the County is diligent about updating the comprehensive plan and project list. They will also need to adjust the impact fees assessed based on these updates as well.*
- Can County assessed impact fees pay for state highway projects? *Yes, if an agreement is established between WSDOT and the County.*
- Can you include projects that were built prior to the establishment of the impact fee program that were built to address growth or that were completed in anticipation of a deficiency? *Yes, this is not common but it is allowed.*
- There are projects identified in Whatcom County that will undoubtedly serve local development. Can the County charge impact fees on local growth that will use these County roadways? *You can only charge for growth occurring in Whatcom County, unless you engage in an interlocal agreement with a local jurisdiction to use some of their impact fees assessed on local growth to pay for County roads, and vice versa.*
- Impact fee zones seem to only encourage growth to areas where the impact fees are set at a lower price. *Yes, that may be true. However, if the impact fees are too high, growth may need to go elsewhere where there is better infrastructure in place to accommodate that growth.*
- Can or will there be areas that do not have an impact fee assigned to them? There may be areas such as service areas that do not currently have anticipated growth, but growth is allowed there. For example, some forest zones do allow

some residential development.

- Can the County use impact fees for transit improvements such as park and rides?
- If an area is developed in a way that reduces the need for car trips, can the County credit the developer for that or reduce their impact fee?
- The committee wants to see an innovative program that looks at creative solutions to address growth. It does not want to see a concurrency management or impact fee program that only promotes road building to address growth.
- In some areas, a subsidy or waiver is given to desired uses such as low-income housing. The County could do something similar to promote other uses or improvements that it wants such as low-impact development or developments that follow the urban village idea and reduces the number of necessary trips.
- The County may want to consider an interlocal agreement with WTA that allows the County's impact fees to pay for transit improvements.
- Birch Bay is interested in the multi-modal concept. The community needs to preserve the natural areas it has and the community is interested in investing in multi-modal system now before all of these environmental amenities are lost.
- WSDOT projects can be funded by County fees if an interlocal agreement is established. This agreement does not exist now and WSDOT must currently use SEPA to fund projects in the County.
- There are very few County roads in East Whatcom County. Most of this area is served by state routes. It is important for Whatcom County to work with WSDOT to make improvements in East County.
- The team should look into innovative ways to fund roads and transit projects with impact fees or other sources of revenue that allow the County to make the appropriate types of investments in areas that would be served better by roads or by transit improvements.

Jon then provided an overview of the next steps for the transportation impact fee program. The project team will finalize a draft concept for the program, based on the feedback received today. It will also finalize a draft project list of projects to be included in the fee program. The team will then define the impact fee cost share, review other funding options, evaluate the idea of impact fee areas or zones and develop preliminary fee rates for the County.

Concurrency Program Discussion

Patrick Lynch, The Transpo Group, provided a brief review of the concurrency management program and what role it plays in coordination with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), developer requirements, and the transportation impact fee program. The main purpose of concurrency management program is to define the adequacy of transportation services and the timing of necessary improvements to ensure that the transportation infrastructure "keeps up" with development. Concurrency management programs are required under the GMA and an area is deemed concurrent if there are adequate transportation facilities to serve growth within six years. Concurrency is measured with LOS standards and developments can be prohibited if the LOS drops below the standards with the development.

Patrick then reviewed the concurrency management program objectives that were based on the discussion from the previous committee meeting, which call for a program that is:

- Legally defensible
- Support Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan land use and transportation objectives
- Reflects alternatives transportation modes
- Supports implementation of transportation system improvements in conjunction with County funding programs, SEPA, impact fees (if adopted), and frontage

- improvements
- Balances resources with overall program objectives

Patrick also reviewed the preliminary concepts for the concurrency program that

- Considers travel time and speed on major corridors
- Builds from the existing interim concurrency program which is based on roadway volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio
- Is based on traffic generated by a development, not a plan-based system that is independent of traffic due to a specific development
- Includes County arterials and collectors
- Includes state highways of regional significance but not state highways of statewide significance
- Places importance on the functional class of a roadway to set standards
- Addresses intersection operations and safety through SEPA, while allowing a way to address safety issues to determine the adequacy of a system
- Uses PM peak hour for analysis
- Incorporates measures of pedestrian and bicycle facilities needed to serve a development
- Accounts for availability of transit and transportation demand management programs (if measurable) for urban developments
- Allows for mitigation

Patrick encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions during his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- What is the definition of an arterial? *The classification of a road is determined by many factors. There is a hierarchy to the roadway network. Arterials are typically connected to collector roads which are connected to local roads. Arterials can also carry and are expected to carry a higher volume of trips per day.*
- It is important to look at how the system is functioning when determining concurrency.
- If intersection operations are only addressed through SEPA, then if an intersection is unsafe or the LOS standard is not met, can the County still allow development under the concurrency program? *The travel time measure should pick up on or include whether or not an intersection is not functioning well within the system. If the travel time measured does not meet the standard set by the County, then development would not be allowed.*
- No other agency has successfully incorporated multi-modal concepts into their concurrency management program. This is mostly due to how the GMA was originally written and it may need to be revised to follow this new emphasis on and desire for multi-modal transportation networks.
- The County needs an innovative plan.
- The challenge is to define standards for multi-modal travel and ways to measure how those forms of transportation affect the network and accommodate for growth.
- Local plans must call for main bicycle or pedestrian corridors in order for those projects to be even considered in the concurrency or impact fee programs. This is an important first step. Tightening local comprehensive plan language to call for multi-modal transportation networks is also important.
- The concurrency management program should not preclude or make implementing a multi-modal network more difficult. If anything it should shift towards encouraging multi-modal travel. The committee does recognize that there may need to be a combination of policies that call for this future vision, and the concurrency management program may not be able to do it all. However, the concurrency management program needs to encourage multi-modal travel where

possible.

**Next Steps and
Action Items**

Action Items:

- Kristine Edens will provide a brief summary of the meeting. The purpose of the summary will be to provide an overview of what was presented at the meeting and to document the committee's questions and comments.
- Committee members will provide any follow up ideas from the meeting via email to John Everett.
- John Everett will look into what portion of County assessed property taxes goes towards funding transportation improvements (not including maintenance).
- Jon Pascal and Patrick Lynch will check to see if impact fees can or ever have been used to pay for transit improvements such as park and rides.
- John Everett will email the handouts distributed at the meeting to all committee members after the meeting for their records.
- John Everett will confirm the next committee meeting date, location and time.

A tentative date of October 4th from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. was set for the next committee meeting. John Everett will confirm the next committee meeting via email in the next couple of weeks.

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**Whatcom County
Transportation Concurrency Management and Impact Fee Programs
Project Steering Committee
Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: October 18, 2007, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Whatcom County Courthouse, Conference Room 514 – 311 Grand Avenue,
Bellingham, WA

Attendees: **Steering Committee members in attendance:**

- Elizabeth Sjostrom, WSDOT
- Roland Storme, WSDOT
- Blair Murray, ThinkWell Development
- Rick Gantman, Mt. Baker School District
- Gary Gehling, East County Foothills
- Doralee Booth, Birch Bay Steering Committee

Project Team members in attendance:

- John Everett, Whatcom County
- Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group
- Jamal El Zarif, The Transpo Group
- Kristine Edens, Envirolssues

**Welcome,
Introductions
and Agenda
Review**

Kristine Edens, Envirolssues, welcomed the group on behalf of the project team. She reviewed the meeting expectations established at the first committee meeting and went over the agenda. The meeting will include a discussion on how the impact fee and concurrency programs relate to the development review process. The team will also provide an overview of the impact fee and concurrency program concepts and approaches to date.

**Transportation
Impact Fee and
Concurrency
Program –
Relationship to
Development
Review**

Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group, directed the group to the handout labeled "Whatcom County Transportation Concurrency and Impact Fee Programs: Relationship to Development Review Elements." He reminded the group that there are four development review elements, including the SEPA review process, site specific development permit requirements, concurrency review, and transportation impact fees. Larry provided an overview of how a development would be reviewed for concurrency within the proposed program and how traffic impact fees would be assessed if approved. He also noted that the handout explained how various transportation elements are covered if they are not directly reviewed in the concurrency or impact fee processes.

Larry encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions during his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- Will the concurrency review process be used for every proposed development?
Yes, if the concurrency test is triggered, the project will be reviewed for concurrency and assessed impact fees if applicable. The county will determine what will trigger the concurrency test. It may be the number of trips expected to be generated by the development or another measure.

**Transportation
Impact Fee
Program
Concept**

Jamal El Zarif, The Transpo Group, provided a brief review of the transportation impact fee program, what transportation projects would or could be included, and how the fees would be calculated for each development. He directed the group to reference the handout labeled "Whatcom County Transportation Impact Fee Program Concept: Overview of Approach and Discussion Items."

Eligible projects may include intersection improvements, new road extensions, road upgrades, shoulder improvements and some non-motorized enhancements such as bike lanes. It is essential that the improvement projects in the impact fee program clearly serve the transportation needs associated with future growth. Potential projects that may be able to be included in the impact fee program include completed projects or projects under construction, ferry dock improvements and new roadways in the city urban growth areas (UGAs), as long as they are needed to serve growth. Non-eligible projects include project level improvements completed by developers, local (non-system) road improvements, maintenance, or improvement projects that only resolve existing deficiencies.

The total cost of improvement projects included in the transportation impact fee program will be paid for by the impact fees in combination with other agency funds, grants, taxes, county road funds, legislative earmarks and other funding sources. The transportation impact fees will not and cannot entirely cover the cost of the projects.

A development will only be charged impact fees if they will create an increase in trips and the origin or the destination of the trip is within unincorporated Whatcom County. Jamal showed the committee a map of a concept for transportation impact fee districts and explained how a development within each district would be assessed their impact fees and what projects their fees would help fund. Larry noted that alternative district concepts were being defined with County staff. These will be tested to ensure that the program meets the GMA requirements. The fee for a district would cover the proportional impacts of improvement projects within all of the districts, not just for improvements in its district.

Larry and Jamal encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions during his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- Will the project list change when significant work is done to update a comprehensive or subarea plan? *Yes, the list can be (and probably should be) updated when new projects are added. For a project to be funded by the impact fees or included in the impact fee program it must be a part of the capital facilities plan of the county comprehensive plan.*
- Birch Bay is updating their subarea plan now and therefore the projects included in the transportation impact fee program project list will be current. What about the East County? If they have not updated their subarea plan yet, will the transportation impact fee program be behind in terms of funding projects needed out in East County? *The impact fee program will only be up to date based on the status of subarea plans and addition of improvements to the capital facilities plan and to the impact fee program.*
- As new projects are added, are they behind the existing projects on the list in terms of priority? *The county's priority system is not directly tied to the impact fee program, although the ability to be funded through the impact fee program and the additional monies may allow projects to improve in priority.*
- Will the county give the East County foothills the same opportunity as Birch Bay to update their subarea plan?

- Will non-motorized projects identified in the Birch Bay subarea plan be funded by the transportation impact fees? *Yes. If the non-motorized projects are included in the Birch Bay plan, a portion of their costs may be eligible for funding through impact fees based on their proportional need to serve growth versus resolving existing deficiencies. However, if the project is included in the Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) plan, it will not be able to be funded by the transportation impact fee program, without some type of interlocal agreement. Capital facilities that serve growth can be funded. Services can not be funded. Larry noted that park-and-ride facilities may be able to be included if they were in Whatcom County's capital facility plan. (NOTE- after discussing this with the team's subconsultant for legal review, the state legislation specifically allows for impact fees for roads and street, and does not include transportation facilities such as park and ride lots. We apologize for that misunderstanding.)*
- It is essential to be able to show how projects are related to growth and that they are eligible under the transportation impact fee, and the Growth Management Act, to be funded by this program.
- We cannot charge transportation impact fees for improvement projects that will not be built within the impact fee planning horizon.
- In the East County foothills, most of the major routes and needed projects are on state routes. Will projects on these routes be included? *The state projects are not currently proposed for the county's impact fee program. Development traffic impacts to state highways would be covered as part of the SEPA review process.*
- The county should charge any development that contributes to the traffic on a certain facility. *Yes, a development will be charged for fees based on the projects identified in their district and the impacts to impact fee eligible improvements in other districts.*
- The project list at first glance does not have projects that benefit East County. *The project team is conducting a thorough assessment of all current improvements in the county's capital facilities plan – all projects in East County are being reviewed. As noted above, many of these are on state highways which are currently not proposed for inclusion in the county's impact fee program. As additional growth related improvements are defined and incorporated into the county's capital facilities plan, they can be added to the impact fee program. We are not allowed to simply define new projects and add them to the program at this time – they must be added to the capital facilities plan.*
- I do support taking any grant funding out of the entire transportation impact fee program. This will reduce fees for everyone, not just the district that received the grant.
- What model is being used? *The model from the Whatcom Council of Governments.*
- Are peak hour trips being used? *Yes, PM peak hour trips are being used as the basis for the impact fee program. The trip rates would be adjusted for trip making characteristics related to the land use.*
- What about seasonal businesses? How is the traffic they generate being accounted for? *This is difficult to do. The model is based on typical weekday trip generation and not the peak season (or the off-peak seasons). We do not want to discourage the economic development in the East County foothills with the impact fee program. Weekend trips are currently not accounted for because we are using the PM peak hour weekday trips.*
- If light industrial uses or even a grocery store is located out in East County, this may actually reduce trips from East County to the urban areas to the west. Is trip length accounted for as well as trip ends? *Yes, an adjustment for trip length is being proposed to account for these types of development. The model also accounts for the affect of "intercepting" travel with new land uses.*

- Overall I am impressed with the structure of the program and the multi-modal aspects of it. However, will this system be easy to amend? Will the project list, and therefore the impact fee structure need to be updated on a regular basis for the program to help fund the necessary projects? How can we make the impact fees predictable for developers? *The fee program can be updated as the Comprehensive Plan or subarea plans are completed or if improvement costs change significantly.*
- Will school districts be assessed fees? *There are some options for exemptions under the Growth Management Act and school districts are one of them. Other possible exemptions are also allowed, to advance a legitimate public purpose, such as affordable housing. The county will need to decide that as part of the ordinance and implementation program.*
- The development on the Semiahmoo spit will not be charged transportation impact fees? *Developments within the City of Blaine would not be charged impact fees unless an interlocal agreement is in place. Developments in unincorporated Whatcom County would be charged, unless they are being annexed. Policies would be suggested to help ensure that those impacts are adequately mitigated (for example, annexation areas will pay the fee as a condition of County agreements for the annexation). SEPA also will be used to help mitigate traffic impacts.*
- Will latecomer fees be incorporated into the program? *Existing projects can be a part of the project list if they were completed to serve future growth.*
- Ideally we would have interlocal agreements between all of the cities and the county. *Yes, then you could fund local and state project with the county's fees, but it would make the program more difficult to administer.*

**Concurrency
Program
Concept**

Larry Toedtli then provided an overview of the transportation concurrency program process and components. He directed the group to reference the handout labeled "Whatcom County Transportation Concurrency Program Concept: Overview of Process and Discussion Items."

Larry explained that travel speeds could be used as a first level concurrency evaluation in order to determine whether travel to/from a district was being adequately served. This would be a county conducted study, on an annual basis. If a district's travel speed met the standard, then the development would move to the second part of the concurrency evaluation based on its impact to the volume-to-capacity ratio. If the travel speed standard was not met, then all developments within that district would be denied, until either improvements were defined and funded that would resolve the deficiency or the standards were changed. No developer mitigation would be allowed to resolve the travel speed condition because it is more of a system wide issue. This first part of the concurrency evaluation also could be conducted by the county without being part of the concurrency program. This would provide the Executive, Council, staff, and public a high-level indicator of how the transportation system was operating and its potential ability to accommodate more growth traffic.

If the district in which the development is located passed the travel speed standard, it would be evaluated for its direct impacts on roadway volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios. If all impacted roadway segments met the v/c standards, it would be deemed concurrent. If the development triggered a concurrency issue for the volume-to-capacity ratio, a developer could propose mitigation for those impacts to meet concurrency. If acceptable mitigation were not defined, the development would not be granted concurrency.

If the development met both parts of the concurrency evaluation, it would continue with its SEPA review to evaluate other considerations such as safety and intersection operations.

Larry encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions during his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- Safety is not a factor for the concurrency program? *Correct, only speed and impacts on roadway volume-to-capacity ratios are used to decide if a development is concurrent. It would be difficult to maintain an all-encompassing database on safety issues to be applied consistent as a part of the concurrency review. Safety would be incorporated into the SEPA review, as it currently is.*
- What about other types of projects such as ski resorts, tribal housing initiatives, and boarder crossing changes that may impact county roadways. How are these types of entities accounted for? *Only projects that require a county permit are subject to the county's concurrency management requirements. If a development is on tribal lands and does not require a county permit, it would not be evaluated as part of this program. In addition, if a development did not generate any new trips (one use is replaced by a new use that generates the same number or fewer trips) it would pass concurrency.*
- It makes sense to allow a project to mitigate for their traffic impacts if safety is not compromised.
- If you use travel time as the concurrency measurement, you cannot account for transportation projects that will be implemented in the next six years. *The county will measure travel time based on the existing conditions. Forecasted conditions will need to take into account the transportation improvements that will be in place to accurately evaluate concurrency for a development.*
- Will the county set the level of service standards on state facilities? *No, the WSDOT in conjunction with WCOG sets LOS standards on state highways of regional significance. WSDOT sets LOS standards for Highways of Statewide significance (HSS), which are not covered by concurrency.*

**Next Steps and
Action Items**

Action Items:

- John Everett and Larry Toedtli will contact the Elizabeth Sjostrom and Roland Storme from WSDOT to brief them on the committee process to date.
- Kristine Edens will provide a brief summary of the meeting. The purpose of the summary will be to provide an overview of what was presented at the meeting and to document the committee's questions and comments.
- Committee members will provide any follow up ideas from the meeting via email to John Everett.
- John Everett will confirm the next committee meeting date, location and time. The next meeting will tentatively be in the first couple of weeks of December.

**Whatcom County
Transportation Concurrency Management and Impact Fee Programs
Project Steering Committee
Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: December 6, 2007, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Whatcom County Courthouse, Conference Room 514 – 311 Grand Avenue,
Bellingham, WA

Attendees: **Steering Committee members in attendance:**

- Elizabeth Sjoström, WSDOT
- Roland Storme, WSDOT
- Blair Murray, ThinkWell Development
- Rick Gantman, Mt. Baker School District
- Gary Gehling, East County Foothills
- Doralee Booth, Birch Bay Steering Committee

Project Team members in attendance:

- John Everett, Whatcom County
- Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group
- Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues

**Welcome,
Introductions
and Agenda
Review**

Kristine Edens, EnviroIssues, welcomed the group on behalf of the project team. She reviewed the meeting expectations established at the first committee meeting and went over the agenda. The meeting will include a discussion on the transportation impact fee and concurrency program preliminary concepts. The team will also provide an overview of the next steps for the project. This meeting was to be the final official meeting of the committee. However, the County plans to continue to involve the committee members as the team drafts the final products and begins the review and adoption process with the Planning Commission and County Council.

**Transportation
Impact Fee
Program
Preliminary
Results**

Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group, directed the group to the handout labeled "Whatcom County Impact Fee Program: Review of Preliminary Results and Implementation Options." He provided a recap of the committee's prior discussions on impact fees. Impact fees are an optional piece of the development review process, they cover "system" improvements needed to support growth, and they can not be used to fund existing deficiencies. He also gave an overview of the program objectives that the committee has supported as well as the methodology the team used to develop the preliminary program.

Three impact fee program scenarios were examined:

- Scenario A: Includes projects in the adopted County Plan
- Scenario B: Includes projects in the adopted County Plan as well as preliminary improvement projects for the Birch Bay Subarea
- Scenario C: Includes projects in Scenario B as well as State highway improvements to Blaine Road and Grandview Road

The team evaluated three service area concepts with the help of County staff:

- Two Travel Shed Concepts, which included areas with similar travel patterns
- A Pie Wedge concept, which looked at "slices" that radiate out from Bellingham as the center.

Larry then presented an example traffic impact fee structure for Whatcom County, in comparison to other areas in Washington State, based on Scenario B with the "Pie" concept. He noted that the County could collect up to \$44 million through impact fees, or 29% of the impact fee eligible costs for the necessary capital road improvements.

The preliminary program recommends that State projects should be included in the impact fee program only through an interlocal agreement or memorandum of understanding between the County and the State to assure that the impact fees collected would be combined with other funds to fully implement the identified projects. Larry also noted the exemptions that could be considered for the program, including low-income housing, public and/or private schools, and parks.

The next steps for the transportation impact fee program will be to prepare a draft ordinance, prepare a draft fee schedule by service area, document the methodology and results of the analysis, and begin the review process with the County.

Larry encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions after his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- Could the other trip end that ends within city limits be addressed by an interlocal agreement between the County and that City? *Yes.*
- What if an interlocal does not exist? Would the developer pay the city's impact fee for that trip end? The City could request mitigation through SEPA, but wouldn't just charge their impact fee. *The agency impact fee would only be charged per an interlocal agreement that identified which improvement projects were covered.*
- The Birch Bay and East County impact fees are similar. Why is this? *Growth traffic in the East County area benefit from the limited improvements in the East County and from improvements in other areas to the west. The East County share of these project costs is divided by the estimated number of growth trips to obtain the fee. If there were higher levels of growth in the East County and the list of projects did not change, then the fees would decrease. The Birch Bay area has many more projects and associated costs, but more growth trips to share in the higher costs. The results are simply a function of the forecasts and identified transportation needs (which are more detailed in Birch Bay subarea).*
- If the fees are so close for each district, why doesn't the County adopt one standard fee? *Separating the County into districts makes the fees more defensible and the nexus between the impact fees charged and the projects, or benefits for the fees, is clearer. As the County updates subarea plans the fee schedules may have more of a difference. The team will present all fee structure options to the County Council so they can make an informed decision when adopting the final impact fee program.*
- Would the impact fees change if one of the trip ends were in the city? *No. The applicant would pay the County's fee for the trip end in the County.*
- How often would the County need to reevaluate the model used to establish the impact fee schedule? *The model that was used is based on existing conditions in 2007 and projections into the future. A major reevaluation of the model would only be necessary when a major change in land use happens or major transportation improvements are added or subtracted. The land use and transportation projects (and their costs) are the major parameters in the fee program.*
- Is the County only allowed to use the impact fees collected on County projects? *My concern is that the impact fees collected in East County are only used to*

improve County roads that are not used as much as the State roads. The County needs to make sure that the impact fees go to the projects that will benefit the local community the most. *The impact fees can only be used to help fund the identified growth-related projects in the County's capital facilities plan that are included in the fee program. The County can include State projects in their capital facilities plan and the fee program, but this should be through interlocal agreement.*

- Can the State use SEPA to charge a developer or request mitigation for their impact to State roads? *Yes, the State can request that the County deny an application if there has been no mitigation for impacts to State roads. SEPA mitigation must be used to offset the direct impacts of a development on operations, safety, or capacity.*
- Impact fees seem predictable and clear. SEPA is not as predictable and clear. The State is trying to figure out how to best express its needs – either by continuing to use the SEPA process, by entering into interlocal agreements, or through another means. The State must spend any funds that have been earmarked for specific projects within 5 years, or they need to give it back.
- The corner of Kendall and Sumas does need to be improved. Safety is more of an issue that needs to be addressed at this location than congestion. *Impact fees could not be used to resolve an existing safety issue.*
- The public would understand an impact fee exemption for public schools. New schools near where the need (population) is will result in fewer trips. Also, impact fees are based on peak hour trips and trips to and from school are generally not during the peak hours.

**Concurrency
Program
Concept**

Larry Toedtli, The Transpo Group, directed the group to the handout labeled "Whatcom County Transportation Concurrency Program: Review and Refinement of Approach." He provided a recap of the committee's prior discussions on concurrency. Concurrency is a mandatory element under the Growth Management Act and requires the County to deny a development application that does not meet the County's concurrency requirements for adequacy of transportation facilities.

Larry referred to a handout that showed a flowchart of the application process as it moved through the concurrency evaluation process. A development must generate more than a minimum number of trips (set by the County) in order to trigger a concurrency evaluation. A number of factors are taken into account to determine whether or not the roadways will be sufficient to support the additional development, including travel speed, trip distribution and assignment and volume to capacity ratios.

He also gave an overview of the program objectives that the committee has supported as well as the two-tier program concept which uses travel speed to measure the overall adequacy of the transportation system serving a district (or subarea) of the County. The second tier evaluates the adequacy of roadway segments directly impacted by a development to assure that they meet County standards. Larry also presented a series of maps that showed the roadways that could be used to measure travel speed, the road segments and potential standards. He also showed which road segments that could have potential concurrency deficiencies using the volume to capacity measurement in 2027, based on the raw WCOG model results.

The next steps for the transportation concurrency program will be to select the program components, collect and analyze travel speed data if it is included as a component, update the interim ordinance, revise the administrative guidelines, document the methodology and results of the analysis, and begin the review process with the County.

Larry encouraged the committee to offer their comments and questions after his presentation (*responses shown in italics*):

- Did your model take into account the expected increase truck traffic to and from Vancouver's Port? *The WCOG model does not include a specific truck mode. Travel demands are based on households and employment levels and trips to/from Canada are estimated separately.*
- The East Foothills Subarea Plan calls for a commercial overlay zone. The development of commercial in East County may reduce trips to and from Bellingham. *That is true and their concurrency evaluation of road segments would focus on the more immediate area near their site, instead of all the way to major employment locations.*
- Travel speed seems like a more accurate measure than then volume to capacity ratio measure. *Speeds can also be hard to measure and they can not truly be estimated or measured until the improvements are complete. Volume to capacity is also a complicated measure, and it can be difficult to explain to the public, because it is based on layers of model assumptions. Both measures can be argued to have flaws and could be challenged. The implementation process needs to account for those types of potential issues.*
- It seems like travel speeds can be challenged more. It would be harder to argue with volume to capacity ratios. *Both measures, once established by the model or the travel speed measurements, would be adopted by the County Council and set in policy, making them difficult to challenge once in place.*
- The public thinks in travel time, not in volume to capacity ratios. Using travel speeds is a more "public friendly" way to set the standard.
- Regardless of the measurement the County ends up using, we need to keep it away from politics. The County should be careful of including any wiggle room in the policy, resulting in a more effective concurrency policy.
- From the developer's perspective, opportunities for mitigation are preferred wherever possible.
- Incentive based policies should also be added in where there are opportunities to do this. It seems like policies only create an incentive to develop and grow now, and not to wait. Our policies should encourage smart, phased growth.

Next Steps and Action Items

Kristine invited the members to the upcoming public open house on December 11th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Birch Bay Bible Open House in Birch Bay. The purpose of the meeting is to present the preliminary transportation improvement projects that may be included in the Birch Bay Subarea Plan. Kristine also provided copies of the press release for the open house event for members to distribute to help advertise the meeting.

A few of the committee members noted that they would like to stay involved in the concurrency and impact fee program process and would even be interested in additional meetings if the County would support that idea.

Action Items:

- John Everett and Larry Toedtli will continue to keep the steering committee members involved and informed during the next steps of the project.
- Kristine Edens will provide a brief summary of the meeting. The purpose of the summary will be to provide an overview of what was presented at the meeting and to document the committee's questions and comments.
- Committee members will provide any follow up ideas from the meeting via email

to John Everett.

- John Everett will consider the need and desire for future steering committee meetings.

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