



**BUREAU
VERITAS**

Berryman & Henigar

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: July 15, 2005
To: Fidalgo Island Subarea Plan CAC and TAC
From: Chanda Emery, Berryman & Henigar
Re: CAC/TAC meeting 7/14/05

Attendance:

CAC: Ed Goodman, Tom Glade, Mike Trafton, Chuck Manning, Tom Stowe, Bill Turner, Terry McNeil, Bill Dinsmoor

TAC: Ross Barnes, David Pearson, Tony Kubena, Konrad Kurp, Jim Mecca

Consultants: Roger Wagoner, Chanda Emery

County: Jeroldine Hallberg

Other: Carol Ehlers, Chuck Trafton, Mike Goodman, Mary Goodman

Upcoming meetings and Updates

Ed began the meeting by welcoming the participants that attended this meeting and to introduce the purpose of this meeting. This is a regular CAC/TAC meeting. The next scheduled meeting will be held on July 28th. At this meeting, there will be a discussion of the lot certification and how it will affect Fidalgo Island, and we will have a Health Department representative come to talk about what is going on in the Yokeko/Dewey Beach/Quiet Cove area.

In going over the revised Plan outline, questions were raised about transportation. Roger said that the element will summarize existing facility information, policies, and projects in the County's Transportation Systems Plan (TSP) and the state DOT's SR 20 project plans. We are looking for the Committee's input on transportation and traffic issues or concerns that need to be highlighted in the Plan. The County TSP is on the website (www.skagitcounty.net) in the Public Works page. This also includes the "non-motorized" plan that was recently adopted. A question was raised regarding the connection of the County's trail systems and those of Anacortes. Roger said that we will contact the County Parks Department and Public Works to find out more about this.

Roger gave an overview of the meeting topic – the draft Land Use Element and suggested that the group skim over the document to look at the overall organization and content, but move to the table with the potential land use recommendations. He also stated that it would be best to go over the key sections together as a group and then at the end he requested that members provide their individual comments on the draft element. Comments and suggestions could be sent to Roger or Aubin via email, fax, or letter – whichever is most convenient.

Draft Land Use Element

The first topic of discussion was about how population forecasts were made and how do those numbers apply to Fidalgo Island. Specifically, the question was about the figures on pages 6 and 7 of the draft element: On page 6, under the paragraph heading titled Potential for Future Development, the text that reads “Based on this number and the current household size on Fidalgo Island of 2.48 people, it was projected that this would result in approximately 375 new housing units over the next 20 years.” and on page 7 “Currently, about 28 new units are being added every year, with approximately 42 new permits being issued on Fidalgo Island every year. Consequently, the projected 375 new homes could be built out before 2025 at the recent rate of development.” There was some concern that these two paragraphs were not very clear and hard to understand. Roger explained that we prorated the county growth down to fit Fidalgo Island, but that it is impossible to come up with an exact number because the data from the Office of Financial Management (OFM) is not available for the local level – for counties and cities. What we have based our work on is primarily the 2000 Census. The analysis was included in the “Profile” that was given to the group last year when we started the planning. It was also noted in the discussion that in general, most forecasts tend to be more accurate over a longer period of time than for a few years. Roger also explained that the reason that we did the estimate was to see if the Island development capacity is sufficient to accommodate the anticipated growth.

Other comments were that growth management is forcing real estate prices to be very high and whether Fidalgo should be growing proportionately more than other rural areas of the County. It was stated that at the current rate of development Fidalgo is getting close to build-out and that Anacortes does not want to annex any more of Fidalgo. There were additional concerns about growth rates, the location of new development, and lot sizes.

One of the problems with trying to estimate capacity and development potential is the legal differences between “parcels” and “lots”. Roger said that the consultants would prepare some additional analysis based on assumptions that the group can consider.

The Draft Land Use Element mentions the year 1965 as a milestone for how the County regulates land use. This apparently was a legislative decision. 1965 was when the first comprehensive plan was adopted. Roger said that we can’t change that date since it is already in county legislation but that we would look into it.

There was further discussion about what “rural” means, and how development should be regulated to retain that feel.

Roger explained that the vision statement expresses the community opinion and passed out some handouts that explained what the CaRD subdivision concept is intended to do. “CaRD” is a Skagit County term but he prefers the word “cluster” which is a division of land that creates smaller parcels for houses and the rest of the original parcel is in open space to protect wildlife or critical areas. Now, in Skagit County, there are different types of CaRDs and what you typically do not see is the type of analysis that the developer goes through during the development process, for example, topography, critical areas, and other features on the site.

The group discussed clustering and CaRDs with a considerable amount of varying opinions. Some of the concerns raised include the maintenance of the common open spaces, the spacing between houses, the feeling that this was a type of very expensive development that might be having a negative impact on older residents’ finances. On the other hand, property rights are important and owners should have the ability to develop their land.

Ed conducted a straw vote to test support for or opposition to CaRDs for discussion purposes only. Roger said that we should be thinking about the places on the island where you want them and how to tailor them to fit Fidalgo Island. The attendees were evenly split.

Policy Consideration Ideas

Roger suggested that we move on to look at page 9 of the draft Land Use Element. He explained the table at the bottom of the page where the left-hand column is the current adopted policy language from the county's comprehensive plan. The second column is our (consultant) comments and the last column is our draft ideas for policy change considerations. He asked that the group look at each of these items and make suggestions on which ones you think we need to work on. Roger said that we can also come up with some bullet items or ideas on how CaRDs can better fit Fidalgo. Lastly, Roger stated that we have a section on rural design standards which basically says what other communities have done. On page 16 of the draft Land Use Element, the work is mostly from Walla Walla and Bainbridge Island. From his observations, the whole clustering concept is happening elsewhere across the state.

This led to a discussion of the value of density bonuses. Skagit County has a limited approach, but most jurisdictions do not. Roger said that we would prepare some comparative information from some similar jurisdictions, including Bainbridge Island and San Juan County.

Jeroldine asked Roger to go over the schedule for the next few months. He said that we will probably have a couple meetings each month in September and October.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 28th at 6:00 pm at the Fidalgo Elementary School. Please read the CaRD handout and draft Land Use Element that was passed around tonight, we will be editing this draft with your individual comments in the next few days and will have a cleaner version available shortly.