

**Meeting Notes**  
**Envision Skagit Citizen Committee**  
**Dec 1, 2010 – 8:30 am – 3:30 pm**  
**Skagit County Administration Bldg**

**Attendees:**

Kerri Cook  
Cory Ertel  
Peggy Flynn  
Jim Meyer  
Kim Mower  
Grace Popoff

Gustavo Ramos, Jr.  
Tim Rosenhan  
Nate Youngquist  
Doris Robbins

**Staff:**

Kirk Johnson, Skagit Co. PM

Lisa Dally Wilson, Facilitator  
Josh Greenberg, Skagit Co. GIS

**Presenters:**

John Bolte, OSU

**Meeting Handouts:**

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Summary Meeting Minutes from November 4 CC Meeting (emailed)
3. Table 1: Highlights, Initial Scenarios for 2060 (from Appendix A, CC orientation document)
4. General Outline for Afternoon Discussion
5. Draft Powerpoint Presentation slides summarizing Initial Envision Results
6. Map of restoration areas as specified in the Chinook Recovery plan and included in Envision model

**Expected Outcomes:**

- See and understand the use of Envision in this project and how the model distributes population based on underlying assumptions
- Gain an understanding of the primary decision rules that most influence the modeled scenarios
- Discuss the project, what you have seen thus far, what you are thinking, what is important to consider.
- Group understanding of the primary issues affecting future land use and the recommendations and decisions that the Committee will be making over the next 6 months.
- Discuss public outreach approach, and solicit volunteers for next steps.

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting began shortly after 8:30 am. Committee members, project staff, John Bolte (OSU) and other meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**Logistics**

- **November 4th meeting notes:** One correction on the date, once correction is made the November 4<sup>th</sup> summary meeting minutes will be considered final and approved by Committee.

- **Citizen Committee Timesheets. Thank you!**
- **Request for Citizen Committee Meeting calendar revisions** – A revised file and calendar will be emailed with the next set of meeting notes.
- **Request for information on Anacortes Water Forum** – Lisa will forward information from a group called “Defending Water for Life” regarding their Forum entitled “Focus on the Skagit River Watershed” to be held in January of 2011 in Anacortes. One issue that this group is addressing is a bottled water plant.
- **Request for instructions to access ftp site** – Lisa will re-send these to the Citizen Committee. They are also in your notebooks that were distributed at the first meeting.
- **Request for list of Committee members and contact information** – Lisa will re-send the Citizen Committee Roster by email.
- **Letter from Citizen Committee to mayors re. January 6th meeting** – letter to include 4 key questions and request to collaborate on the project. Lisa to send draft questions to CC for review.
- **Long term historical development trends** – Lisa will send out website link to one source of these data.

#### **Important Definitions:**

There has been some confusion with the term natural resource as applied in this project. For purposes of the Envision Skagit 2060 project and the sake of clarity, the term Natural Resource Lands (or NRL) or Natural Resource production will refer to land that is used for agriculture, timber or mineral production. Lands that are considered an environmental resource will be referred to as “critical areas” or environmentally sensitive areas, or environmental lands, but will not be referred to as a natural resource, or natural resource lands.

#### **Envision Skagit – Model Approach and Outputs**

Presentation by John Bolte (Oregon State University) on the Envision Model. John provided an overview of the model and the approach used to apply the model to the Skagit Watershed. He then worked through model outputs while fielding questions from Citizen Committee members. General points include: “all models are wrong, some models are useful”, each scenario captures a suite of assumptions. Using the model as a tool helps look at possible cause/effect relationships for differing policy decisions into the future. It should be viewed as a helpful tool, but not a predictive device. It should be stressed that the results presented today are an overview, and that future sessions will provide the opportunity to get into more detail. The following comments, questions or general points were made during the presentation:

- Check “Milltown” label for rural village. Is this the right name?
- Need some upriver screen shots, include Concrete UGA plan trend buildout

- Need to contrast channel migration zone and floodplain on a graphic that also shows UGAs. Do this for each scenario
- Highlight differences in UGA expansion areas between scenarios ON ONE MAP
- Check zoning in Sedro Woolley
- Fix square area of infill around Sedro Woolley – also significant high density zoning in central city area – is this correct/realistic
- UGAs – now 34,000 acres. Check this.
- Show City boundaries and UGA boundaries by Scenario
- Comment about acreage of farmland. Envision and County GIS show 85,000 acres in Ag-NRL, Peggy and Josh mentioned that farmers would say 90,000 – 100,000. Josh said that previous GIS analysis show 85,000 acres in Ag-NRL and 60,000 actually in farm use.
- Check acres of AG-NRL (zoning) vs. acres of land in Agricultural use
- Remove commercial on Hwy 9 in development scenario (see Nov 30<sup>th</sup> notes for details)
- Remove Hwy 9 area from Ecosystem Scenario
- Why is Burlington taking SO MUCH population growth
- NEED a summary of UGA populations by scenario
- John Bolte mentioned that population distribution is based on capacities and preferences. May need more discussion and explanation on preferences.
- Peggy mentioned that she thought Anacortes buildout is 22,000 – 23,000 (pop.), not 30,000 – 35,000.
- Impervious surface – why is impervious surface higher under Ag/Forestry than plan trend
- Check Capacity GRAPHICS - what is going on
- Check why Fisher Carpenter sub basins doesn't expire until 2019/2020 when the reservation is currently depleted (I think what might be happening is that you are using the full reservation for permit-exempt wells at time 0 (2010), when actually, at time 0, that reservation (established in 2005ish?) has been substantially depleted).
- Large amount of new development potential around Lake Cavanaugh – check this.
- Dots on Mtn tops. Check this.
- Make a map showing base map information along with well limitations (show different sub-basins with well limitations and label with name). Also show Guemes Island as a limited basin (label as sole source aquifer).
- Continued questions about what is max buildout in the rural areas? Is this something you could do for plan trend (just run Envision out until you use every developable rural lot??). And report back a number of lots along with a year that full buildout occurs?

### **Citizen Committee Discussion**

The Citizen Committee began the discussion by answering the following questions: what are you thinking, what has made an impression on you over the last 3 months, what seems important, do you see a vision emerging, what questions would you like to have answered in order to develop more formal recommendations. A discussion guide was distributed to facilitate more focused discussion after the general questions were addressed. The following issues were raised:

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- Cities are a very important component of the project. We need to hear from the Cities. This is an important conversation and CC needs to hear about decision points, flash points. We would like to collaborate with the cities. Strive for collaboration between Citizen Committee, Cities and other entities. At some point in time, this might need to be a larger planning entity.
- Need to talk specifically with the cities about densities. What do they foresee and why?
- Examples of density – we need this for outreach, for discussions with the cities. What do the densities being proposed look like? (Port Coquitlam, Vancouver Metro Areas, other examples)
- Affordable housing, county-wide. Committee met for the first time yesterday.
- Responsibility of the CC is to develop a perspective and say what we think is best. It is up to electeds to work with those recommendations. We are playing an advisory role and providing an initial concept.
- Concerns about property rights – does urban density require a change in rural zoning.
- We should be doing outreach to rural areas that could be affected by rural villages NOW. County residents need information to make good decisions.
- Alger – expanded rural village – who will pay, who will plan, where does \$ come for infrastructure
- Bayview – concerns with drainage and drainage infrastructure
- Should give thought to development opportunities that could be associated with recommendations
- Any changes will require the political will of electeds - which requires buy-in from the people. Zoning code, incentives, policies, concepts – all can nudge the ship a bit in new direction. Will require a compelling story to have the population agree with new planning. BEST to provide accurate depiction of trends and directions rather than detailed numbers. Getting too tied up in numbers will carry the project down.
- With any change there will be pushback. Project needs positive images and a compelling story.
- Comparison between Alger and Ballard (20 years ago in Seattle). Resistance – people weren't excited, but it happened.
- This will be a challenge. Everyone likes it the way it is. Any solution will require a degree of densification. Need positive images. Goal is to convince electeds (community paradigm shift to more dense urban areas).
- Important to retain a 50 year vision perspective. Looking at the county as a whole. How do we incentivize development while keeping in mind the 50 yr vision. Think BIG.
- Think Big. Example given of Jim Ellis (Seattle, founder Metro, Mtns to Sound Greenway, etc.). Lesson learned: in looking 50 years out, creative, out of the box thinking and BIG vs. SMALL have been opportunities.
- Consider impediments as an opportunity. Higher density is becoming the trend across the nation. Greater density can be an opportunity.
- Challenges – where do people work? Employment opportunities in the county, commercial and industrial lands? Where, what, how
- City incentives for businesses. Provide them and they will come.
- Need diverse housing options. Multi-cultural-socioeconomic communities. . What do we assume, same levels of socioeconomic structure/diversity in the future?

- Jobs/Economic Development – hard to engineer: What level of economic density is feasible? (Note, ECO NW study may start to answer these questions). Transportation network will be involved.
- Rural villages and urban villages. Both are needed. Not sure what the percent should be. Need creative infill of urban areas, creative redevelopment, encourage incentives for infill.
- Need positive images of infill, redevelopment. Examples of it done well vs. poorly. Examples: Fairhaven, Seattle – Ballard revitalization, Northgate Mall area. VISUALS!!
- NOTE: Citizen Committee generally agrees with the concepts of Vibrant cities, need for creative ways of infill, increase economic base and local jobs as part of redevelopment.
- How will we provide services in rural villages. Who provides services (County, existing towns??) Is it a feasible concept? ECO NW – who would pay for expanded Rural villages. Alger, bench by Lyman, Conway, other?
- Explore benefits of rural villages. On transportation corridors, out of floodplain, Ag land. Concerns that it might be sprawl. Concern about extending or creating infrastructure. Bayview residential may be incompatible with airport/industrial
- Eastern areas used to have more jobs. Long drive. If you expand rural areas to the east, what will be the draw?

**What do you need to Know:**

- Who provides services/infrastructure for rural villages? Who pays for growth, rural village development, etc.
- Need information about revenue sharing (Mt Vernon – internal commercial/residential imbalances). Need examples from around the country. Ask ECO NW.
- How does our tax system (property taxes at various levels, sales taxes at various levels, B&O taxes) influence a city's decisions about what sorts of development to permit and where to put various projects?
- Are there changes to our tax system or revenue sharing options that would influence development decisions in a good way or a bad way?
- How do you balance the desire to be business friendly (for the benefits of jobs and tax revenue) with concerns about protecting ag lands, open space, and the environment?
- Do we need to understand impact fees more? Is this built into our curriculum.
- What does urban density look like at what level?
- Planning 101 – definition of terms, concepts
- Ecosystem services, habitat restoration – where can we have mixed use (Eco and Ag) and where shouldn't we. If we can't combine, where can we expand Ag lands to achieve no net loss of Ag?
- Link cause and effect of rural expansion on the environment (Ecosystem scenario thinking). Would like to understand this more.
- Understand better what redevelopment and community development planning is currently going on.
- How does the county (and cities) plan to slow conversion of agriculture to residential.
- What are viable alternative transportation systems? Are there any Skagit specific long range transportation plans that we should know of? Rail corridor.
- Buildout analysis for rural lots. How many?
- What would it take to make a publically available trail system along the current dike system? Identify hurdles.

### **Public Outreach**

The Citizen Committee discussed next steps for public outreach and small, community meetings in their respective communities. First steps are to schedule a date and find a venue.

Meetings should be scheduled in late January or February 2011. Additional information regarding content and structure will be forthcoming. The following groups will work together:

**Mt Vernon, Burlington** (Possibly Sedro Woolley)– **Gus and Ryan**. This will likely be a larger public meeting and can be considered the public meeting that is included in our current schedule on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Gus and Ryan, can you two confirm that the date works for you, and then Skagit County will work to find an appropriate venue. [Note, Nicole Pomerleau mentioned that she would still like to help with public outreach, she lives in Sedro Woolley.]

**Upper Valley** – **Jim, Kim and Grace**

**Anacortes** – **Peggy and Corey**

**Bayview, Edison and Alger** – **Doris, Tim and Kerri**

**Delta and La Conner** – **Nate and Peggy** with possible assistance from **Kim and Ryan**. Peggy to contact Alan Rozema for potential assistance with venue and scheduling.

Since tribes are not participating directly at this phase, should be making sure they have information about any public meetings.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm

### **Near Term Schedule**

- **Thursday, January 6**, all day meeting – the built environment; will seek to include time with county commissioners, mayors, and city/town/county planning staff to discuss issues such as density and UGA expansion.