

*Land Use & Climate Change Advisory Committee*

## **July 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting Exercise Summary**

### **Discussion of Homework Assignment #1**

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Prior to the July 11<sup>th</sup> LUCC meeting, Committee members completed a homework assignment that asked them to identify opportunities within the context of the GMA or other relevant statutes for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil. The assignment asked members to identify mechanisms in the GMA or other statutes that would enable the opportunities, potential outcomes of the opportunities, and initial ideas for funding them.

Based on the homework assignment responses submitted by members, LUCC members completed an exercise during the July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting that included the following three sections:

- 1) Asking clarifying questions of other members regarding their homework responses,
- 2) Identifying ideas from the homework responses that members found most interesting, and
- 3) Identifying ideas from the homework responses that members felt uncomfortable with pursuing.

In the context of this exercise, it was stressed that Committee member observations would be viewed as personal rather than organizational perspectives.

The following summary highlights the key discussion areas addressed by the meeting exercise.

### **Additional Ideas for Consideration**

Members identified the following additional ideas for consideration by the group in completing the meeting exercise:

1. With projections for climate change-related flooding and sea level rise, consider moving development out of those areas and using those areas for carbon sequestration projects.
2. Consider tax increment financing options for transit oriented development.

### **Clarifying Questions**

The following clarifying questions were asked of and answered by individual members based on their homework responses:

Question: How would a carbon tax be implemented?

Answer: Tax on fuel would be based on the carbon footprint of that particular fuel.

Comment: A carbon tax could be a complimentary process to cap and trade.

Question: Requirements for updating comprehensive plans do not currently require updates of local regulatory plans. Could the State make the local regulatory plan updates part of the GMA requirements to eliminate subjectivity?

Answer: One way to address that issue is to provide a regulatory plan template that would give jurisdictions flexibility and would accommodate local needs.

Question: As far as limiting development outside of urban growth boundaries or in the floodplains, how far would you go with that? One concern relates to the ability to construct or reconstruct buildings for agricultural production or in rural communities.

Answer: The idea suggests limiting residential, commercial or industrial development, and the reduction in vehicle miles traveled, rather than limiting agricultural uses. The soil in the floodplain areas is some of the richest for agriculture.

Comment: Development right outside the urban growth area is not in the spirit of growth management, and is often apart from existing utilities and services. The idea suggests denser development for industrial, commercial and residential uses and does not include agricultural lands.

Comment: In addition to urban development, we may want to discuss rural development that better supports maintaining the economic viability of agricultural communities and giving local governments the authority to determine local needs.

Comment: Regarding the issue of floodplains, the State should review requirements for real estate transaction disclosure documents in those areas as a means to draw specific attention to the possible risks associated with the property.

Question: Regarding avoiding conversion of farmland, what sort of tools are you thinking about?

Answer: The best way to avoid conversion of farmland is to make sure that farms can operate profitably. We need to look at income opportunities for farmers and allowing accessory uses on farms.

## **Ideas That Caught Your Eye**

Members were asked to list up to three ideas that they found, from an individual, personal perspective, most interesting from the homework responses and meeting discussion. Ideas that members found most interesting included the following, arranged by topic:

### ***Uniform Agreement on Basic Principles***

One member noted that there was almost uniform agreement among members on the following basic principles:

- Preserving agricultural and forest lands
- Focusing future growth into compact areas
- Agreement that current mechanisms are not meeting expectations

### ***Urban Density and Compact Development***

- Modifying SEPA requirements to promote compact urban development (several members identified this topic)
  - Streamline SEPA requirements in response to desired development

- Address compact development in municipal plans
- Support design for compact development
- Financial incentives for compact transit-oriented development
- Limit the expansion of the urban growth areas into floodplain areas
- Provide subsidies or focus funding for affordability in housing
  - Look at full cost of sprawl and low density development
  - High density development has higher construction costs
- Create stronger incentives for compact development
  - Provide state guidelines and concurrency metrics
  - Remove fees for multi-unit infill
- Require certain conditions be met prior to urban growth area expansion
- Promote the use of accessory dwelling units (through SEPA exemption)
- Make density politically, culturally, and socially more acceptable

### ***Transportation***

- Require transit-oriented development, strong “centers” policy
- Transportation planning within urban growth areas
  - Concurrency issue
- Land use development patterns that support alternative means for travel
  - Availability of transportation alternatives
- Making transportation alternatives more attractive and efficient
- Investment in non-motorized transportation
  - Funding needs
- Urban transit centers
  - Use carbon tax revenue for transportation
- Address infrastructure system issues
- Require transportation planning to include reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions versus just concurrency.
- Changes in freight routing would help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. Can this be helped through GMA?

### ***Avoiding Conversion of Forest and Agricultural Lands***

- Incentives for avoiding conversion of forest and agricultural lands
  - TDRs (tradable development rights) as one means of increasing incentives
- No limitations created when avoiding conversion of agriculture and forest lands
  - Restriction or regulation can take away options for land owners
  - Keep farms and forests profitable
- Preserve viable agriculture and forestry industries
  - Prevent conversion through markets
  - Recognize farm needs

### ***Measurement***

- Measure greenhouse gas emissions rather than vehicle miles traveled

- Take alternative transportation into consideration
- Consider per capita greenhouse gas emission measurements for rural areas

### **Rural Areas**

- Allowing farmers to rebuild buildings
- Increasing density and infrastructure within designated LAMRIDS

### **Local Governments**

- Credit to counties and cities for actions they are taking to address climate change
- Rewarding jurisdictions that choose to take on urban density
- Financial programs for local governments
- Providing regulatory models as an option for local governments to have Safe Harbor protection
- Model templates from the State for plan elements and local regulations

### **Funding Sources**

- Carbon tax
  - Must look at equity and proportionality issues associated with it
  - Carbon tax could generate revenue to reserve agricultural and forest lands, and provide incentives to developers and employers for compact development.
- Tax abatement for dense development
- New sources of funding
  - Cap and trade system
  - Carbon tax revenues
  - Start thinking about how to use these funds
- Identify existing and new funding sources
- Incentives for transportation and utility infrastructure
  - Funding for high priority issues

### **Markets**

- Markets at the local level
  - Transfer of Development Rights
  - Ecosystem service districts
- Cap and trade system

### **Alternative Energy**

- Promoting wind power and other alternative energy sources
  - Underexplored in the state
  - Opportunity for rural communities
  - Also includes electric vehicles and geothermal energy
  - How it affects funding for schools and parks
- Use GMA to find alternative energy, reduce reliance on foreign fuels

### **Urban and Rural Area Frameworks**

- Different framework should exist for urban and rural areas
  - Per capita measurements for rural areas rather than VMT
  - Focus on transportation, multimodal transit for urban areas, incentives for density
  - Land use planning integrates both frameworks
  - Markets are the nexus between urban and rural areas

### **Changes to GMA**

- Add climate change goal to GMA (several members identified this issue)
- Need to amend Countywide Planning Policies to include climate change
- Include climate change issues in GMA 36.70A.020(10)

## **Ideas That Made You Feel Uncomfortable**

Members identified the following ideas from the homework responses that they individually were not comfortable with pursuing.

- Concerned about having more flexibility with agricultural lands.
- Concerned that limits on rural areas might be too restrictive for the viability of agricultural communities.
- Need synchronization between Office of Financial Management population projections and GMA planning.
- Need to re-evaluate county-wide planning policies that are not working. They have resulted in cul-de-sac type of development patterns that make it difficult to provide utility services.
- Countywide Planning Policies for greenhouse gas reductions strategies would be ineffective.
- Need models for the transfer of development rights and clarity on units of measurement (e.g., square foot).
- Clarification is needed on what is considered good development
  - Focusing on transportation
- Regarding development of rural villages, be careful not to encourage sprawl in rural areas
- Tribes often use utility services from jurisdictions outside of tribal reservations. With restrictions in urban growth areas be careful not to also restrict services to tribal reservations
- Recognize that an increase in marine vessel traffic as a result of reducing truck shipping could hinder tribal commercial fishing
- Oppose idea of a new GMA goal for climate change (several members identified this issue)
  - Would lead to more appeals and confusion,
  - Controversial in legislature and could take a lot of time
- Use SEPA to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil rather than adding a climate change goal to the GMA
- Handling climate change issues on a case-by-case basis through SEPA regulations rather than through growth management planning would increase the delay of permit processing.
- Green building standards should incentivize the use of wood, rather than penalize it.

- Carbon tax causes a concern and may be counter intuitive.
- Concerned with reducing urban growth areas since there is currently not enough buildable land.
- In planning transit oriented development, allow for industrial and transportation corridors across the state for the transport of goods and supplies.
  - Transportation solutions should not penalize farming and forestry, which depend on the transportation of products.
- Having cities form sub-regions and alter current planning could increase the complexity.
- Local governments in their essential public facilities provisions should not be required to allow the siting of essential public facilities as a matter of right (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> runway, Brightwater). The GMA provides little guidance on this issue.
- Incentives are needed for cities and counties to be ready to provide a variety of housing choices and to make this a “benefit”.
- Concerned with using LAMIRDs (Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development) to increase density.
- Allow accessory unit development. But be aware that some accessory unit developments can increase the density of sprawl and they do not necessarily generate compact or cluster development that can be served by transit.
- Certain ideas may be better handled in more detail in CAT IWG groups (e.g., building codes, agriculture and forestry retention). These groups have the experts that can discuss the issues and report back to us.