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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Planning Commission Transmittal

TO:	Board of County Commissioners
FROM:	Vaughn Lein, Chair, Clark County Planning Commission
Prepared by:	Evan Dust, Program Manager II (Transportation) Bob Higbie, Program Manager II (Land Use)
DATE:	November 19, 2003
SUBJECT:	**Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Implementing Code for the Interchange Area Policy**
FILE NUMBER:	**T2001-005**

Introduction

This memo transmits the consideration of the Interchange Area Policy by the Clark County Planning Commission in its August 2001 public hearing. Planning Commission is transmitting the record of the hearing without recommendation. Attached to this transmittal memo is the transcript of the public hearing held August 16, 2001.

This material has been retained by staff until this time because the proposed amendments are consistent with actions to be considered by the board during its review of the comprehensive plan.

Proposed Policy and Code

Staff proposed adding Policy 5.3.6 to the Transportation Element of the *Comprehensive Plan*:[1]

5.3.6 Any requests for plan amendment within the interchange influence areas of the new or improved interchange shall:

(1) Fully address and mitigate the impacts that land use change will have on the new or improved interchange, and

(2) Give preference to resulting development that will provide family-wage employment.

For the purposes of interpreting Policy 5.3.6, interchange influence areas are defined as:

(1) A 1/2 mile radius of the ramp termini and;

[1] When this policy was presented to Planning Commission in August 2001, the comprehensive plan text had not been revised. This transmittal uses the numbering and organization of the text as being considered by the board during the comprehensive plan update.

(2) For a distance of two (2) miles along the arterial that intersects with the improved interchange, all parcels wholly or partially within 1200 feet of the centerline.

Interchange influence areas are identified when a responsible transportation agency accepts a plan (e.g. route development plan, corridor study, or subarea plan) that identifies a new interchange or a significant interchange improvement. Interchange improvements are significant when such an improvement would be of the size or nature as to trigger a Federal Highways Administration Access Point Decision Report (regardless of whether or not the interchange is subject to federal regulation).

Staff also proposed several changes to county code. It was proposed to add the following section to CCC 40.560.010 (R):[2]

CCC 40.560.010 (R) Additional criteria for interchange areas

A map amendment within the interchange influence area, as defined in CCC 40.100.070, may only be approved if all of the following are met:

(1) The proponent identifies the impact of the highest development intensity allowed by the requested comprehensive plan designation on the interchange and demonstrates how that impact would be fully mitigated.

(2) Where applicable, the resulting development maximizes the opportunity for family-wage employment as defined in CCC 40.350.020 (O).

Amendments to CCC 40.100.070:

Interchange influence areas	For the purposes of CCC 40.560.010 (R), interchange influence areas are defined as the parcels contained wholly or partially within: (1) A ½-mile radius of the ramp termini of an interchange and (2) 1200 feet of the centerline of the intersecting arterial for a distance of 2 miles from the center of the interchange along the intersecting arterial. Interchange influence areas exist when a responsible transportation agency accepts a plan (e.g. route development plan, corridor study, or subarea plan) that identifies a new interchange or a significant interchange improvement, as defined in 40.100.070.
Significant interchange improvement	For the purposes of CCC 40.560.010 (R), a significant interchange improvement shall be the modification of a grade-separated intersection and ramp system that requires a Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Access Point Decision Report for highways on the federal interstate highway system or that would require such a study for all other highways and county

[2] The original code references in the Planning Commission discussion were to the code prior to the adoption of Title 40, Unified Development Code. Those references have been updated as appropriate.

	roads if such facilities were subject to such regulation. For example, improvements that are restricted to extending the storage length of a ramp or adding a turn lane at the ramp terminus would not be considered significant; moving or reconfiguring a ramp would be defined as significant for the purposes of CCC 40.560.010 (R).

Planning Commission Discussion

While a substantial number of Planning Commissioners agree with the concept of the interchange policy, the proposal presented by staff raised two policy issues and two technical issues.

Policy Issues

"No net loss" of Interchange Capacity

Planning Commission interprets the phrase "fully address and mitigate the impacts" of land use change upon the improved or new interchange as being effectively a policy of "no net loss" for interchange capacity. "Fully" addressing the impact of land use change would appear to require identification of as few as one trip added to the interchange roadways. "Mitigate" would require the replacement of the capacity consumed by any additional trips on the interchange roadways. Since transportation improvements tend to add large "chunks" of capacity, besides being expensive, are not easily divided to address small amounts of impact. The result may be to preclude small plan amendments in the area of applicability.

Family Wage Preference

Planning Commission was uncertain about the meaning of giving preference to family-wage employment. The uncertainty was tied to the issue of "no net loss" of interchange capacity; a "no net loss" of interchange capacity would not allow a "trade-off" of interchange capacity for family wage employment. Some uncertainty was related to whether or not preferring employment in interchange areas was a good approach to preserving interchange capacity.

Technical Issues

Significant Interchange Improvement

Planning Commission was uncertain if the definition of "significant interchange improvement" was sufficient to determine the area of applicability of the policy for those interchanges *not* subject to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Access Point Decision Report process. While current staff can enumerate the interchange locations where the policy would apply, there was some question by the Planning Commission about future application of the policy with staff turnover.

Area of Application

In response to public testimony, Planning Commission discussed the area of applicability proposed by staff (1/2-mile radius plus 2-mile "fingers" from the interchange along the cross-road) and a public request for an expanded 3-mile radius of the interchange. There was some concern that a wide area of application combined with a

large number of interchanges with proposed significant improvements would lead to the policy being applying almost universally within the urban area. There was a question of whether or not an enumerated area of applicability would prove to both capture areas of little or no impact on the interchange and miss areas of high interchange impact (depending upon the system of roadways connecting to the interchange).

Recommendation from the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission transmits the staff proposal with *no* recommendation and the record of the hearing. A motion to recommend approval of the staff proposal failed on a 2-for, 1-against, 1-abstention vote.

Attachment: Excerpt of Transcript from August 16, 2001 Public Hearing of Clark County Planning Commission

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