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**To:** City Council

**From:** Transportation Commission, Jon Pascal Chair

**Date:** December 13, 2007

**Subject:** Proposed concurrency methodology

*Background*

At direction of the City Council, The Transportation Commission began examining ways to improve the concurrency system in early 2006. At the March, 2007 study session between the Commission and the Council an intermediate report on the Commission's work was given and it was agreed that the Commission should continue to work on improvements to the concurrency system. This memo describes a proposed concurrency update the Transportation Commission is developing. Although some details are yet to be resolved, the Commission has agreed on a method we believe to be viable. We have made presentations to the Planning Commission, Houghton Community Council and to the general public. Although each of these meetings brought refinements, none of the comments we heard led us to change our fundamental approach. At this time we would like to understand Council's response to our ideas. Based on Council's response we will begin to prepare language for the Comprehensive Plan and a revised concurrency ordinance.

Concurrency was put in place as a requirement of the Growth Management Act. The general concept is that concurrency will prohibit the rate of land use growth from exceeding the rate of completion of transportation facilities. Each city can develop its own concurrency system and standards. Concurrency is not designed as the sole method for controlling growth or mitigating its impacts. Other regulations such as Commute trip reduction, SEPA and Impact Fees play critical roles in this regard.

*Why are we looking at Concurrency?*

*Council request.* As mentioned above both the Council and the Commission felt a revision of the concurrency system was needed.

*Current system is confusing with many moving parts.* Since its inception, the existing system with its need to calculate v/c ratios at signalized intersections has been considered opaque and confusing.

*Adjustments are difficult.* It was out of the need for an adjustment in early 2005 that a fresh look at concurrency grew. In the past, making changes to the calculation system have been hard to explain and justify.

*Other cities are looking at streamlining and simplifying.* Although several cities have systems similar to our current system, those cities that are revising their systems are looking at ways of

making concurrency simpler. Primary among these is Redmond. Their proposed system, although different in detail, is similar structurally.

*Goals for a revised concurrency system.*

The Commission has agreed on the following set of goals a new concurrency system should meet.

- Gives an overall view of capacity for new trips, not project level tool
- Doesn't generate funds
- Flexible, system could be out of balance for a time
- Similar to other cities.
- Plan drives concurrency not vice versa
- Multimodal
- Predictable
- Understandable

Although the system we are proposing does not meet all these goals we feel that it does successfully meet most of them.

*Comparing the old and new approaches*

Under the current system, each development proposal is evaluated to determine the number of trips it will add. These impacts are summed across developments to determine the cumulative effect of approved projects. For each signalized intersection, performance is measured by comparing the number of trips that exist to the number of trips to be added with the capacity of the network that will be in place when the development is complete. If the performance of the system with the project meets standards, the project passes concurrency. Otherwise concurrency is not passed and the development cannot go forward without being modified.

Our proposed system establishes a number of PM peak hour vehicle trips that can be allowed based on 1) the land use and road network plans for 2022 and 2) the funded CIP. As more of the 2022 road network is constructed, more trips are allowed. Concurrency is met as long as there are fewer trips approved than are allowed, in other words the supply for trips is greater than the demand.

Table 1 shows how the existing and proposed concurrency methods meet the goals described above.

Goal	Existing	Proposed
Plan based vs. project based	Project based. looks at concurrency on a project by project basis	Plan based. Results are tied back to 2022 land use and road plans. Monitors implementation of the plans.
Doesn't generate funds	Neither system is designed to generate funds to build projects. That is more in the realm of impact fees.	
Flexible, system could be out of balance for a time	Ability to pass concurrency is closely tied to geographic accuracy of future land use and road network projections.	There is more room to pass concurrency when the land use forecast proves inaccurate.
Similar to other cities.	A few cities have programs similar to our existing program for example Bellevue	Redmond is developing that is similar to the proposed system. Redmond is moving away from a system similar to our existing system.
Plan drives concurrency not vice versa	If concurrency is triggered it is difficult to identify how to correct the deficiency to allow development to continue.	If concurrency is triggered the options for correcting deficiency are more clear and can be addressed.
Multimodal	Can account for a reduction in trips because of increased non-SOV use.	Not truly multimodal, but somewhat more obvious accounting for non-SOV trips
Predictable	Hard to predict a) how much capacity is available in the system and b) the amount that any given project will reduce that available capacity.	Easy to predict both how much capacity is available and the effect of any project on the remaining capacity.
Understandable	Since the method involves v/c ratios it is hard to understand. Complication makes it less understandable.	Although there are some portions that are hard to explain, overall the method is easier to explain and understand. Overall simplicity helps understandability

*How does the new system work?*

The basic premise of the new system is to allow a certain amount of new auto trips based on the amount of the network that is built to support those trips. Underlying this method is the concept that realization of the 2022 land use and roadway plans would result in an acceptable level of service.

The basic steps of the new procedure are as follows

1. Look at the future year (currently 2022) land use projection and see how many new trips will be generated between now and then.
2. Divide up the number of trips found in step 1 into the number of trips that can be supported by a unit of the 2022 road network.
3. Analyze the funded 6 year CIP to estimate how much of the 2022 road network will be completed in the next 6 years.
4. Multiply the number in step 2 by the number in step 3 to get the number of trips allowed in the current year.

The figure on the next page illustrates graphically how the system works. Concurrency is met if the cumulative number of trips is less than the number of trips allowed. The upper lines in the chart represent the number of trips allowed given a certain funded CIP. The lower lines represent cumulative trips permitted. Lines in the chart are based on actual data for the years shown. The concurrency factor referred to near the bottom of the chart comes from the calculation described in step 2 above.

Note that the final arithmetic needed to complete step 3 (described above) is still under consideration by the Commission and changes to the calculation would result in changes to where the "trips allowed" lines fall on the chart.

#### *Report Card*

An integral feature of the new Concurrency system is a yearly report card. Details of the card's proposed content are described below.

#### Signalized intersection performance

Table with planning level v/c for each intersection based on actual counts. Compare subarea performance with subarea level of service standards. Forecast signal performance with approved but not yet built development. Description/analysis of findings. Conclusions would be around what project changes should be made to the 6yr CIP or to the 2022 plan.

#### Location and intensity of development that has occurred in relation to where it was forecast to occur.

Maps comparing forecast 2007-2022 land use with actual development activity. Land use would be described by type and geographic location. Also, a map which illustrates where development occurred over the past year.

#### For the funded CIP, project milestones that have been accomplished relative to what was planned.

Information would be presented that shows if the assumptions about project completion are accurate. It would compare the forecast construction benchmarks to actual benchmarks met.

#### Suggestions for how the 2022 land use and/or network should be modified based on what has happened over the past year.

Try and summarize all of the findings above. Are the actual effects of what we're doing passing our standards? Has growth been where and as fast as we expected? Are we building the network

the way we thought we were? How should the short term and long term land use and project plans be modified?

Level of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that have been constructed relative to goals.

This is reported in order to provide a context for the level of funding that is provided to capacity projects versus that provided to non-motorized projects.

*Timeline*

As the new system is put into practice the steps that are completed each year will become better refined. The following table shows an initial estimate of how the new system would work over the course of a year.

Month	Action
February	TC reviews Report Card and makes recommendations such as whether or not a revision of future year land use and network is needed.
Spring	TC review of future year land use and network if needed
Summer	Development of CIP and optional Comp. Plan amendments
Fall	CIP public hearing and adoption
November	Comprehensive Plan adoption

Legal analysis

Now that our concept has been further refined, staff will be conferring with the City Attorney's office to see that it meets the requirements of the concurrency statute in the RCW.

Next steps

The Commission plans to incorporate Council's comments into a final version of the concurrency plan. There are also a few technical details to agree upon by the Commission. Once these two steps have been accomplished, language for the appropriate regulatory documents will be developed. Ultimately the Concurrency revision will be wrapped into adoption of the Comprehensive Plan scheduled for 2008. This will require a public hearing, presentations to the Planning Commission and the Houghton Community Council with final approval by Council.

### Number of trips allowed by funded CIP and actual number of trips allowed 2005-2007

