

Bonney Lake Urban Growth Area expansions headed to Hearings Board

By Marian Berezikian
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In November, the Pierce County Council voted to expand the City of Bonney Lake's Urban Growth Area (UGA) by 495 acres. This is a 9 percent increase in the size of Bonney Lake. These expansions are not needed and violate the Growth Management Act.

The largest of the expansions, at 333 acres, is the Fennel Creek UGA expansion. It is unwarranted for the following reasons:

The UGA expansion converts farmland and wildlife habitat into urban development. The wildlife habitat includes the riparian areas along Fennel Creek and wetlands.

There is no need for this expansion; according to a county staff report, Bonney Lake already has more land than needed for its adopted residential and employment growth targets within the existing UGA.

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Photo by Marian Betzer

Fennel Creek Corridor looking east toward the Cascades and Mt. Rainier, with the pumpkin field and pasture in the middle. Douglas Firs on the opposite side edge the Old Sumner/Buckley Highway, where heavy logging and clearing of natural vegetation took place from July of 2002 to July of 2003. Deciduous forests and natural vegetation on the North slope of Fennel Creek corridor can be seen at the bottom of the photo. The Fennel creek runs along the bottom of this slope next to the pasture.

Higher school impact fees needed in Pierce County

By Marian Berezikian, FPC Executive Director

Does your school district need more money? Most people we have asked this question answered "yes." It is a well-known fact that school districts struggle to pass levies to pay for new schools and improve existing ones. Local governments have difficulty in financing public facility improvements such as schools needed to support the population growth that comes with new development. Over the past few years, public support to increase taxes to pay for schools and other public facilities has declined. Impact fees for construction on new homes provide an additional funding source for schools.

What are impact fees?

The Growth Management Act established impact

fees as a means to ensure that adequate capital facilities are built to serve new development. The Office of Community Development indicates impact fees can be imposed for: 1) system improvements related to new development, 2) cannot exceed a proportionate share of the cost of system improvement reasonably related to new development, 3) cannot be the only source of funding for the facility, 4) must be used for system improvements that will benefit the new development, and 5) may be collected and spent only for public facilities that are addressed in a capital facilities plan.

Because impact fees apply to new development, they distribute the burden on paying for growth-generated public facilities to those who would benefit the most.

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VISION

Communities will strive to utilize all planning strategies that balance the elements of environment, equity and economics.

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Solving traffic congestion without inducing growth

By Kirk Kirkland

In the last 10 years, Pierce County grew by 100,000 people. Few new roads were built during this time and traffic congestion has become worse. Now the county hopes to build their way out of the problem with an ambitious road building program funded by a Regional Improvement District.

A recent opinion poll showed voters favored improving computer rail by 69 percent, transit, and HOV lanes over large road projects. Highway projects scored less than 50 percent with the Cross Base Highway (connecting Spanaway to Interstate 5) falling to the bottom of the priority list with just 28percent support.

Historically, adding road projects has increased sprawl as "bedroom" community grew in rural areas far from jobs. In the last five years the county invested \$10 million in a road to connect the remote Lakeland Hills subdivision with SR 167. Meanwhile improvements to urban areas went unfunded.

Rhodes Lake Road is another proposed sprawl promoting route. The road provides a bypass of Bonney Lake's shopping district. It creates an east-west corridor off of the Orting Plateau. When completed, the proposed four lane road project would increase traffic on a two lane State Road between Sumner and Orting (one the State has no plans to expand).

The proposed Cross Base Highway would provide a bypass of Lakewood. Studies show that it adds to congestion at many major intersections on Interstate 5 while inducing growth in the Spanaway area. It adds 7,000 new people because commuters can save 10 minutes to their jobs in Olympia and Fort Lewis.

Some 28 percent of the workers leave Pierce County every morning. Leaving with them goes our hope of building a tax base and funding cost of growing city



Photo by Kirk Kirkland

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge is one of the most congested traffic areas in Pierce County. Accidents or weather conditions often make the bridge inaccessible or extremely slow to commuters. A second bridge is currently being constructed that will impose a toll for 30 years.

services. Pierce County collects less in sales tax than King County per capita because commuters spend their salaries near where they work, not at home.

Another study included in the Cross Base Highway EIS showed the proposed \$200 million road would only add 11 jobs in the Frederickson's Industrial Area. Most of the businesses there require north-south improvements to Canyon Road. The Boeing factory sends its output north to Everett.

Next November the county council will ask voters to fund a list of transportation projects. Get involved now in choosing the project list. Let your council member know that you prefer solutions that ease congestion, not promote out-of-county commuting.

After 10 years of inadequate funding for transportation, we can't build our way out of this problem. New projects should move people to work, not put more cars onto crowded highways. Contact your County Council members at 798-7777 or write them at 930 Tacoma Ave, Tacoma, WA 98402.

Bonney Lake, from page 1

According to the City of Bonney Lake, less than one third of the land is developable. The rest is in wetlands, floodplains, and other critical areas. This land is not suited to urban development and should not be included in the UGA.

The Growth Management Act generally prohibits including lands with farmland and extensive critical areas in the Urban Growth Area. Only after a county's agricultural, forestry and mineral resource lands have been identified, protected and conserved is it then possible to determine where

urban growth should be directed. Most of the Fennel Creek urban growth area expansion has Buckley Loam soils, which is prime farmland. Some of this land is currently being farmed and this area was historically farmed. Pierce County has zoned 101 acres for farming.

Excessively large UGAs encourage sprawl since there is no incentive to efficiently use land. We should be wisely using our urban land and not be expanding UGAs unnecessarily. We should certainly not expand UGAs into our precious fish and wildlife habitats.

Friends of Pierce County will assist 1000 Friends

of Washington with the petition to the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board. The hearings board is a state agency that decides claims that city, county, and state agency plans violate the Growth Management Act, our state law that requires cities and counties to undertake sustainable planning. The board will decide the appeal in the first half of 2004. 1000 Friends of Washington expects to file the petition in mid-January.

For more information, contact Tim Trohimovich by email, tim@1000friends.org.

What does Pierce County collect?

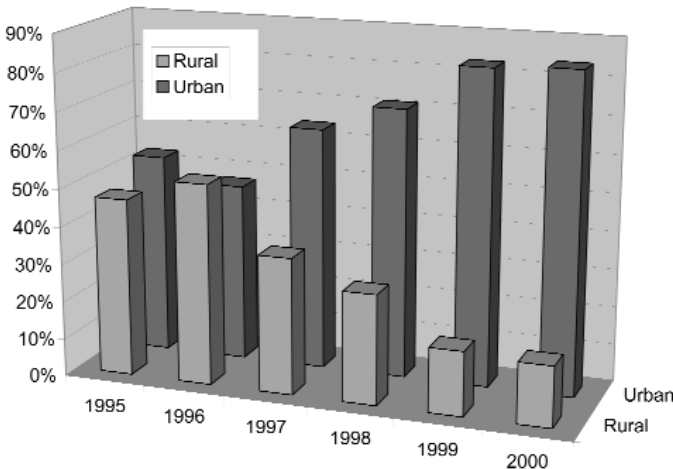
Pierce County currently collects \$1,711 per each new single-family home in school impact fees. Many other jurisdictions collect higher impact fees. King County Department of Development and Environmental Services reported that King County school impact fees range from \$3,033 to \$4,254 per single-family home. Pierce County imposed a cap on impact fees several years ago. As a result, many school districts fall short of adequately funding costs associated with increased enrollment. For example, the Peninsula School District has calculated it needs \$6,350 per new single-family home to support each new student. With each new home built in this school district, the shortfall in school revenues increases by \$4,639.

What can be done?

Friends of Pierce County is working with school districts and the County Council to increase school impact fees. The public is invited to attend a panel discussion on Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Main Tacoma Library (1102 Tacoma Ave South, downtown Tacoma). Panel members include a school administrator, a county council member, and an FPC member. You can also contact your county council members and ask them to increase school impact fees to help out our schools and our students.

County rural development on the decline

Rural development in Pierce County is on the decline. Pierce County Planning and Land Services tracked the number of lots developed since 1995 in the rural areas (zoned AG, VC, VR, R10, R5, RAC, Rsv10, Rsv5, RNC, Rural separator, R20, R40 and FL). Information from the Pierce County's September 2002 Buildable Land Report, summarized in the graph below, represents the percentage of lots platted within the urban growth area (unincorporated Pierce County and most cities/towns) versus the rural designated areas between 1995 and the end of 2000. The graph indicates that the number of lots platted in the rural area over the five year period significantly decreased in comparison with the lots within the urban area.



Source: Pierce County Planning and Land Services

School Impact Fees collected by Pierce County for each school district

School District	Collected from residential ¹	Building permits (SF only) ²	Calculated need per SF (title 4A)	Impact fee goal	Deficit from inadequate fee collection
STEILACOOM	\$39,590	24	\$2,776	\$66,624	\$27,034
YELM	\$119,330	72	\$4,504	\$324,288	\$204,958
PUYALLUP	\$2,851,639	1610	\$4,611	\$7,423,710	\$4,572,071
SUMNER	\$412,875	250	\$3,626	\$906,500	\$493,625
DIERINGER	\$156,280	94	\$2,984	\$280,496	\$124,216
ORTING	\$326,415	196	\$1,813	\$355,348	\$28,933
PENINSULA	\$1,588,783	935	\$6,350	\$5,937,250	\$4,348,467
FRANKLIN PIERCE	\$486,840	258	\$2,737	\$706,146	\$219,306
BETHEL	\$2,428,972	1422	\$2,438	\$3,466,836	\$1,037,864
EATONVILLE	\$221,950	134	\$7,431	\$995,754	\$773,804
CARBONADO	\$3,290	2	\$1,843	\$3,686	\$396
WHITE RIVER	\$207,294	128	\$1,617	\$206,976	-\$318
FIFE	\$31,854	18	\$3,224	\$58,032	\$26,178
Total	\$8,875,112	5143		\$20,731,646	\$11,856,534

1: Data on fee collection and number of permits are for period of Jan. 1, 2002 to Sept. 30, 2003 (21 months)

2: Data source: Pierce County Planning and Land Services Development Center

3: SF = Single Family Home

Pierce County Council Member Contact Information

Mailing address: 930 Tacoma Ave South, Room 1046, Tacoma 98402

Council Member & district	Phone number	Email address
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Calvin Goings District 2	(253) 798-6694	cgoing1@co.pierce.wa.us
Kevin Wimsett, District 3	(253) 798-6626	kwimset@co.pierce.wa.us
Harold Moss, District 4	(253) 798-7590	hmoss@co.pierce.wa.us
Barbara Gelman, District 5	(253) 798-6653	bgelman@co.pierce.wa.us
Dick Muri, District 6	(253) 798-3308	dmuri@co.pierce.wa.us
Terry Lee, District 7	(253) 798-6654	tleel@co.pierce.wa.us

Mark Your Calendar



January 15, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Friends of Pierce County Hearing Examiner workshop about the land-use process in Pierce County; Bonney Lake Library, 18501 90th E

February 18, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

FPC Hearing Examiner workshop; South East Tacoma Community Center, 1614 99th Steet East, Midland

January 20, 7 to 8:45 p.m.

FPC 2nd Annual General Membership Meeting, Main Tacoma Library, 1102 Tacoma Avenue S., Tacoma. Board members will be elected and special guests will discuss school impact fees.

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