

AUGUST 3, 2006 – WORKSHOP

The Walton County Board of County Commissioners met in a joint workshop on Thursday, August 4, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. with the Freeport City Council to discuss traffic concurrency.

The following Board members were present: Scott Brannon, Chairman, Kenneth Pridgen, Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Larry Jones, and Commissioner Cindy Meadows. Ms. Shirl Williams, Assistant County Administrator, and Attorney David Hallman, Legal Services Director, were also present.

The following members were present from the Freeport City Council: Mr. Charlie Simmons, Mr. Ray Jackson, Mr. Mike Helton, Mr. Earl King, Ms. Jean Arrant, and Mayor Mickey Marse. Walton County Planning staff: George Newman, Pat Blackshear and Greg Graham were also present.

Commissioner Pridgen opened with prayer and the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman Brannon called the meeting to order.

Ms. Blackshear spoke about the importance of this meeting and the decision that will be made for the future. She explained that when the scoping meeting was held the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was present and talked about concerns regarding traffic planning. The representative from the Department of Transportation (DOT) stated they would like to see discussion about common methodology on Highway 331 and Highway 98. She stated that the county will need to coordinate the methodology used with the cities and counties to the east and west of Walton County. We already have an Interlocal agreement with the city of DeFuniak Springs to work together on the traffic

concurrency program. Mr. Greg Graham and Mr. George Newman are PE's who have been working with the cities on traffic counts, trip generation, and distribution.

Mr. Greg Graham gave an overview of the county's traffic concurrency management system. The county has been implementing its system since about 1993. There is also an accounting procedure for counting traffic on the road. Prior to this system the county was using a daily traffic count. The commissioners have now adopted a new "Proportionate Fair Share" Ordinance. Some systems were showing deficiencies. The county was required by SB 360 to adopt the Fair Share Program, which was a pay as you go system that addresses growth in the county. Mr. Graham spoke about the joint agreement with the city of DeFuniak Springs and stated that they have been meeting with the Engineer from the city of Freeport. He further explained that the county's concurrency management system is based on accepted traffic methodology generating and distributing the amount of trips. The Planning Department has a handout that shows the capacity and number of committed trips. Ms. Blackshear said that the county went forward with adopting the Prop-Share Ordinance because projects on CR-30A were locked up with no available trips. Also, segments on Highway 331 were out of capacity. She stated that they are now working on a method for collecting the prop-share funding. Commissioner Meadows asked if the state looks at the county as a region when handing out money and what are the advantages of everyone using the same methodology. Ms. Blackshear said that DOT wants everyone to use a similar management system. She explained that a realistic count is trying to be obtained to keep from getting a double count. She stated that they would like to work with Freeport and wants a good coordination system. The county is not looking to perform reviews for the city of

Freeport. The county is not currently coordinating with the city or sharing data or traffic counts. Freeport currently uses an average day methodology. Mr. Graham's goal is to develop a working group out of this meeting to come up with common methodology to use for the county and the city as growth occurs throughout the county. He felt that we could pull our resources together. Ms. Blackshear said that she feels peak hour is better than average day.

Peak and average daily traffic counts are very different. Mr. Graham said that in his opinion peak hour is better, but either one is acceptable. The Department of Transportation would like to see the same method used.

Ms. Blackshear stated that local government can use their own discretion on how far out to take the traffic counts. The method of only taking it out a limited radius will create problems. They are trying to create the traffic counts in a fairer manner.

Commissioner Brannon asked if SB 360 specified the methodology to use. Ms. Blackshear stated that it did not; each county can use their own method. She felt that peak hour is the best method.

Mayor Marse stated that they are using the daily method. Mayor Marse asked if the county is referencing the main corridors from the state line to the gulf. He voiced concerned that what the county is doing will limit development in the city of Freeport and create more work for them. He stated that every permitted development impacts Highway 331. They are planning a community and have changed land use designations in the past in an attempt to plan for growth. He asked when the county issues trips. Ms. Blackshear stated that they are issued when the development order (D.O.) is issued. Mr. Graham stated that when the project is evaluated a concurrency review is performed and

committed trips are assigned, they become vested when the D.O. is issued. If a D.O. is not issued then the trips become available for the next development. Ms. Blackshear stated that if a project has not gone through within a year then a review needs to be made. Commissioner Jones stated that they would like to see a common methodology; whether it is the way the city is doing it or the method the county uses, or a combination of both. The goal for tonight is to find the best way.

Mr. Charles Peters, Engineer for the city of Freeport, spoke about committed trips on CR3280 between projects the county has issued and the city of Freeport has issued. He also spoke about the differences in cost per development for trips. Mr. Peters suggested using dedication through impact fees for all developments. Mayor Marse stated that Freeport has many roads inside the city that the county is not even aware of. He stated that the city of Freeport is only one of three cities in the state of Florida that has rural area of economic concern. He does not want to throw that away for Freeport. Ms. Blackshear stated that the county does not want to do Freeport's reviews. She stated that she would like to see the city and county look at the internal network system of roads and how to move traffic. The DCA is more stringent on evaluating concurrency and the county does not put the traffic counts into the management system until the developer files a site plan review.

Mr. Peters asked why CR3280 is deficient when there are only two projects currently ongoing. Mr. Graham stated that there were two projects that ate up the remaining capacity. Mr. Graham stated that this meeting is to find a common methodology. He spoke about the decision for when traffic is counted and when the counts are pulled out.

Attorney Clayton Adkinson asked if the interlocal agreement allows for the county to administer the concurrency. Ms. Blackshear advised that the cities requested the Interlocal agreement. Freeport had concerns and did not want to turn over their reviews, but they do want to use the same methodology. Commissioner Jones stated that we both should look at them the same way. Mr. Graham is not interested in administering the cities programs, but wants to use the same methodology. Ms. Blackshear said that the law does not require the county to look at our system in a cumulative basis by adding the trips together, but should know what each entity has on the committed list and the invested list. County staff will work with city of Freeport.

Commissioner Brannon pointed out that there are two technicalities to work out regarding the committed and vested trips and distribution.

Ms. Blackshear stated that a review needs to be done on a consistent basis removing trips that are not vested.

Mr. Helton asked if there is a specified time for committed trips before they become vested. Ms. Blackshear stated that there is no set time frame due to permits and other circumstances. Once a developer starts turning dirt you cannot remove the trips; each project varies.

Mr. Graham stated that if a PUD master plan is submitted and goes through the commission with a D.O., the trips are vested. It may be years before you see the trips on the road. He stated that an annual review is done and the inspector evaluates the projects that are vested and the counts are reconciled.

Mr. Jack Rhodes spoke about the Interlocal agreement and Fair Share Model Ordinance and cross jurisdiction in exchange of data and questioned if it is stated that the

sharing of information can be exchanged, but the methodology can be different. Ms. Blackshear stated that each side would have to convert the data if they used different methods. Greg said it would be more difficult to have a working relationship without using the same methodology. We need a working group to discuss the issues to determine the best method. Ms. Blackshear said that a consultant is currently working on getting the county's old information into the system.

Mr. Brannon felt that the issues have been identified and a working group needs to be developed who can work on the issues. Ms. Blackshear said staff is in the process of trying to flush out a good CIP for the county. It is important that the cities and county work together to identify the projects.

Commissioner Brannon commented that a working committee will be developed between the county and the cities who will report back to their independent boards.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Scott Brannon, Chair

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court