

## Kate Koch - Written comments, EIS for Whatcom County 2009 Comp Plan Update

---

**From:** <Bill.Bliss@CH2M.com>  
**To:** <PDS@co.whatcom.wa.us>, <cmail@cob.org>, <Council@co.whatcom.wa.us>  
**Date:** 2/18/2009 10:38 AM  
**Subject:** Written comments, EIS for Whatcom County 2009 Comp Plan Update  
**CC:** <Bill.Bliss@CH2M.com>  
**Attachments:** December 31st 2008 letter to cityand county council and planning and councils.doc;  
 James street map KingMtn (2) with bliss property.doc

---

Matt Aamot  
 Senior Planner  
 Whatcom County

Matt

Attached is a letter that I delivered to the City and County Council and City and County Planning staff in late December 2008 regarding the King Mountain UGA. Specifically, my letter addresses the difficulties that the 2008 County Council approval of this area (but only as far north as Van Wyck Road) has created.

Specifically, I have highlighted two main concerns that I think should be addressed by the EIS for the County Comp Plan:

1. Creation of adequate Transportation corridors, under one government's jurisdiction to allow development of the corridor to occur to serve the county and city (see item 1 attached letter.) This is important regardless of what plan, X, Y, or A or what population you decide to plan for. This corridor (Horton Road to James Street to Sunset Avenue) is needed now to improve traffic flow in and around Bellingham. As the King Mountain UGA is now approved (only to Van Wyck Road) there is no northerly exit from King Mountain to Horton Road and the Guide. If an additional 80 acres is included in the UGA, this transportation corridor is complete, under one jurisdiction and can be undertaken jointly by development and government to enhance traffic flow (Which is desperately needed now).
2. The GMA Guidelines that "require boundaries (for annexations) be logical and established according to natural neighborhood boundaries". With the approval of the modified UGA King Mountain area boundary in February 2008 (leaving out the area between Van Wyck and Horton Road), an island neighborhood was created on east Van Wyck and East Horton Road (see item 3 attached letter). Unfortunately, this coupled with the closure of the District 4 Fire Station on James Street has resulted in an increase in Washington state fire protection code rating from 6 to 10 for this area. For my four rentals on the property in this area, as well as the other property owners on the east end of Van Wyck and Horton Road, our insurance rates will increase by a factor of **four** at the end of this year, if we can not find an alternative means for fire protection and rerating by the State. One of the means that could alleviate this strain is to be included in the King Mountain UGA and then annexed into the city where we would be protected by the Deemer Road station.

The transportation corridor is needed now, and will help move traffic regardless of the options chosen for the comp plan. Also, I would urge you to eliminate island neighborhoods as part of the UGA update. I strongly urge you to include the 80 acres between Horton and Van Wyck Road back into the King Mountain UGA in your update at this time.

Thanks

Bill Bliss, PE  
 Office 360-392-1610  
 Cell 360-961-9267



December 31, 2008

City Planning Staff  
City Council Members  
County Planning Staff  
County Council Members

Subject: Bellingham's King Mountain Urban Growth Area

In previous letters to planning staff and elected officials, I have communicated my thoughts in regards to Bellingham's projected growth, and the importance to plan for that growth. The City's 2006 recommendation for zoning and UGA boundary changes included my property (20 acres) as part of the King Mountain UGA expansion area. My property is located at the east end of Van Wyck and Horton Road (circled on the attached map). As part of the Urban Fringe Subarea planning Process, County planners indicated that my property and those adjacent to mine west to the current city limits were worth considering for inclusion in the UGA expansion, as they provided important linkage for future transportation corridors. It was in February 2008, that the county council removed my land from the City's recommendation UGA, at the very end of the process. Along with my property, approximately 60 acres west of mine was removed from the proposed King Mountain UGA area. This total 80 acres lies between Horton and Van Wyck Roads and approximately 0.7 mile east of the Guide.

I have written many letters and commented at each of the public hearings on the Bellingham UGA update. I ask that you now consider my property and those adjacent to mine as you re-evaluate the proposed King Mountain UGA as a response to the GMA Hearings Board ruling. Three factors should be considered. They are as follows:

1. The Bellingham 2006 comprehensive plans calls for a major traffic corridor to be developed east of the guide from Sunset area to Horton Road. I have copied from page 65 of the City's Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element, i.e. needed improvements when the area becomes urban;
  - New north-south James Street Road secondary arterial Connection to Van Wyck Road along west side of King Mountain
  - New north-south James Street Road secondary arterial Connection between Van Wyck Road and Horton Road;
  - New east-west Horton Road secondary arterial Connection between Guide Meridian, Van Wyck Road, and Hannegan Road;

- Van Wyck Road access control on Guide Meridian.  
New east-west Van Wyck Road collector arterial  
connection with Horton Road secondary arterial

This makes absolute sense to help reduce traffic congestion on Meridian, Bakerview, Kellogg, and within the Sunset area. The arterial would benefit county residents in addition to city residents who attempt to get to and from work in Bellingham on congested streets. A linkage such as proposed would certainly provide the kind of connectivity both city and county support.

I have attached a copy of a Transportation Circulation Map which shows a proposed linkage for the James Street to Horton and Meridian corridor as it is currently planned. I have circled my property at the northeast corner of the brown shaded area. The property which lies within this brown shaded area between Van Wyck and Horton Road is not currently in Bellingham's UGA, but should be considered in order for the City's transportation planning strategies to work, as noted below. The proposed James/Horton arterial may be required as a second way out to the north from the proposed future Urban Village on top of King Mountain, which is already moving forward in the planning process and included in the approved UGA.

Additionally, current zoning in the area between Horton and Van Wyck Road is R5A. At this density, property owners cannot support road improvement costs as there is no potential for return on the investment. With increased zoning densities, annexation and urbanization, significant increase in land value can support owner participation in road improvement costs, as opposed to having city and county tax support required.

West of Meridian, Trillium and others have done a good job in laying out the major arterials and traffic flow for the Cordata PUD. This was accomplished in part because a single owner held the majority of property and was able to work with City and County staff to include arterials in the "Master Plan" for the area. This type of comprehensive planning could work east of Meridian as well, since there are limited owners involved and major road improvements could be accomplished, but only if the area between Van Wyck and Horton Road is brought into the City's UGA and then annexed.

2. With your February 12, 2008 vote on Bellingham's Urban Growth Area, you created an island of the properties that lie east of Meridian between Van Wyck and Horton Road. This area is still county, and served by rural Fire District #4. As such, the only way to serve our area is for Fire District

#4 to go through the city via the Guide / Meridian then east 1220 feet off Horton or Van Wyck Roads. My insurance provider has recently proposed a four fold increase in fire insurance rates for my four houses alone, in part due to the closure of the James Street station and because of the distance to District 4 fire stations are from my properties. Having served as chief of the James Street station for a short period of time, I can tell you that responders are sometimes anxious and confused in emergency situations delaying response times significantly. They may respond to the wrong end of Van Wyck or dispatch is made to Horton and responders do not realize that the road goes east of Meridian.

3. Creating 'island neighborhoods' such as the one that would be created if you move forward with the current UGA proposal is in direct conflict with the principals of the growth management guidelines. The guidelines require boundaries to be logical and established according to natural neighborhood boundaries.

I urge you to consider adding additional land to Bellingham's King Mountain Urban Growth Area to allow the City's comprehensive and regional transportation planning to be realized. By providing high density zoning in my area, the City's transportation planning efforts would not be in vein. I urge you to add my property and those of my neighbors to the City of Bellingham's King Mountain UGA. Moving forward with the current plans and adding the small amount of land between Van Wyck and Horton Road will provide for the growth that is projected for Bellingham, while providing improved traffic flow and minimizing impact on existing neighborhoods.

I urge you to move forward; make the tough decisions that are required. I can be reached at [Bill.Bliss@CH2M.com](mailto:Bill.Bliss@CH2M.com) or 392-1610 if you need or wish to contact me in this regard.

Sincerely and respectfully submitted for your consideration.

Bill Bliss, PE  
1834 North Shore Drive  
Bellingham, Washington, 98226



# Transportation Circulation Map For Area Proposed for Annexation



