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Subject: Public Meeting on Growth

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 30-year resident of Whatcom County. I also served on the Whatcom County Visioning Committee some years back. At that time, the key question asked of people throughout Whatcom County was: "What quality of life do you wish to leave as a legacy for future generations." We held sessions throughout Whatcom County and the resounding response (this was during the heyday of CLUE and Wise Use Movements) was, preserve our natural heritage. I doubt much has changed in the public sentiments. I believe I speak for many others in Whatcom County supporting the adoption of the lowest population growth as a basis for planning. Three points have been made that I also think make this a reasonable approach:

Whatcom County is losing its rural areas to sprawl at an alarming rate, and a lower population projection will support agricultural preservation.

Planning for high population growth commits the county and its municipalities to provide an unaffordable level of government services and infrastructure.

Whatcom County citizens strongly favor slower growth. (This was also the case during our Visioning process.)\

All too often, this type of planning goes forward, hostage to a set of shaky assumptions and fueled by the incessant demand for unquestioned growth and does not take in to consideration the long-term hidden cost of expanding infrastructure in a time of economic downturn; a downturn that might last three to five years, or more. But, as the economy is showing, the paradigm is shifting beneath our feet. We need smart, slow growth; the kind that leaves open the real possibility of preserving our natural heritage and conserving and allowing the possibility of promoting greater self-sufficiency.

Respectfully yours,

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