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LONG RANGE
PLANNING DIVISION

FAX MEMORANDUM COVER SHEET

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DATE: Feb. 17/09

TO: MATT ARMOT FAX NO: 260.738.2525

COMPANY: WHATCOM COUNTY

FROM: PETER SPENCER

RE: _____

Comments:

No. of Pages (including cover page): _____
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**GOLD ★ STAR
RESORTS INC.**

February 17, 2009

Whatcom County Planning & Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097

***Attention: Whatcom County Planning Commission and
Whatcom County Council***

Re: E.I.S. Scoping Comments - Whatcom County - 2031

Dear Planning Commission and County Council:

Please accept the following comments on behalf of Gold Star Resorts Inc. regarding the Whatcom County Environmental Impact Study (E.I.S.).

- We support Growth Population Alternative #3-Y (D. Stalheim memo dated Feb. 11/09) with the 20 year population projection of 258,448 for the County. Growth has shifted away from Bellingham to other small urban communities, particularly Birch Bay over the past 10 years. People are tending to locate to rural areas (smaller communities) and farms and this will continue in the future as the population extends north from Bellingham.
- The scope of the Environmental Impact Statement EIS should clearly include the Birch Bay U.G.A.
- The Birch Bay Sub-Area community plan adopted on September 28, 2004 outlined many ordinances to include mixed use commercial centers, tourism and industry. We support implementation of this plan.
- The 2031 Workshop Survey (Jones/Stokes on Page 6) indicates under Economy - support for job growth and greater employment in the Birch Bay area. We support diversity of industries and economic drivers such as hi-tech business parks, light manufacturing and research development centers in this area creating further employment.
- Jones/Stokes indicates on page 15 - Economy - the need for tourism as an industry. A tourism center is already established in the Birch Bay area and we agree that there is more need for tourism and commercial development in the Birch Bay area on the waterfront and at the Blaine-Alderson proposed town center location as indicated in Birch Bay Sub-Area Plan and further supported by the Northwest Collaborative Town Center study in March of 2007.

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Jones/Stokes page 16 - Population Growth - considers needs of retired population in the Birch Bay area. Infrastructure to provide satellite services such as libraries, schools, professional offices, community centers, is required to service a retirement community as intended by the Sub-Area Plan.

- In addition the scope of the EIS should include known employment and tourist centers outside of the currently established urban growth areas including various industrial/tourism areas along I-5 Corridor currently defined as transportation corridors and LAMRIDs.
- The scope of environmental investments should also be included within the EIS.
- The scope of the EIS should recognize the vision in the mixed use zoning in the Birch Bay area located at Blaine and Alderson Road providing for mixed use General Commercial and Residential development to meet the objective of high density infill and walk to communities.

SUMMARY:

Tourism at Birch Bay impacts positively on the entire region in many ways. As you continue to plan the population growth for the future of Whatcom County please remember that tourism is also focused at geographic locations that are not necessarily in incorporated cities. The geography of your county dictates that tourism is focused at its natural amenity, its beautiful coastline including Birch Bay.

The Tourism Economy is vital to maintaining Whatcom County's economic edge over other regions and to ensure that the local economy can capture the benefits of its beautiful scenery and location in a green and sustainable manner. Timeshare condominiums, beach attractions, restaurants and events draw thousands of visitors to Whatcom County. According to state statistics tourism generates \$422.5 million to the region.

Economic development along the I-5 corridor and particularly Exit 270 at Birch Bay Lynden Road is essential to the county's long term economic and financial viability to the entire region by its strategic geographical location centrally located between Birch Bay, Lynden and Blaine. Development at this location provides employment, tourism and retail and industrial opportunities for firms from Bellingham to Vancouver.

Revitalization at what is called Birch Bay Square located on the northeast corner of the intersection is a sign of resurgence and will attract additional investment. Emphasis should be given to ensure that the original plan for this regional and international economic expansion should be continued and strengthened. In addition, the community-wide benefits of being on a rail corridor as well as I-5 and key east west routes will help to diversify the economy of the county, serve the needs of residents in the region and is consistent with 1997 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent zoning decisions. Prioritization that adequate capital facilities (sewer, water, roads) are in place to serve this area is essential.

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Gold Star intends to develop and invest in Whatcom County. The continued expansion of the region's **population** (city, county and out of county) will mean that residents and non residents alike will desire/require additional recreational opportunities as well as additional job opportunities that the private sector can provide. As you plan for **population growth**, please take into account the job opportunities that the I-5 Birch Bay Lynden intersection and Blaine Alderson intersection in Birch Bay can deliver to the community if planned infrastructure is completed.

Yours truly,
Gold Star Resorts Inc.



Peter Spencer

cc David Stalheim
Matt Aarnot
Gary Davis
Kate Koch
W.N. Grant
Kathy Berg
Lisa Guthrie

gsr/lens/Whatcom County P&D Aarnot_090217