

PDS - comments on EIS

From: "Cathy Lehman"
To:
Date: 2/18/2009 8:16 AM
Subject: comments on EIS

Futurewise Whatcom envisions a prosperous and sustainable future for Whatcom County where urban and rural land uses and experiences remain distinct, where rural land is protected for industries that support rural economies, where housing options are diverse, and where our built and natural environments are in balance.

We ask that Whatcom County leave the future to the future, and contend now with what we do actually have control over. We request that you study options and enact policies that will:

- 1) Direct growth into existing growth boundaries of existing cities,
- 2) Discourage growth in rural areas,
- 3) Monitor our actual growth rates on an annual or biennial basis and adjust as necessary for population increase or decrease as it occurs, AND
- 4) Retool the old mantra that population growth must equal physical growth of our footprint.

Ironically enough, with the downturn in the local and national economy there is currently less development pressure in Whatcom County than we've experienced in decades, which gives us a rare window of opportunity right now to put in place the policies needed to solve the problems we face.

The first thing you can do to support our request is to include the OFM's lowest legally allowable population projection, 220,000, to be studied in the EIS process.

Additionally, please also consider the importance of documenting the costs to taxpayers and damage to the environment from our current growth patterns into the next 20 years - along with what can be done to mitigate those costs and damages. That is the real environmental impact. The most significant damages would be done across the county in the rural and agricultural zones. Unless we document the extent and consequences of what is happening, the real problem might not even be addressed.

Thank you for your consideration,

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The mission of Futurewise Whatcom is to preserve and enhance the prosperity, diversity, health and character of rural Whatcom County and support the preservation of compact, livable urban areas, by encouraging local government and citizens to manage growth responsibly.