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ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

Seth M. Fleetwood
Whatcom County Council
Courthouse Suite 105
311 Grand Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Councillor Fleetwood,

I live along Yew St Rd and received a letter notifying me that you are considering changing the zoning regulations for our area. Currently we are at RR2 (east side of Yew St Rd), and the proposal is to change the zoning to 1 house per 10 acres and remove the area from the UGA. We moved into this area in 2002 and were aware of it being in a UGA with proposals to change it to 6-10 units per acre (upon incorporation). A new elementary school was planned and upgrades to Yew St Rd were in the works which would allow us to walk to Lake Padden. We were delighted with these planned improvements. Now it seems everything has changed. Please vote to keep us in the UGA with responsible development.

I have a Ph.D. in Plant Breeding and Genetics, and worked with agricultural projects for 9 years in Africa and two years in Latin America. I am very aware of the problems of food shortage that affect large parts of the world. Many parts of Europe have stringent restrictions on building on agricultural land. So far, we've been spared those concerns in the US. But our time is coming. Our population continues to increase, and the best agricultural land around our cities is turned into housing developments. The US population continues to explode, the state of Washington has doubled in population since I first moved here 45 years ago. The estimates that I've seen for Whatcom county show about a 30,000 population increase from 2000 to 2008. Plans for where to build housing over the next few decades have to be made logically. If we put them on our agricultural flat lands, we end up destroying ourselves because we won't be able to feed ourselves.

The logical solution is to put housing up in the hills as has been done in farming communities for centuries and preserve the flat lands as they are best able to produce food. King Mtn. was a good choice for development, and so is the area along Yew St Rd. I love being able to enjoy the natural environment here, and walk around Lake Padden. Yet, housing can be brought in without totally destroying the nice natural setting. There will be changes for sure, however there are a number of options that can be made to keep the location looking natural, and limit the problems of rain runoff.

- the housing footprint can be limited

- dry wells to collect roof runoff can be installed (I have one)
- permeable driveways can be mandated (mine is gravel, and could be improved)
- new roads should have impoundment ponds for runoff (should be mandated everywhere)
- limits of the amount of land that can be cleared on a parcel
- the streams are virtually dry in July and August and any digging of foundations or building roads could be limited to the dry times of the year

It has been very disconcerting to see that the planned upgrade to Yew St Rd has been essentially abandoned. It is very disheartening to understand that you are planning on changing our zoning. As a citizen, I like to trust our government to maintain its plans, we made our plans partly based on what the government told us were their plans. Quite honestly, we're beginning to feel violated. This part of the county is a great area for growth, with good access to I5 and close access to shopping to limit the amount of driving that we have to do (saves fuel). Please put a sidewalk along Yew St Rd for those of us who like to walk and the few kids who dare to walk to Wade King School. Please help us to develop responsibly in these beautiful areas in a logical manner without sacrificing our future (food production).

Sincerely,



Wayne C. Youngquist