



September 24, 2009

Whatcom County Council
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Mr. Pete Kremen, County Executive
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 108
Bellingham WA 98225

Dear Whatcom County Council and Mr. Kremen,

We are writing today to express our deep concern regarding the proposed removal of the Yew Street area from the existing Urban Growth Area (UGA) and to request that the current UGA boundary for this area remain.

As you are aware, the Bellingham School District purchased land and recently built a new elementary school on Yew Street Road. We did so based on several factors. These factors included the fact that the area where we located our school was within the UGA and the land west of our school site, immediately adjacent to the existing Bellingham city limits, was also within the UGA. This led us to believe that growth was highly likely this area, thereby creating additional neighborhoods which our school would serve. In addition, the development of these neighborhoods would provide improved infrastructure such as sewer, water, and traffic improvements including safe sidewalks for children. It is highly unlikely that if we had been told that the area around the new school would be limited to 1 house per 10 acres or 1 house per 5 acres we would have purchased the land and built the school in that location.

We recognize the County Executive and staff are concerned about the health of Lake Padden, and rightly so. However, we believe the proposed removal of the Yew Street area from the UGA is unnecessarily over-restrictive and essentially 'closes the door' on the possibility of future neighborhoods in the area which we planned on serving. Maintaining the Yew Street Area within the UGA would not automatically mean that there will be more intensive development in the area, as proposed projects must still clear many other environmental and land use hurdles prior to being given approval for construction.

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Superintendent
Kenneth D. Vedra

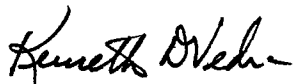
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In summary, we encourage the Whatcom County Council to maintain the existing Urban Growth Area boundary for the Yew Street Area thus keeping the door open to the possibility of future neighborhoods and necessary infrastructure improvements in the vicinity of our school.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth D. Vedra, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Ron Cowan
Assistant Superintendent
Business and Operations

cc: David Stalheim, Director
Whatcom County
Planning & Development Services