

From: Council
To: Blystone, Kate; Boxx, Becky; Council Members; Craven, Rebecca
Date: 11/3/2009 8:39 AM
Subject: Fwd: West Blaine UGA
Attachments: West Blaine UGA - letter of support.pdf

>>> "Chris M. Benner" <cmb@trilliumcorp.com> 11/3/2009 8:32 AM >>>
Please find attached our letter in support of retaining the Blaine UGA.

Best regards,
Chris Benner

Chris Benner | Vice President - Real estate Development

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November 3, 2009

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Re: Semiahmoo Company Application

Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council:

I am writing to advise you that on Friday, October 29, the Semiahmoo Company made application to Whatcom County to develop a 624 acre site within the West Blaine UGA. The proposal is for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to include 1,129 residences and about 60,000 square feet of neighborhood scale retail and service oriented commercial space and a related subdivision.

1. The West Blaine UGA Should Be Retained Because It has a long history of being planned for Urban Level Development and this planning has demonstrated that it is appropriate for urban development

The 624 acre site that is the subject of our application lies entirely with the City of Blaine's West Blaine UGA. As we explained in our previous letters, the property has long been considered by Whatcom County to be suitable for urban level development at four units per acre. For over 30 years, including 15 years under Growth Management legislation, this area has been identified in all of the County's adopted planning documents including various Comprehensive Plans, Subarea Plans, and Sewer and Water Plans as a location for growth at urban densities.

2. The Growth Management Hearings Board has previously upheld the validity of the West Blaine UGA.

As we pointed out in our previous comments, the Growth Management Hearings Board considered the question of the size of Blaine's Urban Growth Area in 1997. The Board found that the short term planning areas (STPA) of the Blaine UGA were compliant with GMA (FDO Case # No. 97-2-0030c as amended January 22, 1998). We believe that the Hearing Board decision regarding Blaine's UGA should be given strong consideration by the County as the Urban Growth Areas are finalized. .

3. Trillium has relied on the history of planning and the Hearings Board Decision to make long term plans for our property

The Trillium Corporation has relied on the County's long history of support for urban level development in this area and the Growth Management Hearings Board decision in 1998 as a basis for continuing to acquire and retain property in the West Blaine UGA. We have taken time to

evaluate the characteristics of the site and understand its limitations including the presence of large wetland areas. The County's decision to consider removing our property from the UGA has accelerated our planning effort and prompted us to finalize our plans and submit an application for Planned Unit Development Approval and a preliminary plat on our property.

4. The filing of a complete application for development approval constitutes sufficient reason to retain the West Blaine UGA.

With the filing of a complete application for a residential community of about 1,200 homes as allowed under the current comprehensive plan and zoning for the property, we believe that the principles of good planning under GMA and case law regarding vested development applications in UGA's compels the county to retain West Blaine Urban Growth Area.

Very Truly Yours,
TRILLIUM CORPORATION



Chris Benner
Vice President-Real Estate Development

cc: Amy Kosterlitz, GordonDerr LLP
David Stalheim, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
Michael Jones, City of Blaine Planning Director