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LONG RANGE  
PLANNING DIVISION

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Senior Planner Matt Aamot  
Whatcom County PDS  
5280 Northwest Drive  
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September 11, 2008

Re: Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area (UGA)

Dear Mr. Aamot,

Thank you for conducting a professional and informative meeting at the Kendall Elementary School on September 4th.

Following the meeting, it was understood that the county could adopt any of the three proposals or a hybrid version for the Columbia Valley UGA.

**Please consider maintaining the current commercial and other land use designations for the regions of Glacier, Maple Falls and the area surrounding the Kendall Elementary School. For the remaining sectors along Kendall Road, Hwy 547, and Hwy 542 please consider proposal #3.**

The foothills area is unique, rural, and recreational and must remain low impact. Placing 700 hundred homes, condominiums, retail and commercial space in the foothills increases sprawl. Each household contains 1-2 vehicles meaning significant increases in commuter traffic. The process of building homes, businesses, and commercial centers increases heavyweight vehicle construction traffic to the highways and to South Pass Road; thereby, increasing road maintenance expenses. Pre-, intra- and post-construction traffic places additional stress on Hwy 542. The existing problem areas of Hwy 542 and Smith Road and Hwy 542 as it enters Bellingham will be impacted. Future plans exist to modify both of these areas, but this planning was done on current road-use studies without consideration for increased commuters and builders. In addition to increased traffic, on Designated Scenic Byways, pollution from vehicle exhaust, lights and noise will increase to the residents along South Pass Road, Hwy 547 and 542. Bicycles are increasing on all of these roadways and riders will be in more danger from the increased traffic and lack of roadway shoulders.

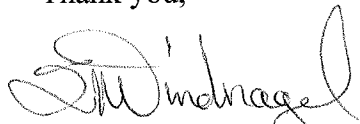
Significant impact will be placed on the existing water table through increased usage and pollution run-off from lawn maintenance, vehicle maintenance and traffic, and retail and commercial businesses –Water tables that support existing residential drinking water, wildlife, and the Fish Hatchery. In addition to fish, other wildlife will be impacted. Deer, elk, bear, bobcats, mountain lions and bald eagles currently coexist with residents. Encroaching further into the foothills with massive development will increase more bear to human contact. The bald eagles currently feeding along Hwy 542 and the Nooksack River will be exposed to increase noise, traffic, and water and air pollution.

Fire, police, and emergency services departments in the area are already overused and under-funded. Additional homes and proposed commercial areas will increase the tax base, but not enough to offset the long-term maintenance of continued services. The school system will be assimilating students from the proposed area en mass. A new school has been proposed for the Balfour Development. If the developer pays for the building, taxpayers are left with increased school taxes to support maintenance, hire new administration and faculty and provide services. Not all of the children living in the proposed homes will attend this new school, several will be commuting to the existing junior and senior high school further increasing the demand of services, staffing, building capacity requirements, buses, and traffic.

Recently, Whatcom County and the city of Bellingham have been planning for the future with a renewed strength and foresight. A future of homes located near large city bases with services currently existing. Homes that lower the human footprint by decreasing the need for commuting, increasing public transportation, and supporting or expanding existing services. Please continue supporting these plans by avoiding the creation of large communities in rural areas.

Keep large-scale development near Bellingham, near existing cities and towns, and away from the foothills. Protect these areas for low impact residences on acreage, and for farming, ranching, family outings, biking, hiking, winter sports, and vacations. Please Continue Planning Responsibly and don't let big money and promises from developers blind your decisions.

Thank you,



Susan M. Windnagel