

My name is Jan Eskola,

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I have been the Office Manager for the Glacier Water District for 22 years, a Fire Commissioner of Glacier Fire and Rescue for over 15 years and a resident of Glacier for 35 years. These are my comments:

The SEIS focus seems to be in the Columbia Valley area. I can appreciate that this would be the case as that is the area that has been chosen for more intense growth. However, the population projections and traffic counts used in the report are based on flawed information. I would hope that Whatcom County Planning will finally recognize this and use the proposed 2009 population projections for the SEIS and not the outdated 2006 population projections. I would also hope that Whatcom County Planning will finally recognize that the traffic report is flawed. Planning has received information from both the City of Bellingham and the Washington State Department of Transportation asking that the traffic report be corrected to include additional intersections, proper analysis of the SR 542 and SR547 intersection and inclusion of the entire foothills subarea. The current traffic analysis also fails to acknowledge seasonal uses of the Mt. Baker Highway.

The need for a groundwater model to properly assess water quantity and water quality in the Columbia Valley is stated in the Water Quantity and Quality Report done by Aspect Consulting thirteen times. The SEIS references the need for this groundwater model eight times. It would seem that the groundwater model must be required in order to properly assess water quantity and water quality.

The elimination of the Small Town Commercial designations for Glacier, Maple Falls, Kendall and Deming along with the Neighborhood Commercial designation for Welcome and converting the areas to a LAMIRD with no explanation is just plain wrong. These areas are currently commercial areas and should remain at their current land use and zoning. The statement on page 34 that says "The Kendall STC zone is not centrally located to serve the population of the Columbia Valley" is offensive. Kendall is in a perfect location to serve the needs of a greater area of the Foothills and should be recognized as such.

The mitigation measures specifically for Fire District 14, to accommodate proposed growth in the Columbia Valley would result in extraordinary higher taxes for the residents of the fire district. These higher taxes would require the approval of the residents and failure of a bond issue is a distinct possibility. Other mitigation issues regarding schools and transportation will also require higher taxes whether voter approved or not.

In closing, please fix the SEIS so that it reflects current population and traffic information. Require a groundwater model to assess water quantity and quality. Leave the STC and Neighborhood Commercial designations as is. With all the mitigation measures that must be taken to provide more intense growth in the Columbia Valley, maybe that growth should not be allowed. You do have the power to limit growth. I support Alternative 3, the LAMIRD choice for the Columbia Valley and Alternative 1 for the Glacier, Maple Falls, Kendall, Deming and Welcome areas.