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June 22, 2009

David Stalheim, Director
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226

Re: 10 Year UGA Review, Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area

Dear Director Stalheim:

I am writing in support of Alternative Y and the proposal presented to the Whatcom County planning Commission and County Council at their joint hearing of June 16, 2009 pertaining to the Columbia Valley UGA for Whatcom County's 10 UGA review.

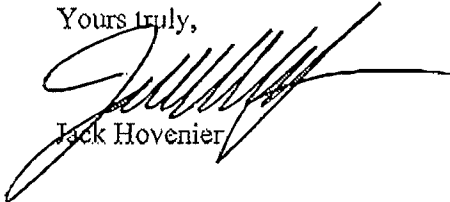
The proposed UGA would decrease in size from approximately 1,489 to 1,339 acres as envisioned by the community and recommended by the FSPAC in the Draft Foothills Subarea Plan (October 2007). The County's proposal to adopt this reduced boundary as envisioned in the community's plan seems appropriate and adequate to accommodate growth through 2029/2031 and will return an additional 150 acres to the rural land base, providing a buffer between the UGA and surrounding rural lands and the Mount Baker Scenic Byway, and reducing potential development pressure near Kendall Creek and Sprague lake.

The Columbia Valley UGA as envisioned in this proposal appears generally consistent with Alternative Y as presented in the Draft EIS prepared to inform the County's 10 year UGA review. The proposal is reasonable and elegant in its simplicity, filtering future development almost exclusively into an existing sewer service area, providing land for parks and open spaces, and encouraging capital infrastructure investment and planning.

It should be noted that the jobs to population ratio under this proposal would yield less jobs per population than is currently seen in the rural areas of Whatcom County. While this is troublesome, Alternative Y and the Community's recommendations for employment growth will provide opportunity and a good "first step" for moving forward to correct this imbalance in the long term planning for this area. It should also be noted that rezoning within the UGA for a variety of densities and uses will also play a key role in creating opportunities for a more successful and healthy community dynamic as noted in section 9 of the land capacity analysis results presented on page 8 of the written proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Whatcom County's 10 UGA review and the Draft EIS.

Yours truly,


Jack Hovenier