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Whatcom County Planning Commission
5280 Northwest Drive, Suite B
Bellingham, WA 98226-9070
Planning Commissioners

Re: Foothills Subarea Plan Public Meeting

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The following are excerpts or quotes from correspondence to the Whatcom County Planning and Development Services from The Tilghman Group and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

In an email to Mr. John Everett, Transportation Planner of the Whatcom County PDS dated February 15, 2008, The Tilghman Group stated, in a section titled Implications for Growth in this Rural Area, “that each road serving the Columbia Valley, where the growth is predicated, has major physical constraints such as numerous dog-leg corners, speed restrictions, limited passing area, narrow bridges little to no shoulder, or winding sections with significant grades, means that the valley can support a very limited amount of new development.”

A letter from the Whatcom County PDS to Tin Rock Development dated January 29, 2010, contained a section from the Washington State Department of Transportation expressing some concerns regarding some traffic reports. “We have some serious concerns about the results stated in the report and would like to offer the following comments:

Point number 20 – It is clear that this development will have serious traffic impacts on the State highway system, as well as the County roads and city streets. Many of these impacts are yet to be determined, or have been incorrectly reported.

As I, and many others in this area, travel SR542, note that some of the issues have not been addressed in the traffic studies. One of those pertains to the section of the highway between Deming and the junction with SR547. One of the issues, limited passing areas, stimulated my interest for a little research on the matter. After reviewing traffic flow markings on SR542, I found that nearly 5.4 miles (67%) of the approximate 8.0 miles between Deming and SR547 was designated “no passing zones” for both lanes of traffic. That amount of no passing areas increases the probability of motor vehicle accidents and sight impairment increases the negative results with chance encounters with wildlife crossings. Increased motor vehicle volume as a result of the planned home density in the Columbia Valley will, undoubtedly, increase the probabilities even more.

Respectfully submitted,
William (Bill) Vaught