



Public Policy Perspectives

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1/15/09

Whatcom County Planning Commission

Re: Hearing of 1/15 on Foothills Subarea Plan

Dear Commissioners,

Regarding the matter of the adoption of the Foothills Subarea Plan before you tonight:

I would agree with the staff recommendations that the Columbia Valley remain an Urban Growth Area and that the population projected for the area be reduced.

I would also like to reference the letter I sent regarding the Supplemental Environmental Impact statement and stress the material contain in it remains pertinent as you move forward on this plan.

As to the UGA, I find it difficult to believe that anyone would contemplate reducing the size of the UGA by changing the designation to that of a LAMIRD or by simply removing land from the UGA.

That would not be legal. One of the points stressed in many Hearings Board and Court cases is the certainty UGA inclusion brings to a landowner in that the land will be available for development within the planning period the UGA is designated to serve. Without that certainty the entire concept of a UGA is meaningless.

Again, reduce the population contemplated for the Columbia Valley but remember, unless you have willing landowners you cannot reduce the size of a UGA. In fact, it may not be appropriate to reduce a UGA even if landowners are willing.

Regards,

Jack Petree