

PO Box 865  
Maple Falls, WA 98266  
January 18, 2009

Jean Melious, Chair  
Beckie Boxxe  
Members of Whatcom County Planning Commission  
5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226

To Members of the Planning Commission:

After attending the January 15, public hearing regarding certain aspects of the Foothills Subarea Plan, I yet have some grave concerns.

First, as mandated under the Growth Management Act, we are called to protect the rural character of the Foothills. Further, as evidenced from various surveys and community meetings, residents of the Foothills value highly this preservation of rural character. Since the Lamird Alternative best protects rural character, why should any other alternative be considered?

Second, why does an UGA even exist in this rural, forested, foothills area? It is totally out of character, inconsistent with its surroundings. Why was this UGA designated in the first place? How can the implant of a 460 unit ready made housing community, a commercial area, and industrial areas possibly be in keeping with rural character? One cancels the other out!

Third, please consider very seriously the conclusions of the Tilghman Traffic Report, April 28, 2008. How can we ignore the impact of ski season traffic on the weekends when cars are lined bumper to bumper on the Mt. Baker Hwy – morning and evening? This traffic creates unacceptable levels of service five months out of the year. What about considering summer recreational traffic? What about considering the impact of early morning going-to-work traffic in addition to the County's consideration of Weekday PM counts? How can Hwy 542, Hwy 547, and South Pass Road – as the only traffic ways in and out of the Foothills area – possibly provide acceptable levels of safe service with a long term plan of adding 460 new housing units, a commercial business area, and light industry?

Fourth, what about the issues of ground water, aquifers, fish hatchery, wildlife, wetlands, landfills, air quality? These are all pertinent aspects of rural character.

Fifth, I look at the current community of Paradise and ask, "Don't we have some serious care-taking work on our hands right now?" Who is going to assure that a newly implanted residential area on the west side of Hwy 547 will not fall into the same unfortunate conditions as the Paradise area to the east?

Have any of you lived in or even spent time seriously visiting this east county area? Before you make a decision, please drive the back roads (South Pass, Reese Hill, Silver Lake

Road, Mosquito Lake Road, Kendall Road, Shamrock, Oregon Trail, Sprague Lake Road, Cornell Creek Road). Know what you are about to change by your decision. Protect rural character!

Thank you for your care-filled decision and for your time and effort in serving our community.

Sincerely,

Martha and Gary Sirguy

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