

March 11, 2009

William Stiles III, Chairman
Skagit County Planning Commission
C/O Skagit County Planning and
Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

SKAGIT COUNTY
PERMIT CNTR.

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Re: UGA Open Space Concept Plan

Dear Chairman Stiles:

This letter is written in support of the referenced plan for the following reasons:

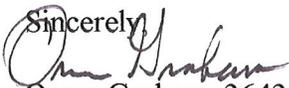
1. The plan addresses a clear need in our community. – While the folks who live here in Skagit County place a high value on the many amenities associated with open space there are growing signs that, over the long term, there may not be enough open space resource to go around. My personal observations suggest that existing open space areas such as trails and parks are fully utilized and in need of augmentation. Similarly the once vast landscapes of the valley have been parcelized, fragmented and developed to an extent that the viewscapes and vistas afforded by open spaces are vanishing. The plan provides an opportunity for the Cities and County to work together in the development of an open space network that will provide a source of recreation and inspiration for future citizens.

2. The plan is based on sound information and an inclusive process. – The plan includes an earnest attempt at gauging public opinion relating to open space issues through a mail out/phone back survey. Review of the survey results indicates a perceived deficiency of existing open space conditions, particularly within urban growth areas and a general recognition of the importance of open space in urban and rural areas. In addition to the survey the process has included interviews and workshops with interested parties and public workshops and presentations before official review authorities. That process continues with the Skagit County Planning Commission prior to adoption by the County and participating municipalities.

3. The plan is supported by the municipalities. – At a time when almost every attempt at a cooperative planning effort turns contentious, it appears that the Open Space Concept Plan has benefited from the umbrella provided by the Skagit Council of Governments. It is no wonder; over the long term, the plan will benefit the citizens of the Cities and County alike.

4. The Plan includes funding and implementing provisions. – The Concept Plan anticipates the challenges of implementation and funding by identify an implementing organization, devising a financial strategy for open space acquisitions and establishing criteria to assess the public benefit associated with open space proposals.

Careful consideration and adoption of this plan will help assure that the qualities of the County we all value dearly are maintained for future residents.

Sincerely,


Oscar Graham, 3643 Legg Road, Bow