

# Concrete Herald

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Jeroldine Hallberg, senior planner  
Planning & Development Services  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

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Dear Ms. Hallberg:

I write to support the UGA Open Space Plan, an important first step toward defining open space and encouraging more sustainable development in Skagit County.

Here in Concrete, I've heard concerns voiced about property rights issues and a perception that the Open Space Plan could trample those rights as it seeks to shape urban form by identifying open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. As a member of the Concrete Town Council and the publisher and editor of the *Concrete Herald*, I am doing what I can to address that perception and present the facts to the communities of eastern Skagit County.

As this process moves forward, I encourage you and your colleagues to refine and tighten your terms, abandoning "open space" in favor of more precise terminology. Move away from this "catch-all" term, which leads to a one-size-fits-all mentality—the same mentality that has brought the U.S. and Skagit County the unsustainable and unbearably boring scourge of suburban sprawl. Open spaces—a.k.a. natural environments—are by their nature complex ecosystems; our response to and management of them should be equally complex and thoughtful.

My hope for this process is that it will inform, guide, and regulate our built environment. If our goal is to preserve our "open space," perhaps building lot sizes on county lands should be restrained even more, to prevent the land from being gobbled up in large chunks for the benefit of a few—at the expense of many. Creating clearly defined edges between our built and natural environments also should be a sought-after goal.

The UGA Open Space Plan is a necessary and, so far, effective approach to managing a finite resource. I applaud its inception and will support its designers as they mature and refine it.

Sincerely,



Jason Miller, publisher and editor  
Concrete Herald