

119 N. 39th Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

March 20, 2009

Skagit County Planning Commission
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 982723

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I would like to voice my support of the current proposal for open space and recreational trails in this component of the comprehensive plan. Trails are needed in Skagit County to provide access for the public to our beautiful open spaces. While our area has trails and recreational resources in the federal public lands, those are primarily in the mountains and at higher elevation. We need trails nearer to the urban populations and accessible year at lower elevations.

Trails provide recreational opportunity for enjoying the outdoors and getting exercise. They also increase property values for homes within comfortable walking distance of such trails. Studies do not support the fears that trails increase crime or property damage to nearby homes. Opening up trails to use by the public and families provides more eyes to watch for poor behavior.

We need plan to connect our existing trails together into a coherent system. Conceptually, this proposal does that, and begins to tie urban areas to open space and rural vistas.

I ask for you to support this open space and recreational trails plan.

Sincerely,



Mary Mae Hardt