



Preserving Our Heritage, Shaping Our Future

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Envision Skagit 2060

Local Citizens Plan for the Future

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Officials estimate that Skagit County's population will nearly double in the next 50 years. Where will all of these people live, and with what consequences for the things that we value? This was the major question posed to the Envision Skagit 2060 Citizen Committee in September 2010.

With an EPA grant, Skagit County officials initiated the multi-phased Envision Skagit 2060 project in late 2008 by first forming a steering committee and four technical committees. Broadly focused on agriculture, ecosystems, forestry, growth management and housing issues, members of the steering and technical committees worked for approximately 18 months to define various alternative-future scenarios and indicators based on their respective areas of expertise. The large majority of members of the steering and technical committees are Skagit County residents representing key jurisdictions (county, cities and towns, tribes), interests (agriculture, forestry, conservation, economic development) and organizations.

In September 2010, the Envision Skagit 2060 Citizen Committee was formed to develop a balanced and forward looking "preferred future" drawing on the best elements of four alternative futures developed by the steering and technical committees. For the past ten months the Citizen Committee has been deeply immersed in learning as much as possible about the impacts of growth on our way of life. For example, more than 300 of our friends and neighbors countywide have turned out at 10 community workshops that we conducted to help us understand their vision and values. We've made more than a dozen additional presentations to local groups including Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, EDASC, Evergreen Islands and Friends of Skagit County, Skagit Valley College students, and local high school students. We've toured farms, forests, restorations sites, floodplains, cities and towns around Skagit County. We've made field trips to the greater Seattle and Metropolitan Vancouver areas. And we've heard from experts from around the country to help us get a firm grasp on cutting edge thoughts, ideas and best practices related to our task. While the project is very much rooted in the visions and desires of Skagit County residents, there is merit in sometimes looking at "best practices" and leading examples from other communities – to help us get where we want to go without having to reinvent the wheel (or make costly mistakes).

The amount of time we have spent listening to Skagit Valley residents and local organization representatives, talking among ourselves, and visiting different sites in this community vastly outweighs the time we have spent listening to and brainstorming with noted regional and national experts including regionalism expert Dr. Robert Lang, visionary architect Bill Kreager, and sustainable development expert Ed McMahon.



Envision Skagit 2060 works with Skagit County residents to develop a broadly-supported, 50-year vision to protect our environment, sustain our natural resource industries, and accommodate population growth in livable, walkable and economically-vibrant communities.

We have the benefit of a sophisticated computer model (developed with the help of modelers at Oregon State University, based on extensive input from the steering, technical and citizen committees) that enables us to view maps, graphs and charts reflecting different alternatives based on policy choices and preferences that we identified. Through this computer model we're able to imagine various growth alternatives and get a better understanding of how this growth might impact our region.

In conducting community workshops, the Citizen Committee heard overwhelmingly from Skagit County residents that they place a very high value on protecting our diverse local agriculture, our healthy natural systems (including forests, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat), access and connections to nature that they find here, and the unique character of our cities and towns. People value the beauty of Skagit County and the opportunity to make a living here.

We invite you to join the ES2060 Citizen Committee as we unveil our draft recommendations on Thursday, June 16 at the Northwest Washington Pipe Trades Apprenticeship Building, 780 Chrysler Drive in Burlington, starting at 4 p.m. By listening to you, our fellow citizens, we believe our vision for the future will reflect what we've heard from you.

Sincerely,

Envision Skagit 2060 Citizen Committee

Peggy Skaggs

Not your friend

Kimi L Cook

King Williams

James A. Flynn

Doris Robben's

Alynn Sakuma

Mustafa Basmaj

Tim Roenker

Coley J. Estes

Signed by,

Kerri Cook, Alger

Cory Ertel, Anacortes

Peggy Flynn, Anacortes

Jim Meyer, Rockport

Kim Mower, Hamilton area

Gustavo Ramos, Jr., Mount Vernon

Doris Robbins, Edison

Tim Rosenhan, Samish Island

Ryan Sakuma, Burlington

Nate Youngquist, Mount Vernon

Note: Citizen Committee member Grace Popoff chose not to sign this letter.

Committee member John Cheney has been unavailable to review and sign the letter.