

ENVISION SKAGIT POST-PUBLIC PRESENTATION INPUT FOR THE RECORD:

GOALS I DON'T SUPPORT, AND WHY:

1. Regional coordination, collaboration & cooperation:

Ceding control to un-elected entities destroys “unique character” and takes away our local “voice” (elected officials). This plan suggests a fiscally and constitutionally unsustainable vision for our future that is funded with money from outside Skagit County. It suggests unrealistic, expensive, restrictive, anti-growth, economy stifling, anti property rights land use/control policies. “Tax revenue sharing” and combining cities, allocating population and employment is income/wealth redistribution. This will not enhance incentive or productivity. Why push future growth into the flood plain? Local control will be sacrificed to gain a 90/10 equation, as opposed to present 80/20 equation. This difference is NOT worth giving up local control of our future. Why are we fixing what isn't broken? Why are we attempting to write new history while ignoring related work done in the past? There is another agenda here. Could it be funding for county staff? Could it be money, period? This County government seems to have an integrity problem. Did anyone take an oath of office to protect us? If yes, then that oath should be revisited.

2. Protect Natural resource lands, Aquatic Resources and Industries:

The environmental movement is CO-OPTING FARMLAND PRESERVATION to implement land use control, copious changes in code/regs/law regarding things not essential to working farmland or working forests. This plan will restrict and regulate business and local citizenry. This is an anti-growth, anti tax-base agenda. “No net loss” is not realistic. What is the definition of “agricultural lands”? Is it **WORKING FARMLAND? Where is money for industrial center coming from? **NO**, to traffic control! What are options to double Farmland Legacy capacity? **TAX** or money from outside that comes with strings attached? **NO**, to the regulatory strings that accompany “state, federal or international designation”. Is “forestry” defined as **WORKING FORESTS**? If not, then maintaining existing zoning is not related to anything but land control.**

3. Protect, Preserve, Restore Environmental Resources and Values:

Since when is open space, green corridors, green infrastructure, bike paths, green building etc. integral to farmland preservation? WE HAVE ALLOWED OUR EYES TO BE TAKEN OFF THE PRIZE. Long range, county wide conservation vision will not enhance, but impede vitality/business/tax base. “Open space projects” are code for an anti-growth, anti-development, anti-tax base, anti-local control. This section is borrowed from national environmental agenda that we don't need, don't support and can't afford. **WHERE IS THE MONEY COMING FROM? If it comes from outside Skagit County, then there will be strings attached that we also can't afford. Purchase of development rights from floodplain, maintaining current pace of restoration, widening the river corridors, etc. is unrealistic and expensive. **SEA LEVEL INCREASE** – the seas are rising at the rate of 1mm per year. Why the hysteria? This whole section is full of social engineering, increased**

regulation and terminal torment of tax payers. Then, we are going to force more population into the flood plain downstream. This makes absolutely no sense.

4. Compact Communities and Conservation Development:

Agriculture has apparently jumped into bed with Futurewise and/or other radical groups. This contradictory alliance will not end well for Ag. Commissioner Dillon said that there was NO undue influence from any group. Why then is this section full of Futurewise language and goals? This section will not enhance our unique character but will create a template of “smartgrowth”. There is nothing unique about a one size fits all approach. WHO is deciding what environmentally “sensitive areas” are? Who gave environmentalists authority to decide what was best for WORKING FARMLAND? What qualifies them to pile on more laws, regulations and codes? This process has lost all integrity with this section on social engineering that will effectively erase character, create slums, keep awareness of Ag. minimal, penalize industry and create a permanent voting base for democrats. This is a good example of how farmland preservation has been co-opted for other agendas. This kind of manipulation will undermine the integrity of farmland preservation efforts, as it has in Whatcom County.

5. Sustainable Transportation:

Please. What do bike lanes, Hwy 20 collectivos, open space corridors, and other expensive suggestions do for all those who commute out of county for work every day? THAT is neglected. Environmentalists want to eliminate autos, logically or not. DO NOT turn over control of our navigable waterways to federal entities, where possible.

6. Water/Wastewater:

This section is full of unrealistic expectations, will be prohibitively expensive, inflict more laws/regulations and lead to potential rationing and coercion.

7. Housing Variety and Affordability:

Implementation of “smartgrowth” social engineering will result in lower property values, turn rural areas (villages) into slums and destroy existing character. It destroys what is “unique” while purporting to “protect it”. This punishes the building industry, among others. The pilot project specs are discriminatory and expensive. Stop picking winners and losers! This kind of coercion invites golden geese to fly elsewhere to do their business.

8. Economic Vitality:

This plan will destroy economic vitality. “Sustainable” is not a business-friendly term. It means restrictive. Stop pretending that environmentalists know anything about economic vitality. Why not “large-scale” business and industry? Environmental micro-management will KILL business, period. Economic diversity is code for picking winners and losers. That does not create vitality. Providing “sustainable” education is promoting tunnel vision for

the future. This plan does not invite economic vitality but does invite industrial tyranny. Whose county is this, anyway? I suggest that you all drink a big cup of economic reality and then get back to us with some realistic and affordable suggestions. STOP taking grant money from outside entities to destroy our economy and our quality of life!

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE ENVISION SKAGIT PROCESS:

Who gave Envision Skagit (the environmental movement) the power to invite and subsequently dismiss citizen concerns? Any process that purports to solicit input should subsequently put that input forth, not obscure it or codify it (silos of special interest). They have diminished and omitted copious public comment and legitimate concerns regarding property rights, potential taxes and regulation. Taxing issues have been referred to as “emotional issues”. This restrictive agenda will attempt to “break down” any opposition. We have been deemed “selfish” for our concerns. Unelected entities are taking the voice from citizens and their elected representatives. Why are grants being accepted to wreak present and future economic and constitutional havoc on local tax-paying citizens and businesses? Money is being exchanged for control. Use of grant funds by the County for staffing suggests pre-determined outcomes and is a disgraceful scam! This process has discriminated against “certain” taxpayers. Why are some tax-payers more equal than others? This is a waste of federal and county resources. This plan will bind tax payers and business in regulation and anti growth policy. The green agenda is not fiscally sustainable or fair. Stop picking winners and losers and get back to the preservation of WORKING FARMLANDS!

Diminishing Property Rights - Slip sliding away -
<http://www.whatcomexcavator.org/diminishing-property-rights.html>

Submitted by Ellen Cooley, 16340 Lookout Lane, Bow, WA 98232