

# Written Comments on the Envision Skagit 2060 Citizen Committee Recommendations from the April 25, 2012 Envision Skagit Open House

Following are written comments submitted during the April 25 Envision Open House on comment forms that were provided.

Gabriel Olmsted, Anacortes

**Goals and Recommendations I support, and why:**

- 1.1, Skagit Alliance: continue this comprehensive approach going forward
- 2.5, Stormwater management: use LID techniques and practices to protect Salish Sea
- 3.14, Expand voluntary use by including in various Public Works Department standard practices
- 3.9, Diked farmland into salt marsh/wetland – restoration of natural habitat
- 4.2 & 4.3, Find quality in density – proximity to services and jobs, community, etc.
- 6.1, Include catchment, grey water and L.O.S.S. (on-site sewage) options where possible
- 7- All sections. We need to meet the housing needs of the county!

**Goals and Recommendations I don't support, and why?**

I think I mostly "support" the report.

**General comments on the Envision Skagit project:**

I sincerely appreciate the good efforts of committee in the formation of these recommendations & the county is carrying these conversations forward. I strongly encourage the continuance of discussions with the community & citizen involvement.

Jeroldine Hallberg

**Goals and Recommendations I support, and why:**

4.7, Compact growth will best preserve resource & rural lands. It also has the greatest promise of minimizing energy use & has the potential for healthy communities. No net loss of ag lands: look to upland areas with good soil, but smaller lot sizes. This helps accommodate habitat creation in the flats.

**General comments on the Envision Skagit project:**

Monitoring achievement of these goals is important. This task is challenging and has been avoided in the past. Cities have down zoned residential areas with no consequence or debate at the regional level. Look at how industrial uses can be more densely developed.

Aileen Good, Sedro-Woolley

**Goals and Recommendations I support, and why:**

Ag must be protected. Private property must be protected.

**Goals and Recommendations I don't support, and why?**

Trails do not need to interconnect between towns. Short trails within towns are good.

**General comments on the Envision Skagit project:**

Make cities more inviting to encourage population growth within the cities and towns. Skagit Council of Governments has no accountability; very few know they exist and what power they have. Skagit Alliance must be local citizens only. This plan is a waste of time and money.

Randy Good, Sedro-Woolley

**Goals and Recommendations I support, and why:**

No net loss of farmland. Encourage economic development in designated area. No taking of private property without paying for it, including land or easements considered for anything or projects.

**Goals and Recommendations I don't support, and why?**

I do not support any enlargement of present trail systems. More than adequate trail systems are in Skagit County now. Trails are a waste of tax dollars. I don't support SCOG; unknown entity to 99% of citizens.

**General comments on the Envision Skagit project:**

Stop contradictions in plan. This plan promotes open space and trails into our farmlands. As we all know, this makes and causes adverse effects to ag. 99% of homes along the Cascade Trail in East Skagit County has been burglarized or vandalized, some three times. No law enforcement to protect these landowners. Calls to the Sheriff result in next day responses; they claim lack of personnel. This is stressful to area farmers.

Dennis Clark, Anacortes

**Goals and Recommendations I support, and why:**

I strongly support the entire package. Recommendations of greatest importance that should not be eliminated or watered down are: 1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 3.10, all of section 4, and 5.4. If followed, the recommendations will preserve most of what I value about Skagit County and improve quality of life for all of us.

**Goals and Recommendations I don't support, and why?**

None. The Citizen Committee did a great job and didn't identify any problematic recommendations.

Dennis Clark, continued

**General comments on the Envision Skagit project:**

I've been following the project for a year and commented on the 2011 draft. Skagit County is fortunate to have the leadership and vision to get to this point – now for the harder work of realizing this vision. Please don't allow a tiny minority to undermine this good work by raising silly fears about "Agenda 21", The United Nations, and other groundless fears about erosion of property rights.

The following comment was provided in typed format, not hand-written on a comment form:

**Comments for Envision Skagit 2060**

**Public Open House**

**April 25, 2012**

To the Envision Skagit Leadership, Citizen Committee and Staff:

It is my understanding that **The Envision Skagit 2060 Project** seeks to develop and implement a broadly supported, 50-year plan to protect the Skagit and Samish River watersheds' many environmental values, maintain our highly productive natural resource industries, and accommodate population growth in livable, walkable, and economically vibrant communities. I believe this effort is a truly, noble, important, and forward thinking Plan.

The broad based Plan includes Goals in nine key areas:

1. A Regional Vision: Stronger Regional Coordination, Collaboration and Cooperation
2. Protect Natural Resource Lands, Aquatic resources and Industries (Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Shellfish)
3. Protect and Preserve, Restore Environmental Resources and Values
4. Compact Communities and Conservation Development
5. Sustainable Transportation
6. Water / Wastewater
7. Housing Variety and Affordability
8. Economic Vitality
9. Climate Change

As you most likely are aware, Skagit County could become part of a railway transportation corridor for the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project which is proposed for Cherry Point in Whatcom County. The proposed project could bring as many as 18 coal trains per day through Skagit County and each train could be 1.5 miles long. There are eight "at grade" rail crossing in Skagit County that currently block local business related traffic when current trains pass through. The range of potential impacts from the significantly increased coal train traffic is extensive:

- blocking of major intersections such that fire, police and ambulances will have serious and potentially life threatening delays; along with traffic delays for residents, businesses /commerce, school buses and visitors to this area;
- such obstruction of traffic will also have a negative impact on economic development throughout Skagit County;
- the diesel fuel emissions from the significantly increased train traffic will have serious subsequent health impacts;
- increased train noise will negatively affect daily life;

- train vibrations may have an impact on buildings particularly some of the historic buildings throughout Skagit County;
- coal dust spread from the trains will have environmental impacts;
- potential decrease in property values for homes and businesses along the train route corridors due to increased noise and coal dust;
- the burning of coal in Asia will influence future climate change.

As recent articles in regional newspapers have reported, (see Skagit Valley Herald – Wednesday, April 18, 2012, front page) “The EPA wants full review of Oregon coal export project.” The report indicated that EPA had informed the Army Corps of Engineers that it should conduct a thorough and broadly-scoped review of the cumulative impacts of exporting large amounts of coal from Wyoming and Montana to Asia through proposed Washington and Oregon ports.

Given that Envision Skagit 2060 has outlined nine broad and extensive Goal Areas, it is appropriate to take the EPA recommendation into consideration when envisioning what could become of Skagit County with the potential of increased coal train traffic.

The review process for the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project includes a scoping period which will take place sometime in the summer of 2012. The scoping period is a critical phase in the review process which allows for comments from the public, tribes, state and local agencies regarding what factors and what geographic areas should be included in the overall study of the terminal’s potential impacts. Providing such comments during the scoping period does not require or imply that the sender(s) are either for or against the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project.

Therefore, during the scoping period, it is imperative for the Envision Skagit 2060 County Leadership, Citizen Committee and staff to share comments regarding factors requiring environmental impact review and insist that geographically, Skagit County is included in an overall comprehensive environmental impact analysis and study for the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project.

Letters and Comments made during Scoping (time to be determined) should be submitted to:

- Whatcom County Council: Tyler Schroeder: [tschroed@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:tschroed@co.whatcom.wa.us)
- Washington State Dept. of Ecology: Ted Sturdevant: [tstu461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:tstu461@ecy.wa.gov)
- Army Corps of Engineers: Randel Perry: [Randel.J.Perry@usace.army.mil](mailto:Randel.J.Perry@usace.army.mil)

**For more information see:**

[powerpastcoal.org](http://powerpastcoal.org)  
[coaltrainfacts.org](http://coaltrainfacts.org)

There are many people in our county who are very concerned about the coal port proposal and the negative impacts from coal trains. Please participate in the scoping period in an effort to assure that Skagit County is included in the overall comprehensive environmental impact analysis.

Thank you,

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