

**Skagit County Board of Commissioners
Public Hearing: Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update
June 20, 2016**

Commissioners: Lisa Janicki, Chair
Ron Wesen
Ken Dahlstedt

Staff: Dale Pernula, Planning Director
Kirk Johnson, Senior Planner

Commenters: Karen Everett
Randy and Aileen Good
Mark Madden
Dianne and Doug Neilson
Nancy Fox, GIPAC
Allen Bush, GIPAC
Edith Walden
Ginger Orsini
Hal Rooks, GIPAC
Kit Harma
Max Benjamin
Michael and JoAnne Gray
Ramon Hayes, Mayor of La Conner
Liz McNett Crowl
William W. Dunlap
Carol Ehlers
Tim Manns, Skagit Audubon Society
Joan Melcher
Molly Doan, Skagit Land Trust
Ginny Darvill
Ken Fritsch
Ellen Bynum, Friends of Skagit County
Brian Lipscomb
Anne Winkes
Linda Talman
Marie Erbstoesz
Christopher Freitas
Gary Hagland, Citizens Alliance of Property Rights
Ed Stauffer

Others: Josh Axthelm, Skagit County Planning Commission Chair

Chair Lisa Janicki: (gavel) Good evening. I'd like to call to order the Board of County Commissioners. We are here this evening for a public hearing on our 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, and I just want to thank all of you – we weren't sure what would happen if we scheduled a public hearing for 6 p.m., but obviously that was a good time to do this so I just want to welcome you all to the Commissioners' Hearing Room. I'm going to ask our Director Dale Pernula to give a little bit of background and then I have an opening comment or statement to

make. At this point I'd really ask all of you to turn off phones, cell phones. Just double-check them so we don't have that beep. There's a lot of phones in this room, I know, so anyway. Dale, would you like to start?

Dale Pernula: Okay. I'm just going to make a few very brief comments. This is a periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan for Skagit County. This is an eight-year update and it's required by GMA to be adopted by June 30th. We began in about two years ago with meeting with the planners from the various Cities within Skagit County to determine what the population forecasts were going to be and what the employment forecasts were going to be for each of the urban growth areas so that we could size those urban growth areas. And we kept on working on it and then it really began in full swing about a year-and-a-half ago in early 2015. The Board of County Commissioners adopted just before that in December a resolution, 20140374, that established the scope of the Comprehensive Plan Update. After that we held a number of meetings with local people on Fidalgo Island, Concrete, Big Lake, and Edison in January of 2016. We also held workshops dealing with population and employment allocations, the Transportation Element, and on the Rural Element. We released the Comprehensive Plan Update on March 3rd and ran a 42-day public comment period through April 14th, and it included a public hearing on April 5th. The Planning Commission met four times to deliberate on the proposal and completed its recorded motion on May 31st. The Planning Commission's recorded motion was formally presented to the Board when they were scheduling this hearing tonight.

I'd like to mention a couple of things about the Comprehensive Plan Update. One is I see there's a lot of interest from Guemes Island and we have included a couple of changes from the Guemes original proposal. One is that we're going to be measuring – according to the new proposal – the height of structures from the base flood elevation, not from the surrounding ground, so that if they are really low locations they're not impeded from building a reasonable structure.

The second thing is that variances from the setback and height provisions of the Guemes Island Overlay would be an administrative variance and not a Hearing Examiner variance.

Also I understand there are some concerns about junk provisions of the code, and I'll point out that these are not substantive changes to what the code is right now. We allow up to 500 square feet of junk on a lot before it becomes something that we're going to enforce on. The main thing we're just trying to do is clear up that part of the ordinance, make it easier for the public to understand and for us to enforce. And those are my main comments. There's an awful lot of material here, so take comments.

Chair Janicki: All right. So just to kind of lay the groundwork here: The purpose of this public hearing is to receive testimony on proposed amendments to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, the development regulations, and land use zoning map being considered as part of our 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. The initial 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update proposal was released for public review, as Director Pernula said, on March 3rd, 2016. A 42-day public comment period followed and included public hearing before the Skagit County Planning Commission on April 5th of 2016. This new public comment period today is focused primarily on the 38 changes to the original proposal, as recommended by the Planning Commission in its May 31st recorded motion and the additional changes directed by the Board of County Commissioners at its June 7th meeting.

So the sign-up sheets – those of you who have – we'll go through the sign-up sheets and they were divided into two areas, one for Comp Plan and development regulations and the other was

for the land use zoning map amendments, which I don't see anybody signed up for that particular session. And then if you have not signed up and there's still time, we will allow some additional time at the end of sign-up sheets. We are going to absolutely hold to three minutes for each person so that we can get as many people through as possible. And when you testify, I would like to ask you to state your name, spell your last name for the record so we get it right, and state your address. You also have the opportunity to provide written comments. There's a box located on the staff table – a basket there on the staff table. The written comment period is open until Thursday, June 23rd, at 4:30 p.m. Written comments are encouraged and are not limited in length or in the number of issues you may raise. Written comments must be submitted to the Planning and Development Services Department, preferably to the e-mail address on the screen. Is it on the screen? Yes, on the screen.

And then I did have one question I just had confirmed with Director Pernula ahead of time. Someone asked if the comments that they made at the Planning Commission meetings were incorporated by reference to this process. And so the answer is yes. So, you know, tonight we really want to focus on the things on those 38 items that the Planning Commission worked so hard to bring forward to us. But just so you know that the comments and your comments that you have submitted and the responses from staff are already part of the record.

So with that – so the process will be to come forward to this podium here and, as I said, to state your name, spell your last name, and state your address. So I have Karen Everett, followed by Randy Good and Aileen Good. And so maybe if the on-deck people could be on-deck....

Karen Everett: My name is Karen Everett, E-v-e-r-e-t-t. I've lived on Guemes Island for nearly 22 years and I've also been a realtor specializing in Guemes Island for 12 years. I'd like to start by thanking Skagit County Planning and the Guemes – GIPAC for its work so far protecting our island; however, my husband and I are strongly opposed to some of the proposed building restrictions.

Our family has owned properties continuously since 1917. That's almost 100 years. And we have – we're in the process of trying to build on one of our 50-foot waterfront lots. And we've been paying taxes on these two lots, you know, for 800,000 for both lots together, and if those aren't buildable lots then I want my taxes back for one thing! But we've already been through a lot of the process. Our next step is the reasonable use exception. But with some of the new building restrictions again, like I said, we would have a hard time putting in what our dream would be. We feel that there's people who have already built their dream homes and would just like to freeze Guemes Island in time because their projects are already done, at the expense of those of us who haven't been able or can't afford to build their dream.

I don't believe the recommendations represent the majority of islanders. So and as a realtor, I'd like to add the new rules would deeply impact many areas of Guemes. So many people on Guemes don't even know about these, including me, who's a realtor. I mean, I was marginally aware of them, but it wasn't until a contractor explained how they would affect what a building would look like that I really – that's why I'm here. So we'd like to ask you to delay a vote but it sounds like you can't, according to the – what you were just talking about – the eight-year plan. But at least look at some of these building restrictions and change them according to some of the other testimony you're going to hear today. Thanks.

Chair Janicki: Thank you.

Commissioner Ron Wesen: Thank you.

Randy Good: Randy Good.

Aileen Good: Aileen Good.

Mr. Good: 35482 State Route 20, G-o-o-d.

Chair Janicki: And just for the record, Randy and Aileen approached me before this hearing and I told them that the two of them together could present.

Mr. Good: Regarding projects that have been added to the County's Transportation Improvement Program in the Transportation Technical Appendix, exhibit 26 of March draft, this project list was reviewed by the County Planning Commission and adopted by the County Commissioners December of last year. Somehow 11 projects without ID numbers listed under "Non-Motorized" heading have mysteriously been added without going through the process of a public meeting, a public hearing with the Planning Commission, and without a public hearing with the County Commissioners. No vote by the Commissioners to include these 11 projects that cost \$71 million. Two of these non-motorized trails results in a loss of 120 acres of farmland. Another shows a trail drawn through a dairy farm. All other projects have ID numbers, have gone through the County public process already in place to add projects onto the County TIP as described in this 2016 Comp Plan Update.

May 20 Staff Report #4, which removes some of these projects, combines several, renames several, adds two new ones now listed at nine projects, all without public notice or review. Unethically, staff Walters and Johnson insert false information under their staff recommendations and rationale, which the Planning Commission members believed to be true. Examples of the false information: County staff recommendations on the Wiseman Creek Boardwalk, Centennial, and the Cascade Trail, as identified on the Staff Report 4, which the Planning Commission motion was based on, have statements that these projects were adopted onto SCOG's Regional Plan. How can that be? The Board of Commissioners has not even voted to include these three projects onto the County's Six-Year TIP so how can they be on the Regional Plan at SCOG?

Staff Report 4 also states the Centennial and Cascade Trails are adopted onto the Capital Facilities Plan which staff somehow claims makes them a legitimate project that has gone through a public process. The Capital Facilities Plan is only a budgeting planning tool on which the two trails are listed for maintenance funds only. Staff's recommendations on the Centennial Trail also state it ties into several Sedro-Woolley projects. One of the Sedro-Woolley projects even has Skagit County holding a clouded title as owner of the parcel. Documentation attached shows how by quit claim deed the County confiscated the abandoned rail corridor easements from Sedro-Woolley out to the Snohomish County line – Centennial Trail – without the easement landowner's knowledge, along with a County attorney memo telling the Commissioners how to take the railroad easement lands without paying the landowners, which they did. Other parcels remain today with clouded titles under the same County's quit claim deed.

The County Planning Commission has donated many long hours to the betterment of Skagit County. Why would County staff Walters and Johnson knowingly supply the Planning Commission with false information? They need to be held accountable. The Planning Commission members and county citizens deserve better. We encourage the County Commissioners to remove from this Comp Plan Update Transportation Technical Appendix TIP

the following three projects: Wiseman Creek Boardwalk, Centennial Trail, and the Coast-to-Cascades Trail, which was identified on Staff Report #4 as Cascade Trail, from which the Planning Commission's recorded motion was based on.

For additional comments, on the Open Space Concept we encourage the County Commissioners to support the County Planning Commission's recorded motion of May 31st.

On the development regulations, a new section, 14.15.945 – what Dale was talking about – Prohibited Uses, please review this section and clarify the language. I think as it is written, probably 85 to 90% of the rural residents will face civil infractions. We encourage the Commissioners for now to delete that section 14.15.

We have additional comments on other items in this letter, and thank you for your consideration.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. I have Mark Madden, followed by Dianne and Doug Neilson.

Mark Madden: Good evening. Thank you for holding this hearing. My name is Mark Madden, M-a-d-d-e-n. I have a home at 4910 North Indian Village Lane. This is a remote community on the west side of north Guemes Island. It's known as Indian Village.

I'm going to begin by complimenting the Planning and Development Services staff. They take the time to listen to people and search for solutions between conflicts that are conflicting proposals, even though they have a rigorous schedule and many obstacles, and they have tight deadlines. I support Recommendation 23 from the Planning Commission. 21 homes in Indian Village and 53 homes in West Beach, a larger community south of Indian Village, have ground lines averaging four feet below the base flood elevations without the recommendation proposed. And with the new side wall restrictions proposed in the Guemes Island Overlay, minimum eight-foot ceilings at setbacks would not be possible.

I also support the proposal for Administrative Variances. We're going to need them. The terrible restrictions in the proposed Guemes Island Overlay are especially hard on narrow lots, and 18 of 21 lots in Indian Village are only 50 feet wide. The proposed Overlay restricts good designs and things like side roof gables and vaulted ceilings, and it miniaturizes the frontage area where homeowners want windows so they can see views of Bellingham Channel and the San Juan Islands. Even with variances, though, property values will decline because potential buyers cannot rely on approval of variances to build an average size home.

The small but vocal group pushing these Overlay restrictions claims they are necessary to preserve views and to prevent scale differential. Not true. Or at least rarely true. Not one of the 21 homes in Indian Village and not one of the 53 homes in West Beach have homes behind them. And half of these homes are already large. A perfect storm will flood the low homes in these communities and they'll have to rebuild smaller, increasing the scale differential. Together these two communities on west Guemes make up the majority of no-bank waterfront homes on Guemes Island and yet they had no input or they had no notification of these proposed changes from GIPAC. Thank you for your time.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. And just for clarification, that yellow light goes off it means there's one minute left on the timer for timing. There are four empty seats in the front, if anyone wants to come and sit down.

Dianne Neilson: Where's the yellow light?

Chair Janicki: Three minutes, and it'll drop to one minute, and then the red will –

Ms. Neilson: Okay. Dianne Neilson, N-e-i-l-s-o-n, and my husband, Doug.

Doug Neilson: Doug Neilson.

Ms. Neilson: And we're here first to say that we really appreciate GIPAC and their goals to protect our beautiful and unique island; however, we are also in opposition of the current proposal. We're new homeowners on West Beach and we – I have a 71-year-old, below-floodplain beach cottage that is going to be needing some updating or, rather, rebuilding, and we feel that these proposed building recommendations will be very restrictive, very limiting, and will affect our plans and our dreams. We recently learned about this and have tried to educate ourselves more about it. We spoke with on the island builders, real estate, neighbors, friends on three beaches, and no one seemed to be sure of why these were happening. And our goal today really was just to urge the Commissioners to either not vote or remove or modify those plans before they are adopted.

And then I was asked to read a letter from Mike Rodgers who was ill, planning to be here tonight. His last name is spelled R-o-d-g-e-r-s. He wrote:

Dear County Commissioners: My wife and I are 16-year owners of Guemes Island waterfront property at 6224 West Shore Road. We strongly object to the proposed building restrictions proposed by GIPAC, which are strangely supported by County staff who apparently believe that this small group speaks for the needs of Guemes Island property owners. Apparently GIPAC wants to preserve views for non-waterfront property owners on the North Beach area of Guemes by proposing greater building setback and height regulations. These non-waterfront owners are attempting by regulation to create view easements for themselves. Commissioners should be aware that the state of Washington has never recognized a view easement. The assessed value of waterfront property far exceeds non-waterfront property values for the very reason that access and views to the water are non-obstructed.

And just to shorten this:

GIPAC has never informed any of us they were proposing unneeded additional setbacks. Potential buyers going through administrative variance process, expensive and time-consuming, will put County staff in the position of judge and jury that will be built on our waterfront lots. Waterfront property should not be in (the) position of needing to demonstrate hardship, as required by the administrative variance. None of the newer waterfront homes built on the west side of the island would have been permitted if they had been required to conform to these new setback and height restrictions.

Commissioners, you need to recognize the new restrictions on height and setbacks are being urged by a few non-waterfront owners who are attempting to preserve water views that neither paid for nor are recognized by Washington law.

Chair Janicki: Okay. Thank you. You might want to drop that written record off.

Ms. Neilson: Where's the box?

Kirk Johnson: Right here.

Chair Janicki: On the corner of that staff desk. All right, I have Nancy Fox and Allen Bush next. Well, Nancy and then Allen's up.

Nancy Fox: Hello. My name is Nancy Fox. That's F-o-x. And my address is 7202 Channel View Drive. That's on Guemes Island. I'm Chair of the Guemes Island Planning and Advisory Committee and I'm here tonight to provide GIPAC – we call ourselves GIPAC – GIPAC comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update. I do have written comments and I'll drop those off as well.

In introduction, I just want to remind everyone we are at the tail end of a very long planning process on Guemes Island. Our plan was 20 years in development. Our subarea plan was ultimately adopted by this Board five years ago, and in that plan GIPAC was assigned responsibility for working with the County to put specific implementing actions in place. And that's exactly what we've done. We haven't come up with new ideas. We are working to implement the adopted Guemes Island Subarea Plan.

We're very pleased to be here tonight to be able to support the code provisions that are proposed for Guemes Island, and specifically I'm talking about the Guemes Island Zoning Overlay and the Seawater Intrusion Policy, which is proposed for codification in the critical areas ordinance. We do understand that there are some beachfront property owners, they've raised concerns about the Overlay. And in fact, some of these property owners came and met with us, which was great, and we had some good discussion.

Tonight there are two of the three – 38 rather – changes in the Comprehensive Plan that you are considering. Two of them relate to the Zoning Overlay for Guemes Island and Dale mentioned those. One is the proposal to measure building height from flood elevation rather than grade, and the other is to allow administrative variances from the standards of the code.

Can you remind me what that one means?

Chair Janicki: One minute.

Ms. Fox: Thank you. So I just want to report that GIPAC has reviewed these changes. We think they're appropriate. We support them. We think they provide the flexibility that is needed for building on small beach lots on Guemes Island.

I'm going to submit our full comments in writing. We do have a couple other issues to – that we'd like to bring to your attention and we'll just give those to you in writing and ask your consideration of them. Thank you very much.

Chair Janicki: Thank you.

Commissioner Wesen: Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Allen? After Allen is Edith Walden, followed by Ginger Orsini.

Allen Bush: My name is Allen Bush, 6628 West Shore Drive, Guemes Island. I'm the Vice-Chair of GIPAC. I want to thank everyone – my neighbors, both on the island and in the county – for showing up for this process. I appreciate Planning and the Commissioners for hearing our concerns.

I want to start by saying that we as GIPAC are committed in that in 2003 by resolution – I was in the room when this resolution was signed – recognizing Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee as a community-based representative for purposes of obtaining funds and initiating a subarea plan for Guemes Island. In 2005, a resolution there approving work plan for the Guemes Island Subarea Plan. Another resolution from 2004, a resolution entering into an agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology to provide shoreline planning for Guemes Island and getting a grant for \$10,000 to do so. And then in 2011 an ordinance adopting the Guemes Island Subarea Plan. So welcome to the 11th hour. We've had a lot of time, a lot of discussion, a lot of studies – American Institute of Architects, Rapid Shoreline Inventory – all public documents, and, yeah, we've had a lot of public comment. In that plan on page 10 – or page 30, excuse me – is in fact the side yard setback and building structure. So 5½ years on the books. So again I thank you for your time and effort, and thanks.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Edith Walden, Ginger Orsini, and then Hal Rooks.

Edith Walden: My name is Edith Walden. I live at 6203 South Shore Road. I've lived on Guemes Island 21 years. I'm the Editor-in-Chief of the Guemes Tide, the island's newspaper that has been publishing monthly for 6½ years, with a circulation that reaches approximately 600 households. Guemes Island also has a well-used website called LineTime, where all community organizations have webpages and publish their meeting notices, minutes, and information that is important to islanders. In the past several days there have been comments on two community Facebook pages suggesting that members of the Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee are not elected through a publicized electoral process and do not represent the broader community. I would like to remind the Commissioners of the facts.

The first GIPAC members were elected at a public meeting in 1991 to begin planning for subarea guidelines. In 2002, a new GIPAC was elected at a public meeting to draft a subarea plan, which was adopted by the Skagit Board of Commissioners in January 2011. The adopted plan specifically designates GIPAC to represent the island. In the drafting stages for the subarea plan, numerous public meetings were announced and held. In 2004, 60 islanders attended a public workshop to complete a survey that resulted in a strong preference for maintaining the visual rural character of the island. That same year, a written survey was returned by nearly 370 households. 56% of the respondents strongly preferred the community's right to preserve its character. Only 9% strongly preferred the importance of individual property rights. In 2006, about 200 people attended a three-day workshop facilitated by the American Institute of Architects. The final report validated the path the island community wishes to follow and upheld the objectives of the subarea plan. The plan has been widely publicized and described. One would have to be very new to the island or extremely disconnected to the community to not know about the Guemes Island Subarea Plan, GIPAC's role in the community, and the widespread community support of regulations that preserve the rural character of the island and protect the island's limited water resources. GIPAC, by the way, was just elected Citizen of the Year by the Guemes Island Property Owners Association for their work towards getting the Guemes Zoning Overlay and the Seawater Intrusion Policy codified in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. While it is understandable that owners of very small, substandard lots in a rural area that now has a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres might be disappointed to discover that out-of-scale homes are not in keeping with island standards, the protection of the island's rural nature is a widely shared goal. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: All right, Ginger Orsini, followed by Hal Rooks, followed by Kit Harma.

Ginger Orsini: Hello, my name is Virginia Orsini and I live at 4971 Guemes Island Road, what's considered the North Beach of Guemes Island. I've lived there for 26 years. My husband has lived there for about 60 years off and on. He grew up there and then we resided. During that time I have been well aware of the GIPAC planning process going on – all the processes that have happened. I remember when it first began and we got the opportunity to get together and build a plan for Guemes Island. It was – everybody was very excited and I think everybody had the same intent at heart. The people from all different political persuasions, economic classes were all eager to participate. Some people were new to the island – brand new to the island. Some had planning experience; some not. Some were – had been on the island for a long time. So it was the coming together of many different areas of expertise – and they were many – you know, just regular people and some people that had great areas of expertise. And they all set at their tasks and they were voted into place. They set at their tasks very seriously, determined to do the best job for Guemes that they could. And I remember that there was one individual who stood up at a meeting who had just – was a new resident to the island and he said that they had looked long and hard for a place where they could settle down where there was still a respect for the rural environment in the community, and Guemes Island was one place that they found that they could settle down because of that respect for the environment and for, you know, the community. So I think that those things are what everybody that I've known who has been on the GIPAC committee over time has taken to heart and has been interested in looking at.

I think they've shared this individual sentiments all the way along. And I know that the planning process has been arduous. It's been long. But everybody who has worked on it has been very serious and taken everything to heart. They have listened. They have discussed. They've studied. They've gotten grants. As Al said, it's been a long process. It's been over 20 years. And we're all very happy to see now that things are getting into place and we applaud the people that have been involved. There have been new people elected over time, but it's never been a process that has been hidden. All efforts were made to bring people into the discussion. As a matter of fact, people wanted to know what everybody was thinking, where they were coming from. And if they didn't come I'm sorry but you have to make your wishes known. Some people –

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Thank you.

Ms. Orsini: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: If you have other comments, you can submit in writing. Thank you. Hal Rooks, Kit Harma, and then Max Benjamin are my next three.

Hal Rooks: Good evening, Commissioners. My name's Hal Rooks. I'm a member of the GIPAC, the Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee. I'm the Treasurer. My house on Guemes is at 5971 Upper Hollow Road and was built by my parents 55 years ago. Tonight I would like to address a number of assertions that have been made by opponents of the building envelope parameters that GIPAC has asked to be included in the County's 2016 Comp Plan. Some of the assertions have been alluded to already. One thing to be really clear about for everybody is that these building parameters are not something we just dreamed up. They've been in the subarea plan since it was passed by the Commissioners five years ago and that plan was another ten years in the making, and if you're interested, they're found under policy 2.11 under Land Use.

So one of the assertions is that Guemes isn't elected and doesn't represent the island. In fact, GIPAC holds elections open to the public and advertised every year for its members. The election is advertised in the community newspaper, the island website LineTime, and by notice on the board by the ferry dock. The County Board of Commissioners has recognized GIPAC as

the community-based representative of the island in numerous resolutions over the years, as you heard earlier.

Another assertion is that GIPAC has hidden its proposal from island property owners. In fact, GIPAC welcomes the public at its meetings and gives notice in all island media. GIPAC has posted issue papers and updates regarding the public process on the homepage of LineTime, the website for the island. The island newspaper, the *Guemes Tide*, has provided extensive coverage of the plan and GIPAC's work.

Another assertion is that GIPAC is a small group of self-interested property owners coming up with overly restrictive regulations to stop reasonable development. Apparently many of these alleged self-interested property owners are on North Beach, which we don't have anybody on our Board except someone who lives on the shoreline, not inland, which was one of the allegations.

Okay. In fact, GIPAC is not coming up with the proposals. As I stated, they've been in the plan for a number of years. We are working to carry out the mission, as stated in the adopted Guemes Subarea Plan, to work with the County on implementation of the plan.

The Guemes – another allegation – the Guemes Overlay would prevent reasonable development on small beach lots. In fact, GIPAC worked with the County staff to come up with some modifications to the proposal to address the concerns that were voiced. Measuring building heights from flood elevation, not grade; allowing administrative variances where site conditions warrant flexibility from the zoning standards. We support those changes and so did the Planning Commission.

Thank you for your consideration and your time.

Chair Janickj: Thank you.

Commissioner Wesen: Thank you.

Chair Janickj: Okay, Kit Harma.

Kit Harma: I'm Kit Harma, spelled H-a-r-m-a, and I live at 7393 Holiday Boulevard on Guemes Island. Thank you all for your infinite patience for listening to Guemes issues again. I was a member and Chair of GIPAC for a couple years a few years ago, and when I left I thought I'd heard the last of the Guemes Island Subarea Plan and GIPAC, and I'm sure a couple of our Commissioners sitting in front of us are wishing that's going to happen for them at some point in time! But here we are again.

So the members of GIPAC are elected each year by the public and serve in accordance with RCW 36.70.60.070 (sic), which governs the actions of planning advisory committees. The minutes of every meeting are posted on LineTime. A draft of the subarea plan and the final adopted version are still available on LineTime through a link.

The *Guemes Tide* ran a six-part series recently that described and summarized all of the subarea plan recommendations. This year the *Guemes Tide* ran a two-page story in March about the upcoming reviews of the Shoreline Master Program and the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update, and in April ran a front page story entitled "Last Chance for Comments." LineTime

has continued to post numerous releases about GIPAC and the upcoming comment period. So I'm very surprised that anybody can say that this caught them by surprise.

Thank you again for your infinite patience.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Max Benjamin, followed by Michael and JoAnne Gray, and then Liz McNett Crowl.

Max Benjamin: Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity. I live at 6232 East Lux Sit Lane on Guemes. I am not a member of any organization on the island.

(laughter)

Mr. Benjamin: I'd like to tell you a little story. We moved to Guemes in 1959 and really enjoyed our space and the opportunities that it gave our family. Everything went really well until my daughter got in high school. And then we were faced with: This island is a goddamned prison. I hate it. We have the six o'clock ferry. I can't be with my friends. I don't get to go to all of the wonderful things we can do in town. Well, that was – that ended up with two assertive females talking back and forth and me going to my studio.

After my daughter left high school, she went to several universities, received several degrees, and I've got a good job and shortly thereafter came back to Guemes Island and said, Hey, Pops. You've got all this acreage. Have you got a place for me? Well, she has a place now on the island and she comes up every weekend to take care of her flowers and the grass and whatever she wishes to do – mostly to unwind.

Now this is not a history story. It's a metaphor. And the metaphor is that I wish and I hope that the Commissioners take the long-term plan and look at this opportunity that we have with this new Comp Plan to go slowly and honor what we do have and move forward cautiously. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Michael and JoAnne Gray.

Michael Gray: Hi. We are Michael and JoAnne Gray, G-r-a-y, 4898 North Indian Village Lane. We recently – 2½ years ago – moved on the island for fulltime, having moved on property that was owned by our family since 1959, so about 60 years. We're thankful that we were able to build 2½ years ago under the then-County requirements and wish that our friends, our neighbors that are on smaller lots, had the opportunity to build an efficient view home on the waterfront that restricts nobody's view that is environmentally sound. And we're here to support those neighbors in the low-lying 50-foot lots so that they have the ability to do the same thing. And as Mark Madden mentioned, that is approximately seven out of the 21 homes that are already two-story homes along our beachfront. So we're here to support the objections put forth by Mark and Dianne and a number of letters and e-mails you'll be seeing soon to the restrictive and burdensome proposal put forth by GIPAC.

Having said that, I would like to sincerely thank GIPAC. We've been on the island for 2½ years. I was unaware. I didn't receive a ballot to vote for people. We didn't even – we were gone out of the country for about four months travelling. I didn't see the March issue of the newspaper, and we don't check LineTime all the time. So I would hope that when these things go on and they're going to affect property owners like our neighbors so dramatically that a mailing should go out to property owners saying, Okay, there's a GIPAC-represented vote. Here are the issues. And not

rely on a website that not everybody looks at, nor a community newsletter that everybody reads. Thank you for your time.

Chair Janicki: Okay, thank you. Before we continue on with our sign-up sheet, Mayor Ramon Hayes has joined us in the back of the room. And, Mayor Hayes, if you are here to make a comment, I was just going to offer you a spot in the line if in fact – okay. So, Liz, you're getting bumped for just a minute – or just three minutes. And before you – are there any other elected officials in this – or – that I just – okay. I just want to make sure that we are – welcome to the –

Ramon Hayes: Thank you very much and that's very kind of allowing me to just jump in like that. I appreciate that.

Chair Janicki: Well, Liz let you in.

Mayor Hayes: Thank you, Liz. Listen, after just coming from down south and experiencing the traffic issues that we face I'm really happy to talk to you about non-motorized planning and having that as a part of the 20-year plan, so I appreciate that being in there. You know, not just as a mayor but as a business owner I see the impacts of walking, of biking. You know, in La Conner we always look for wins, not only for businesses but for the citizens, as well – the citizens of our community. What's going to benefit business and the citizens? Our boardwalk is a perfect example of that. So I know around when we talk transportation, dollars are tight. They're always tight. But these non-motorized projects, if you think about it just for a minute, add greatly to the economic activity within the valley as well. So I'm here just to encourage that. I support the plan. I thank you for considering it strongly. And just remember that economic component is critical as we plan moving for the future. So thank you very much.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. All right, Liz McNett Crowl, followed by William Dunlap.

Liz McNett Crowl: Good evening, Commissioners.

Chair Janicki: Good evening.

Ms. Crowl: Liz McNett Crowl, 13797 Trumpeter Lane, Mount Vernon, M-c-N-e-t-t space C-r-o-w-l. I support the proposed language for the non-motorized plan and open space in the June 9th draft of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. Seriously, I've been following non-motorized transportation since the County adopted their first plan many years ago, and I will tell you that this is the best plan we've ever had. The inclusion of the proposed Non-Motorized Element and the 20-year project list are key to creating a regional transportation system that serves all modes of transportation. I'm a very strong advocate for a network of separated facilities like the Cascade Trail and the Centennial Trail, but I think it's important to be realistic and say that counties like ours with many large, rural areas where county roads are the only option, we must and should consider the needs and safety of all users, especially on roads.

I think this plan is a great foundation for an integrated transportation system, and it's a foundation from which we can continue to grow and build a connected transportation system that meets the needs of our residents but also supports people coming here to visit and be tourists.

I also support the proposed language for the open space policy that states Skagit County's intent to work with local partners to identify and conserve open space – open space corridors. Open space can preserve the rural nature of our valley, protecting our agricultural industries and

heritage while also helping to sustain fish and wildlife habitats and providing places for people to enjoy and appreciate nature.

I really appreciated the openness and clarity of the public process. There were times when it was confusing but I thought we worked through it very well. I found the County staff very easy to work with and really appreciated that, and I hope that you will support non-motorized transportation as proposed and the Open Space Plan as proposed.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Okay, William Dunlap, followed by Carol Ehlers.

William Dunlap: I'm Bill Dunlap, D-u-n-l-a-p, 22461 Mount Vernon-Big Lake Road in Mount Vernon. Easily accessible open space is important to me and I think to the entire community and so is the opportunity for safe, non-motorized transportation, both for commuting and for recreation. So I don't have point-by-point comments on these things, but I just hope that we do move forward with open space recommendations and the non-motorized transportation. That's it.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Carol Ehlers, followed by Tim Manns and then Joan Melcher.

Carol Ehlers: I'm Carol Ehlers, E-h-l-e-r-s, Wind Crest Lane, West Fidalgo Island. Three-hundred ninety-four pages in 11 days is ridiculous so I've looked at the plan from another standpoint. The first issue is that you have to have consistency among your documents. You have a Comp Plan and a zoning map. You have a Shoreline Element that's almost as long as the Comp Plan that must agree, must be consistent with. And you have a designation map. The Comp Plan talks about scenic rivers. The shoreline map doesn't. None of the maps talk about the five scenic rivers, the four wild rivers. They're not recognized. There has to be a coherent relationship between something that is required and described in one part and in the other, and that's going to take you a bit of time to do.

Another example where – an example where there's no consistency: I listened to the staff talk about rural services the other day. In the resource section of the Comp Plan, which you did not review, it talks about urban services. That's half of the services that I figured out you could possibly have in either/or the rural or the city. Nobody has sat down and thought of what either kinds of services are or where they differentiate, but legally, as a result of the natural resource section, the one urban service that is not acceptable is sanitary sewer. That's going to be an issue.

A second thing that's in the Comp Plan that's in – the Comp Plan does not accept multifamily houses. That's why you have one of these map amendments in this project. The shoreline document permits multifamily in the 200 feet of the shoreline. It's got to be consistent. You can't expect staff or the public or the realtors or anyone else to do it. Now if I had enough time to actually talk about some of this, which I don't, let me add a complaint of my own about the process. MRO is an overlay. It's also a zone. Either it's compatible to dig up the shorelines of the rivers of this county, which is what the zone says and the rest of it, or it isn't. But don't tell us that we are going to protect fish and that there can't be any silt for the fish, but we can mine it.

Chair Janicki: Thank you, Carol. Okay, Tim Manns.

Tim Manns: Commissioners, my name is Tim Manns. Spelling is M-a-n-n-s. I live at 1220 South 11th Street in Mount Vernon. I serve as Conservation Chair for Skagit Audubon Society and I'm

here representing our 225 member families who live throughout the county, with the highest proportion residing in District 1.

Among the aspects of the Comprehensive Plan Update of particular interest to Skagit Audubon members are those dealing with non-motorized transportation and with open space. We have a very active, well-attended hiking group which goes out every Wednesday using trails throughout the county. Many of us are also bicyclists who commute, recreate, and pursue our other daily activities via bicycle. We very much want to see Skagit County catch up with other counties in Washington in the number, the quality and the interconnections of its trails, bike paths, and roadside bike lanes. To this end, we want the Comprehensive Plan Update to include the 20-year list of non-motorized transportation projects described by the Planning staff which the Planning Commission approved on May 24th and you approved on June 7th. Thank you for doing that. It's important to us that there be a long-term vision for an interconnected network of walking and biking paths to support healthy exercise, and so that we can get where we need to go without always having to drive. With that list of non-motorized transportation projects in the Comp Plan, the County and other entities will have better access to grants to move those projects ahead. We don't want our county to miss out on this funding.

We are also very interested in seeing the UGA Open Space Plan taken off the shelf and put into action. We support inclusion in the Comp Plan Update of the language drafted by the Planning staff which you voted in favor of on June 7th. This simply calls for the County to continue working with partners on identifying and conserving open space corridors. Open space refers to a range of types of lands with different uses, public or private ownership, and different degrees of public access, if any at all. Skagit Audubon's mission cites conservation and ecosystem protection and restoration for the sake of wildlife and the people. What's especially important to Skagit Audubon members is the ways preserving a variety of open space can provide for birds and other wildlife. Just as one example, our county supports more wintering Trumpeter swans than any other place in the lower 48 states. This largest of all waterfowl does well here because of a combination of types of open space – farm fields, wetlands like Barney Lake, and the saltwater bays. And I would add that thousands of visitors come here each winter to see birds such as swans, snow geese, and bald eagles. They eat at local restaurants, stay in local motels, and in other ways support our economy. The UGA Open Space Plan is seven years old now. It needs to be updated every six years in order to ensure eligibility for RCO grants, so please direct that to happen – that updating to happen – so that our county doesn't miss out on those funding opportunities. Thank you very much.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Joan Melcher, followed by Molly Doran, Glenn McGoff.

Joan Melcher: Hello. Joan Melcher, M-e-l-c-h-e-r. I'm the Skagit Audubon Hiking Organizer and I'm also greatly involved as a volunteer in a local trail maintenance group called SWITMO, Skagit Whatcom Island Trail Maintenance Organization. I'm here to urge you to pass this legislation on the open space and the non-motorized trail usage. I have had firsthand experience from many people. It benefits their lives in not only physical benefit but mental benefit and it's good for the soul. Our oldest trail worker retired this week at ten months past 91 years of age. So getting out and doing things in the outdoors I know kept him going and working on the trail. A number of our hikers are well into their 80s. There have been people who have found solace in going out into the wilderness when their cares of the world and things going on in their private life. They go out there and they feel better.

As already has been mentioned, the economic benefit to Skagit County is really great. The trail to the Oyster Dome on Blanchard Mountain – a couple years ago the Department of Natural

Resources counter in the trees over 90,000 users in one year and that has gone up since then. The Sunday issue of the *Seattle Times* – finding quiet hikes and undiscovered cabins at Washington’s favorite state park, Deception Pass State Park. Half of this article is on trails in Skagit County so these people come to our county. A lot of the people who hike on Blanchard come from Seattle. They spend money here. So there’re all kinds of benefits, and I urge you to pass what was proposed. Thank you very much.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Molly Doran, followed by Glenn McGoff and then Louis Nutter.

Molly Doran: Good evening. I’m Molly Doran. I’m the Executive Director of Skagit Land Trust. Doran is spelled D-o-r-a-n. I live at 5032 Roney Road in Bow and the Land Trust is located at 1020 South 3rd in Mount Vernon. I’m here tonight because I represent 1500 supporters from across Skagit County – some are outside the county but mostly from Skagit County – who support voluntary conservation with willing landowners. So we do not do anything regulatory. It’s all voluntary and willing. But it’s amazing what you can get done with a community that has a lot of people with a conservation intent.

We definitely support the 20-year list of non-motorized projects being included. Trails in every survey for the past 15 years in Skagit County have shown 70 to 80% or higher support among constituents. It’s something that everybody including our constituents loves and wants more of. We understand that this was a complex process to get the non-motorized list together. We learned a lot as we went through it watching it. I believe it’s the first time we’ve had a 20-year list. And that’s the most transparent thing that I can say. I can’t understand why we wouldn’t have had a long-year planning list before. To have a list allows us all to think about it because we understand that naming it in the plan does not confer funding. It still has to go through a long process. So we’re very excited to see that in there and look forward to the future of working towards some of these projects on the 20-year list. And as many people have said, it’s great for the economy. And I also want to say, as the mother of two boys, on Father’s Day we decided to take our family out for a bike ride and my 13-year-old said, You mean I have to ride on those roads with those cars going by me? And I’m like, That’s the only way we can do it. And he was terrified. And I thought, Wouldn’t it be nice if he could have his first bike ride on somewhere where he didn’t have to worry about – I mean, I was as much a mess as he was. I was like, Okay, just stay right on that white line. So I really look forward to having more of them.

At the Land Trust, we also are very happy to see support for the Skagit County’s intent to cooperate with local partners to identify and protect open space. And open space includes farmlands and forestlands and wildlife corridors. There are so many plans in this county. There are so many jurisdictions that work with open space. We are not competitive unless we work together. Wildlife pollinators don’t understand plans, don’t understand spaces. We have to come together. So we’re really enthusiastic to see the County Commissioners put that language in the plan and we hope to see more work with the open space document. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Okay, Glenn McGoff. Glenn?

Unidentified male voice: He’s not here.

Chair Janicki: Louis Nutter? Followed by – oh my goodness – Ken Frish? Louis Nutter, Ken Frish. How about Ginny Darvill?

Ginny Darvill: Ginny Darvill, D-a-r-v-i-l-l, 20175 East Hickox Road, Mount Vernon. Glad to follow Molly. I live on 36 acres of land on the south side of Little Mountain. It’s all in conservation

easement with Skagit Land Trust. Have a trail on that property that is also in easement with Mount Vernon City Parks. So I speak very personally about open space. And also, remember that in the 1980s I stood before then the Skagit County Commissioners pleading with them to widen Hickox Road sufficiently so that the children and the bicycles and the horses and the dogs that use that road could have a safe space to walk. It's only this big but it's very greatly appreciated. And I simply want to speak on behalf of those proposals in the Comprehensive Plan that have to do with non-motorized transportation. It's important for people to be able to get to the open spaces and not to have to use their cars and park them somewhere if they have the opportunity to walk and walk safely. I've seen an amazing increase – thanks to some of you in this room who have been working on Little Mountain Park – an amazing increase in the number of users and the number of younger users in the park and on my property. So I really urge you to continue and take very seriously these proposals. My son's been living in Singapore. This is kind of off. This is not Singapore. The thing that makes that city livable is public transportation, open space, and trails. And that's one of the most dense places on the planet, but it's livable. And Skagit County has an opportunity to be far more livable for a longer time. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Okay, next I have Ellen Bynum, followed by Brian Lipscomb and Anne Winkes. What? Oh, we're going backwards. Okay.

Ken Fritsch: Hi. My name is Ken Fritsch. I live at 27711 Burmaster Road, Sedro-Woolley. This concerns the junk vehicle ordinance and stuff. I've dealt with the County. I have had a repair shop there as my father did since the 1940s. We were grandfathered in, which was reaffirmed by now ex-County Commissioner Ted Anderson.

I was approached by your new Code Compliance Officer with some complaints and some threats and stuff about the vehicles there, and when we tried to work with her I explained to her that even though I have a lot of vehicles and I am cleaning it up on my own, there're several problems with that. And I'm sure most of the Commissioners are aware of it. My place is flooded probably six to eight months a year, which the County has a legal obligation that they signed on to back in the mid-40s with the federal government CCC. That has not been done. It wasn't till about two or three weeks ago my place dried up enough I could move on it. We have a problem with your code compliance officer and the fact that she assumes a lot of stuff. She drives by, she looks at equipment that she deems in her opinion to be junk when, in fact, they are a very viable piece of equipment. And, you know, I like old cars. I'm in that business. In my situation I have a lot of older Fairlanes and stuff that are classic value vehicles. Her attitude is, Well, if it don't have a plate on it it's a junk vehicle and you're going to get rid of it. I'm going to make you do that. I don't think that's reasonable. I've tried to work with her on that. I thought we came to an agreement at one point and I've talked to, you know, some of the Commissioners about that. I thought we had an agreement that she was going to back off until the weather cleaned up so we could get to it. I get a registered letter today with all kinds of threats and fines in it and she's fining me for having a house on one acre that has a Skagit County parcel number on it, a trailer that was there from my mom when she was alive.

We have a lady who has absolutely no background or level of education into vehicles – what is junk, what is not. She has been completely unreasonable to deal with when I have tried to deal with her, you know, and get statements. She claims that I have not responded to her and I'm well sure that the County Commissioners know I've responded time after time after time and I've made the offer. I said, Look, you know what? This lady, I talked to her. It's very obvious that she has no background in equipment or whatever it may be. And I said, Look, you know what? I understand you don't know that and what your perspective may be, but if you want – and I've offered this several times – you know, come out and talk to me, go to somebody else, and we

can show you the value of that equipment. And her pat answer every time is that I'm going to allow you 500 foot to store your stuff in –

Chair Janicki: Okay.

Mr. Fritsch: – and that doesn't work for any of us, including some of you on the Board up there. So we all know farmers got a whole lot more equipment.

Chair Janicki: Okay, Mr. Fritsch, it sounds – we need to have maybe a conversation.

Mr. Fritsch: I'm sorry. I can't hear.

Chair Janicki: Maybe we need to schedule – you need to call and schedule some separate time on *that* particular matter. So – but thank you. I need to let the next speaker speak.

Mr. Fritsch: Okay.

Chair Janicki: Okay, Ellen Bynum. Brian Lipscomb is next and then –

Ellen Bynum: Ellen Bynum, Friends of Skagit County, 110 North First Street, Mount Vernon. We're appreciative of the Board of County Commissioners including – or reminding people that the testimony and the comments that are received by the Planning Commission are a part of the record going forward. We submitted quite a few legal references, RCWs, and other reasons that the Planning Commission ruled on the Open Space Plan and the trails plan, so I won't go over those.

I'm really interested in looking at the things that I didn't get when I reviewed the 394 pages and also the Shorelines Plan. So I have seven things. Some of these have been mentioned so I'll go very quickly through them.

There appears to be no concurrency review of any proposed changes proposed for the Update. Updates to the concurrency management system do not appear to be included. We had in 2007 a Comprehensive Plan that contained a concurrency system under the Capital Facilities profiles, and I don't think we have done that this time around.

Two, it is unclear whether all 24 trailing issues listed in ordinance – and I've got the ordinance up here on the overhead here – that adopted the 2007 Comp Plan were brought to the Planning Commission for review or were addressed in the 2016 Update. An example Carol pointed out was the Mineral Resource Overlay, and the zoning has not been addressed in the Update and clarified.

Three, editing, deleting, and moving sections or adding to the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update should comply with the applicable RCWs, WACs, and Growth Management Hearings Board rulings, and then I give you some examples. Staff suggested moving Essential Public Facilities section from the Capital Facilities Element to the Land Use Element, and the RCW 36.70A.070(5) Rural Element states "The following provisions shall apply to the rural element," and under rural development, the rural element provides for a variety of densities including essential public facilities. So there's two more examples there for you.

Then since the Shoreline Master Program Update has not yet been completed, we assume that Chapter 6 of the Shoreline Element is the currently adopted Shoreline Master Plan. If it's not, we

need to figure out what we're going to do about that because people are operating as though the old Shoreline Master Plan is in place, and if we're going to delay until the new one we have to make some note of that in there.

And then you've had map changes, corrections and designations are incomplete, and Carol noted some of those.

And then I'd like to say about the four appendices, we'd like to add that the dates of adoption and RCWs be left in the definitions. Some of those have been removed. Under Appendix C, the description of related plans and studies and regulations, we'd like to leave that in because that enables somebody who's new to the county or someone who doesn't know to know what that means.

And then the adopting amending ordinances need to be updated. Thank you. I'll give you paper.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Okay, Brian?

Brian Lipscomb: Good evening, Commissioners. Brian Lipscomb, L-i-p-s-c-o-m-b, 27765 West Gilligan Creek, Sedro-Woolley. I won't start with how the maps are wrong or that your data's from 1963 or anything like that. No, I'd rather talk about the natural resource letters that we all have to sign or that goes against our title. It seems like a very, very small thing but if you live in a natural resource area and you're zoned Agriculture, if you go to build a building do you literally have to sign a document against your title saying you are next to an agriculture area? You *are* an agriculture area.

It gets better! Now I see the new plan here is if I *transfer* a property to someone, the buyer or – it says “buyer.” It doesn't say “recipient” but I believe you mean “recipient” on this – has to record a document. How would you ever enforce something like that? As a buyer, you're going to tell me I've got to go down or I can't buy it now? Who's going to enforce this? So let's say that I actually followed all this and I did go ahead and sign this because I gave this property – I quit-claimed it to my sister or whatever, right? Now what you going to do? She wants to build a building. She's next to an agriculture area. Does she have to now sign that second document that says? So now she has to file two documents just to build anything more than 200 square feet. Unless, of course, she's in a floodway. Then she'll have to have yet a third document and that would be – what is it? – Special Flood Hazard Area. And each time we do that it's \$70. Did you know that of that \$70, \$38 of every document goes to the homeless? So when we ask for more money for the homeless, is this the way we're getting it? I mean, from our documents? Really. \$38 of every - \$70 to do a document, right? That's \$38. So anyway...

What I'd really like to say is I don't know how the Planning Commission can get through all these pages of stuff. I mean, it is – it's incomprehensible the amount of data they have to go through and digest and make decisions on. There isn't enough time. And the worst part is I think a lot of these documents are built by armies of people. The Growth Management Steering Committee, the Department of Ecology, right? *Armies* of people, along with lawyers. If you look at the latest one, we have this water rights thing, right? Okay, so here we have two attorneys representing this poor person up here trying to get a well and all that. How many attorneys are opposing them? Four from Department of Ecology, three from the Swinomish Tribe, and all that. And they say it's because of water? If you want to discuss water, how about the envirotranspiration of all the trees that are in the floodway? You don't think those are pulling water directly out of the aquifer? I mean, what is ____? 300 gallons a day. Commissioners, thank you very much for the work you do. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Anne Winkes, followed by Linda Talman.

Anne Winkes: My name is Anne Winkes. I live in Conway at 18562 Main Street. The mailing address is P.O. Box 586, Conway. I fully support the updated Comprehensive Plan's stated expression of the County's intent to continue cooperating with local partners to identify and protect open space corridors, and I fully support the re-inclusion of the 20-year list of non-motorized transportation projects in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

As a nurse practitioner working in Skagit County for many years, I stress to parents the importance of playing outdoors with their children. Such play confers many low cost health benefits to all ages and all socioeconomic levels. The Comprehensive Plan's express commitment to rural and interurban open space and to the improvement of a network of safe and accessible non-motorized paths and trails will contribute to the health and well-being of all who live here.

As a property owner in Skagit County, I appreciate the economic benefits of living in a county whose Comprehensive Plan addresses the value of protecting greenbelts. Planned walking and bicycle-friendly communities and intentionally preserved open spaces will make Skagit County a more desirable place to live. Property values will increase, and increased property values will bring monetary benefits to our local government. As a bicycle tourist, I have developed an appreciation of the contribution of bicycling to local economies. Recreational bicyclists in Washington state spend \$3.1 billion per year statewide. By improving the safety and comfort of Skagit County's roadways with wider shoulders and designated facilities and focusing on the connectivity of established bicycle routes, the updated Comprehensive Plan will lead to recreational tourists spending more money locally. Conway serves as a starting point for many bicyclists' exploration of Skagit County. Cycling across Fir Island, they pass over the North Fork Bridge on their way to the Skagit Flats. I particularly appreciate the inclusion of the North Fork Bridge Safety Project in the Comprehensive Plan.

Open space corridors are natural partners of the County's non-motorized projects. Because such corridors are the arteries of the natural world, the health of both wild and human communities cannot be maintained without them. The Comprehensive Plan in its acknowledgment of their importance clearly recognizes the undeniable interconnectedness of the world in which we live. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Linda Talman, followed by Marie Erbstoeszser.

Linda Talman: Good evening, County Commissioners. Thank you for holding this hearing this evening. I'm Linda Talman, T as in Tom -a-l-m-a-n. I live in La Conner, the Town of La Conner, where we enjoy a walkability score of 61, according to that website, which is pretty good for this county. And I think there's only one better. I'm the Chair of the La Conner Planning Commission, a walker, a traveler, and a bicyclist.

I'd like to address the Non-Motorized Element of the proposed Comp Plan, or as I like to think of it, the horse- or human-powered element. I also like to think of it as the value-added element. I think of this as a value-added element because it is just that. Just as with barley we have – as you're familiar with, we have barley. That's a value. We have malted barley. That adds more value. We have distilleries and breweries, which add still more value to that original concept, that original element. So it is with transportation. Roads add value to the county. Roads with bike shoulders add more value because they attract visitors and they help us to stay healthy.

Roads with bike shoulders and walking paths add still more value because of the aforementioned and because they increase adjacent property values and help reduce pollution and __ help our kids' brains. I shouldn't say it quite that way. Much nicer, Anne. As a walker, I can walk in La Conner. As a bicyclist, like Molly's son I'm a little afraid to ride on the roads with unsafe surfaces and too narrow shoulders.

Non-motorized transportation is important. What we have is a start but I think we can go further. I can tell you it wasn't easy to get our wonderful boardwalk in La Conner. Not everybody saw this as added value. Not everybody was seeing how this would work. But now that it's complete I can tell you that in La Conner we walk and we are healthier and we're happier and we're proud to be there. I think we can do the same in the whole county. Thanks.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. After Marie speaks, we have a Christopher Freitas and Belinda Rotton. Belinda. Go ahead, Marie.

Marie Erbstoesz: Thank you. Honorable Skagit County Commissioners, thank you for reopening the public comment period. My name is Marie Erbstoesz, spelled E-r-b-s-t-o-e-s-z-e-r. My husband John and I have been residents of Skagit County since 1975. We live in Mount Vernon at 217 East Division. Our careers in health services and our personal interests highlight how important it is to have access to health, wellness and physical activities. Public health and medical publications repeatedly cite the importance of regular exercise as a means of improving and maintaining the health of the public. Access to walking and bicycling facilities are excellent ways of addressing significant population health issues such as heart disease, blood pressure and obesity. In May of this year, the National Institutes of Health released a report titled "Increased physical activity is associated with lower risk of 13 types of cancer." Clearly the existing body of scientific knowledge indicates that a healthy county must have access to and encourage opportunities for outdoor exercise, be it walking, bicycling or just plain being outside. Therefore, as you adopt the revised draft of our Comp Plan for Skagit County, we strongly support the recommended inclusion of a 20-year list of non-motorized projects as part of the updated Comp Plan's Transportation Element. In addition, we support modifying the proposed policy 2B-1.3 to indicate Skagit County's intent to continue cooperating with local partners to identify and protect open space corridors with GMA requirements.

As you know, in 2015 the Skagit County Public Health Department launched the Population Health Trust as a means for creating a plan to improve community health throughout all of Skagit County. The sections of the Comp Plan which I cited before are very important for enhancing and sustaining a healthy lifestyle. Skagit County is a vibrant and great place to live and work and play. We need to make sure it continues to be that. We commend each of you and your staff at the Planning and Development Services for all the work you've done in preparing the updated draft of The Comp Plan and for reopening this public comment period. In the Leadership Skagit program, one of the five practices of exemplary leadership is Model the Way, and by reopening this public comment period and scheduling an *evening* meeting you have definitely modeled the way of an open government and in encouraging us to participate. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you. Christopher Freitas, followed by Belinda and then Gary.

Christopher Freitas: Thank you, Commissioners. I'm primarily making comments on the non-motorized transportation plan and I wanted to express that I support the projects that are listed and feel that they're a – the support is justified and that even more support should be considered for many of the projects. I'm a father of a 24-year-old son who probably will not drive

and we relocated from Big Lake to Mount Vernon due to the lack of adequate transportation options, as well as lack of bikeability. He's an avid bike rider, takes public transport, and it would be nice to have more options.

One thing I'd like to emphasize is the Centennial Trail project, the portion from the Skagit-Snohomish County line. There's about a 4000-foot section which has never been completed which would connect it to the Lake McMurray community. And right now you're required to go out of the trailhead onto Highway 9 to a very high speed section of Highway 9 and then ride over to Lake McMurray, and if that was extended the 4000 feet – which is currently owned by the county – you would be then able to rider right into Lake McMurray in a low-speed section of the highway.

In addition to that piece, you know, just the greater inclusion of adequate bike shoulders. I live in Mount Vernon now but I spent a lot of time out at Big Lake and Highway 9 is very dangerous on a number of sections and there's, you know, not very many viable options to get around that.

So I'm very pleased that there is an inclusion of non-motorized transportation projects. I would like to see that section – particularly since this is a 20-year plan – be supported and also consideration for additional projects to support the range of inhabitants in Skagit County. Thank you.

Chair Janicki: Thank you.

Mr. Freitas: Oh, my last name is spelled F-r-e-i-t-a-s, just in case.

Chair Janicki: Thank you for clarifying that. Is Belinda here?

Belinda Rotton: I'll pass.

Chair Janicki: Oh, you'll pass. Okay, Gary Hagland.

Gary Hagland: Yeah, I am Gary Hagland. I live in Anacortes and I'm associated with the Citizens Alliance of Property Rights, Skagit chapter. The first thing I want to say is I think we all owe a vote of thanks to the Planning Commission. They worked their butts off, I mean, week after week after week, plus a lot of homework. They did it. And they don't get paid, so we owe them a lot.

Chair Janicki: Thank you for saying that. Make sure that's not part of his three minutes.

Mr. Hagland: Number two, this is not my written comments but I just want to say something about – because I've scoped this out – in the county, as far as the roads and expanding the shoulders, may not be possible because of drainage considerations. A lot of the roads here are, you know, almost in an arc and it's because of the amount of rain we get. So I don't know what you're going to do with that but it may be very difficult.

But I want to address what I didn't do in April and that is the Planning Commission's Finding of Fact and Reasons for Action, specifically item 9. And I do support the Planning Commission in that this Open Space Concept Plan should not be implemented. To satisfy the GMA, the plan, which was approved in 2009, only requires that it be used as a tool for mapping and identification of open space. To use it to develop and expand non-motorized trails would create conflicts with the agricultural community and rural property owners over safety and security.

There are more communities in this county than just the bicycle community. Trail projects, especially up to urban standards, are also very expensive, whether it's property tax, whether it's sales tax, or whether it's income tax it's still tax and it comes out of your and my pocketbooks. The Guemes Trail in Anacortes cost \$1 million per mile.

And I also agree with item 23. It's important to respect property that neighbors trails and other public access points with regard to trespass, trash, privacy and animal waste which, you know, if you look at it is possibly one of the reasons that a lot of the of the folks who do live out there – do live in the rural element – aren't as excited as a lot of you are about trails. So thank you.

Chair Janicki. Thank you. Okay, that appears to be the end of our sign-up sheets. Is there anybody else who would like to speak – take three minutes at the podium? Mr. Stauffer, please join the podium.

Ed Stauffer: Ed Stauffer, rural Skagit County, Chuckanut Mountains west of Alger. Thank you for this opportunity, Commissioners, to speak once again to these issues. I put up this reference of Joe King because Joe King was the Speaker of the House that led the charge to create the State of Washington's Growth Management Act in 1987. This is an interview of Joe King that was done by a member of the Secretary of State's office. And for those of you that don't realize that we already have a very well-reasoned Comprehensive Plan, if you read this nine pages it'll give you a good idea of the background from which we begin this process. I served on the rural element of the committee in 1993 prior to the elements of the 13-element committees of citizens which each met for a year, and then followed by four years of deliberations by staff and Planning Commission members and many public hearings.

In 1997, we adopted our growth management plan under the Growth Management Act called the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. It included a Rural Element. The Rural Element is what we're talking about here primarily in this Update process. So we have some requirements for the Update process, and one of them is that any change to the Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act must be vetted for consistency and congruency with our existing plan. You'll find nowhere in the narrative, the testimony, or the recordings or the discussions of this Update any reference to the fact that we already have a plan. It is very important that they be vested against the conditions and narrative of the rights that are existing in place under our current law, which *is* the 1997 Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan as amended over the years.

So I'm really pleased to see so many people using the trails. One thing I'd like you to do is to recognize that one of our primary objectives was to keep Skagit rural. We have hundreds and hundreds of miles of trails that have been built and provided for at public expense; maintained; toileting facilities provided; cleanup services provided at public expense. For years I've admired the trail users who have volunteers groups who go out and help maintain their own trails. Now we've become regional. We have consequences. We've lost a threatened species from the Oyster Dome because of habitat invasion by tourists. We need to watch out for these kinds of things. I would like to hear from the trail users groups two things: One, the first thing they do with a child with childhood obesity is take him down to see Dr. John Erbstoesz for a lecture on what they need to do about that. Get out and use those trails instead of sitting in front of your TV monitor. And number two, thank the citizens of Skagit County for providing the public benefit that pay for the trails that you use. Was that it?

Chair Janicki: That was three minutes. Did that seem really fast?

Mr. Stauffer: Can I push it for five more seconds to give a few people a credit?

Chair Janicki: Five seconds.

Mr. Stauffer: From the Joe King interview – he was asked the question, has the Growth Management Act changed land use patterns in this state? His response: I think it has given, in a process sense, county commissioners a process – commissioners who have a very, very difficult job, the hardest political job in the state. They have to make very difficult decisions that impact their neighbors' livelihoods, and that's always a tough position. They do it in the context of very small hearing rooms where their neighbors are looking them right in the eye.

(laughter)

Chair Janicki: Thank you, Ed!

(applause)

Chair Janicki: I know I was wondering if I should wear Kevlar but...no, that's my old job. Okay, is there anyone else who would like to have three minutes at the podium? Because if not, I do want to join the thanks – oh, Josh, are you going to come up and –

Josh Axthelm: Yeah.

Chair Janicki: I was just going to – we're going to sing your accolades here from the front, but...Josh Axthelm is our – head of our Planning Commission. Talk about a thankless job. Go ahead.

Mr. Axthelm: No, actually I – this is Josh Axthelm, Chair of the Planning Commission, and I've really appreciated the public input that we've had lately. It's good to see the for and against and see both sides of the issues. We have to consider – you know, there's a lot of things we have to consider with the Planning Commission and sometimes you'll have a group of people that'll come before you and testify about certain issues, but we have to consider everything – consider the property owners, consider – and for that matter – the wildlife. And so I've really appreciated this process and the help to come to some conclusions that hopefully will work really good for the county and for its residents. So I'm really interested in the future and seeing the trails and how they move forward, making sure the public (is) involved and making sure public process is taken care of. And that was one of our issues s we had with the Planning Commission, or at least my opinion was that some of those items, although there had been a lot of studies and a lot of time put forward in the Open Space Plan – there was a lot of work put into that – there were a few holes in it that we just had concerns on, but so I didn't want want to throw it out. I thought this has got some good information. Let's use it in moving forward, just not put it in the Comprehensive Plan but yet be able to refer to it and refer to its important information. And so I appreciate that and the Planning Commission really liked your input. Thank you for coming.

Chair Janicki: Thanks for your work, Josh. Dale, do you want to just review quickly again the dates? So we've got public comment due by – we've got a June 28th date and a June 30th date coming up.

Mr. Pernula: By the 23rd at 4:30 is when we will be accepting written testimony. Then next week we'll be putting together on – I don't have the date in front of me. We'll be meeting with the

Board with a draft ordinance to make sure it's what you wish to have, and then we'll be adopting it on the 30th.

Chair Janicki: So June 28th is that in-between date –

Mr. Pernula: Yes.

Chair Janicki: – the decision-making date. So that will be – we are up against the deadline but being able to utilize this time. And again, I really do appreciate the level of interest and support and your willingness to give up part of your evening to be here.

Commissioners, do you have any other comments that you need to add, or shall we adjourn?

Commissioner Wesen: I'd also like to thank the Planning Commission. They met every week for many many times, and staff and so forth. It's a big process going through this Comp Plan Update. And we're never going to get it exactly perfect. There's always going to be things we need to change and that's part of the whole Update process. And people need to understand we have to do this every seven, eight years, depending on what the legislators say, and we also can make amendments every year. And so individuals, you can put in every – by the last business day in July – any updates you want, and so you need to if you want to do that. So this is a Comp Plan. We can make Comp Plan amendments and so forth going forward. But once again, thank you all for coming and being here. I do appreciate that and I thank you all for being involved.

Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt: Yeah, I want to thank you all, too, and especially all the citizens that we work for. I think the interesting thing is always, as you've heard this evening, not everybody agrees on what they want. And a lot of times I've heard from people say, Well, you're just not listening to us. Well, no, we're listening to everybody but everybody doesn't agree, so at the end of the day we have to try and find the balance of respecting property rights, respecting the needs and expectations of the citizens, maintaining a healthy environment, a reasonably strong tax base so that we can provide any services at all. But it's really important, just like tonight, that you all come and share your thoughts. And we've done a lot of surveys. I know there was a lot of talk about trails and a lot of those surveys have gone countywide and we've had substantive – I think 80% of the people have highlighted that trails have been a number one priority. And so for us it's not just what we hear tonight, but then we need to go out and talk to the public, whether it's your church or your grocery store or the local restaurant, because there's 118,000 people and so when we hear from 50 or 100 people we also have an obligation to those that are working every day and may not be able to make it to these meetings. And so that's really the most difficult part, is listen to everybody and then respectfully come up with some decisions and come back and tell you what we've decided and why we have. And the Planning Commission, I appreciate all their work. I mean, they spend hours and hours with just piles and piles of pages – 1200 on one group in the Comp Plan and 600 on Shorelines. And some people will be impacted and some people it won't be in their best interests, but you've got to talk to us. The goal is to try to be responsible and remember who we work for, and that's all of you. So thank you.

Chair Janicki: All right. Well, thank you all very much. With that, we stand adjourned (gavel).