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To: <davisj@co.thurston.wa.us>
Date: 4/15/2009 6:59 PM
Subject: Comment re: proposed amendments to TC Comp. plan for YelmUGA/population projections

Thurston County Planning Commission
Mr. Chris Lane, Chair
Thurston County Development Services Department
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Olympia, Washington 98502

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April 15, 2009

RE: Public comment on proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan for City of Yelm's UGA/population projection.

Dear Thurston County Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for the chance to provide public input in this important matter.

The members of the Adams Cove Group are primarily residents in Thurston and Mason Counties who live and/or own property along the marine shoreline of the Puget Sound. We formed in order to address growing concerns about the health of the nearshore marine environment and to address fresh and marine water quality issues. These issues are intimately and immediately impacted by the land use decisions and implementations of Thurston county and its incorporated and unincorporated cities, which is why we have so closely followed and given input on so many land-use issues here within Thurston County.

Water quality and availability is our primary concern here with the proposed amendments, although it is not our only concern.

An inappropriately oversized UGA is a great negative in terms of water quality. Low density sprawl, within or without a UGA, brings increased impervious surfaces and decreased forest cover, resulting in increased stormwater run off and subsequently much poorer water quality within streams and freshwater bodies, and proceeding downslope, it increases the pollution entering the Puget Sound. It also increases the possibility of contamination to vitally important drinking water aquifers, and to more flooding events and the greater severity of those flooding events when they do occur, leading to greater peril for people and property.

It is not only water quality but water availability that is endangered with an inappropriately large UGA. Yelm is ALREADY exceeding its legally allotted water supply, as was ruled by Justice Chris Wickham in the autumn of 2008 in the case of

'JZ Knight v. City of Yelm' et al. in Thurston County Superior Court.

We thought it was remarkable, and appalling, that it took a lawsuit to bring out the incredibly obvious concept that cities should be sure they have the water to serve developments, before they allow the developments to be built.

It is not only water quality and availability that is negative impacted by an inappropriate large and low density UGA.

A member of the Adams Cove Group was present and participated throughout the Buildable Lands Analysis undertaken by TRPC (Thurston Regional Planning Council) in 2007. The conclusions drawn from

the TRPC study and from the studies that were used in the analysis, as well as innumerable other studies, are very clear:

Higher development density within a smaller UGA results in better drinking water quality, healthier streams and hydrological systems, less waste in public water usage, more efficient transportation systems, fewer roads to build and subsequently maintain, cleaner air and fewer greenhouse gases proceeding from a decrease in automobile travel, more efficient waste management systems and other public utilities, more efficient use of public services, preservation of valuable agricultural lands and open space, the protection of economically important shellfish and fishery industries, and the protection of salmon and other wildlife, and last but not least, result in a wiser and less wasteful use of tax-payer dollars.

This is the outcome that Yelm should be seeking. This is the outcome that Thurston County should be seeking, not only for Yelm but also for all cities and towns within Thurston County. Thurston County should absolutely require such wise and sustainable growth and seek to implement such good growth with a well-planned TC comprehensive plan and appropriate land use regulations.

At this time we urge that Thurston County refuse to amend the Yelm joint plan, and that Thurston County require a smaller UGA and increased density for the city of Yelm.

Thank you,

Gayle Broadbent, representative
Adams Cove Group

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