

## Foothills Friends Newsletter — December 5, 2005

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*Together we can ensure that the Foothills remain rural and beautiful. Join us!*

**SUMMARY:** Growth and development issues for the Foothills (Glacier, Maple Falls, Columbia Valley, Kendall, and Deming) continue to evolve. These include the pending Balfour Village proposal, as well as a new Foothills Subarea Plan for growth and development. Community input for the creation of this Subarea Plan has begun. Foothills Friends was created to address these and related growth issues.

### **Aiki Homes proposal for Balfour Village, Kendall**

- **Permit processing was put on formal hold** by Whatcom County Planning and Development Services on September 26, 2005. In its letter of the same date, the County asked that the developer provide the County with additional information before the County proceeds with the approval process. (For a copy of this letter, or of any of the documents or letters referenced in the letter, please call Whatcom Planning and Development Services at 676-6907.)
- **Most critical concern: The engineering risks for the alluvial fan above the property could expose the property to debris flow.** The County's own preliminary geological review "recommends denial of development on alluvial fan portions of the site" and provides 13 rationales for denial.
- **Land supply/market analysis study:** This study must demonstrate the need for additional commercial land, as required by the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- **Additional issues** have been raised and must be met to their satisfaction by the Mt. Baker School District, WA Department of Transportation, Whatcom Fire Protection District #14, the Lummi Nation, the County Plans Examiner, and the County Comprehensive Plan.
- **Consequences of the hold on permit processing: No determination has been made by the County on Foothills Friends' request for an Environmental Impact Statement.** The Statement would address well water and sewer quality, risks of the alluvial fan, and specific environmental risks, including those to fish and wildlife. The decision will be made only after the Hold has been lifted and the County is satisfied with the material received from the developer. Foothills Friends will keep you posted on new developments on all of these issues.

### **Subarea Plan for the Foothills region**

Whatcom County has started the process for developing a new Subarea Plan for the Foothills region, as reported in **a front-page article in the November 11-22, 2005 issue of the *Foothills Gazette*.**

- **Please partake fully in the process!** A large base of resident involvement is critical. This process will be our last chance for influencing development in the Foothills. *This is the only way that we can ensure that the Foothills retain the rural character and beauty that we all cherish.*
- **Consultant assistance:** The County anticipates choosing a consultant on or before January 1, 2006, to assist the County with developing the Subarea Plan.
- **Plan timetable:** The Plan process itself will take 12 months, with most of the community vision and goals to be determined in the six months from January to June 2006. Thereafter, the Plan will be drafted, drafts reviewed by the community, submitted to the County Hearing Examiner and the Planning Commission, and then finalized by the County Council.
- **Updates on the process:** The Foothills Friends website will be updated regularly with information about community surveys, meetings and workshops that will be held throughout the process.

**Join Foothills Friends! Sign a printout of the membership form on our website or submit your membership online.  
You may also call 599-9432 to request a membership form by mail.**