



Broken Process

Editor,

Two meetings this week at the Snohomish Planning and Development County Building illustrate what is broken in the planning process.

On Monday May 21st, a packed audience of citizens tried to voice their ideas about some planned expansion of the Urban Growth Areas that allow high density building in areas such as Maltby, Mill Creek, Darrington, Stanwood, Granite Falls.

The agenda was too full to reasonably accommodate citizens wanting to speak.

The next morning the County Council convened tardily to discuss updates to the Critical Area Regulations.

These regulations have been more than two years in coming and are still not finalized. The result of this type of backward planning has been disastrous to our urban watersheds and critical areas.

Citizen groups often must legally challenge decisions being made at the County planning that directly harm our environment. As such, they are always steps behind the developers who have capitalized on the early information to obtain permits.

Within UGA designation, developers often get by with simple administrative approvals on lands that should -require full Environmental Impact Statements.

A good example is the partial EIS now required on Horseman's Trails in the Picnic Point watershed. That partial EIS came about only after a huge citizen campaign.

Partial is not enough. Full EIS statements need to be required on sensitive lands, wetlands, steep slopes and watersheds within the UGA or a moratorium placed on the permits allowed until those much needed Critical Area Regulations get passed.

This type of broken process only aids rampant development and harms our environment in untold ways for generations to come.

Joan Smith