



CITY OF SNOHOMISH

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UGA Expansion – SR-9 and US-2 Responses to Questions Asked During April 2, 2008 Meeting April 29, 2008

Question 1: How will the City plan differently, and keep congestion out of the classrooms and off the roads?

Response: *The City of Snohomish intends to adopt land use and infrastructure plans for this UGA area before any annexation would occur. These plans will be adopted only after thorough study and public comment. After annexation, land development will need to adhere to the adopted plans.*

The City Council developed a lengthy list of issues that need to be addressed prior completion of this project. That list is contained within Resolution 1145. Work to address those issues is now underway.

Classroom size is determined by the Snohomish School District, not the City of Snohomish. The School District is currently monitoring this UGA planning process (see Question 12 below).

To ensure that new development contributes to mitigating new impacts to existing facilities, the City requires that developers of residential projects pay an impact fee to the School District. School impact fees are expended on projects to increase the capacity of school facilities.

Preventing further traffic congestion will certainly be a challenge. Detailed studies are currently underway to identify transportation impacts and potential mitigation measures. At this time, the City proposes the following measures to help prevent more traffic congestion in the area: a) limiting the amount of development so that congestion does not exceed allowed levels; b) coordination with Community Transit to ensure the new land uses will be well-served by transit (Transit Oriented Development, or TOD); c) coordination with WSDOT and Snohomish County to plan and fund improvements to SR-9 and US-2; d) collection of traffic impact fees with new development; e) creation of new employment centers within the UGA area so that local residents can work here in Snohomish; and f) directly funded improvements to SR-9 and the intersection of SR-9 and US-2 near the project site.

Question 2: How do the City of Snohomish’s wastewater rates compare to those of Lake Stevens Sewer District?

Response: This question can be answered only in part, because neither utility provider presently knows, at this time, the true cost of building (and method of funding) a transmission line to this area. With that said, a basic comparison can be summarized as follows:

Comparison of 2008 Wastewater Rates For A Single Family Residence ^a

	City of Snohomish	Lake Stevens Sewer District
Monthly service charge	\$53.17 ^b	\$50.00
Side sewer permit fee	\$50 + \$75 inspection	\$250 ^c
Basic connection fee/General facility connection charge	\$2,942	\$6,850
Special connection fee/Local facility charge	\$1,962	\$3,530
Other: special project, developer extension, developer reimbursement, etc.	?	?
Utility tax	5.33%	0

Notes:

^a Estimated. Some charges may not be exactly comparable.

^b Assumes average household water use – 7 CCF (748 gallons) per month.

^c Plus applicable B&O taxes.

Question 3: Why doesn’t the City consider more area than just the 375 acres proposed?

Response: *The City of Snohomish may be interested in additional lands north of US-2, but at present focusing upon the properties closest to, and most readily served by, transportation and utility infrastructure. The City, by focusing on this smaller area and planning for more-compact development, is striving to comply with the Growth Management Act and to prevent low-density urban sprawl.*

Question 4: What is the status/timeline for widening Highways 9 and 2?

Response: *WSDOT is currently constructing widening and intersection improvement projects for much of SR-9 south of Marsh Road. There currently is no funding available for widening of SR- (north of Marsh Road) or for US-2, other than limited safety improvements east of Snohomish. Those capacity projects were contained within Proposition 1, which was rejected by Washington voters in 2007.*

It is expected that this UGA expansion will include funds for improvements to SR-9 and the intersection of SR-9 and US-2. The scope and cost of those

improvements are within a study jointly sponsored by the State Department of Transportation, Snohomish County, and the Cities of Lake Stevens and Snohomish.

Question 5: Will the City keep some trees standing in the Joywood area?

Response: *Natural buffer areas are required along wetlands and streams. Existing trees will be preserved in these buffer areas. The City supports the preservation of existing vegetation when practicable. City regulations do not require the preservation of trees upon land that is otherwise developable. Property owners can establish conservation easements to preserve trees upon their land. Property taxes can often be reduced for lands with such easements.*

Question 6: Will the City protect the environment?

Response: *The City has regulations to protect critical areas such as wetlands, streams, and steep slopes. The City must also comply with State and Federal regulations for non-point sources of pollution, such as stormwater runoff from local streets.*

Question 7: How can we get our property included in the UGA?

Response: *Such requests should be made in writing to Snohomish County and to the City of Snohomish. If the addition of more land to the UGA area would require new and different environmental analysis and therefore delay progress on the current proposal, then it is likely that the City of Snohomish would not support this change. Substantive changes to the boundary under study will need to be considered at a later time, such during the review process for Docket XIV (2010).*

Question 8: Why doesn't the City of Snohomish disassociate itself from Reid Development and proceed with the UGA process on its own?

Response: *This action is an option that remains available to the City. The City is committed to the creation and dispersion of objective data on the UGA expansion. As part of the City's agreement with SR9/US2 LLC, we are able to fund the necessary studies, and to ensure that only reliable and empirical information is used. This is an expensive undertaking, and without the collaboration between the City and the LLC, public monies would need to be used to obtain this information.*

Separate from the County's review of the UGA expansion, the public process for determining policy and land use frameworks, regulations, and standards for this area will be conducted by the City. This process commenced with the April 2nd Community Meeting and will continue with input from the community and all interested parties.

Question 9: In the event that a present homeowner in this area decides to remain, would they be required to hook up to sewer service? What would this cost?

Response: *City regulations require that existing homes connect to the City’s sanitary sewer utility within five years of annexation—if the sewer system is available and within 200 feet.*

The UGA area will ultimately need to be served by a new sewer transmission line and the cost of that infrastructure will be recouped through some financing method, such as developer extensions or connection fees. Since this new transmission line has not been designed, the amount of the special fees cannot yet be determined.

For comparison purposes, the connection fee within the Cemetery Creek Trunk Line Special Development Area (south of US 2) is \$13,317 per single family residence. The City requires the connection to the City’s water utility when sewer connection is made. The connection charge for water is \$3,229. The cost of installing the necessary service lines to the home is in addition to these connection charges, and is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Question 10: In regards to the “favorable cost” for our properties, most of us have our savings in our homes. If we don’t receive a fair offer, we will need to stay in the UGA. What will be the price of doing that?

Response: *There are two answers to this question. One answer relates only to a change to the UGA boundary, the other relates to changes that may occur after the UGA boundary is changed and after annexation into the City.*

a. *Land added to Snohomish’s UGA but remaining unincorporated*

Overall, there will be no financial impact or ramification for the owners of property added to the City’s UGA. City services are not provided to unincorporated areas of the City of Snohomish UGA. Accordingly, no City fees or taxes would apply. No change to utilities or the boundaries of special purpose districts would occur. Land within an UGA may ultimately have a higher market value than non-UGA land. See response below regarding property taxes.

b. *Land added to Snohomish’s UGA and annexed to City of Snohomish*

Methods of annexation are fairly complicated, but generally annexations do not occur without the consent of a majority of the affected property owners. This means that, in general, property owners determine when annexation should occur.

See response above regarding water and sewer connections. The City’s property tax levy rate is slightly less than the County’s rate, so property taxes will not increase as a direct result of annexation. Homes in urban areas and with urban

utilities typically have a higher market value (per square foot) than comparable dwellings in rural areas. The amount of tax paid by property owners is a factor of the levy rate and the assessed value. Increases in assessed value can result in an increase in the amount of property tax paid each year. However, assessed value typically does not increase until such time as real estate transactions demonstrate a clear trend. This means that assessed value normally increases in response and in proportion to actual increases in property value.

The City of Snohomish imposes a 5.33% utility tax upon most utilities. No utility taxes are assessed by Snohomish County.

All of the UGA study area is within the Snohomish School District service area so no change in school district taxation would occur. Land currently served by the Snohomish Fire District (District 4) would see no change in those taxes. Upon annexation to Snohomish, properties currently served by Lake Stevens Fire District (District 8) would be added to the Snohomish Fire District.

Law enforcement emergency response will improve dramatically following annexation and the change in service area from the County Sheriff to the City of Snohomish Police Department.

Question 11: Will the congestion of Highway 9 be addressed before development starts?

Response: *See response to Question 4. Transportation system improvements needed to alleviate existing congestion are only partially funded, and this new development would not be obligated to solve existing congestion problems. Development of the UGA land would include frontage improvements along the SR-9 frontage, which could include an additional travel lane (south bound). The project may also fund some improvements to the interchange of SR-9 and US-2. Furthermore, the City assesses traffic impact fees upon new development for improvements on City Streets. That money can only be spent on planned transportation system improvements.*

Question 12: More than five acres will be needed for an elementary school. One elementary school is needed at a minimum of 10 useable acres. A new middle school may be needed as well.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Question 13: What happens to families living here?

Response: *Families living and owning homes in the area would have the choice of remaining in their home as the surrounding area becomes urbanized, or to sell their home and relocate.*

Question 14: Where does Snohomish have medium or high density now?

Response: *Most of the City's multifamily developments are located between the downtown and 10th Street. The City currently has three multi-family zones and allows medium density multi-family development (up to 18 units per acre) in Commercial, Mixed Use, and Business Park zones. The City's Land Use Map and Municipal Code can be found on the City's website.*

Question 15: Where are the open spaces going to be located?

Response: *Wetlands and streams will have natural buffer areas around them. The planning process currently underway will help determine where other types of open space should be located. For example, the area may include ball fields and/or neighborhood plazas. Where do you think open spaces should be located? What types of open spaces would you like to see?*

Question 16: How will 87th be updated to handle this proposed density?

Response: *The City is preparing to study the intersection of Bickford Avenue and 87th Avenue SE, and the improvements that will be needed there. 87th Avenue SE is an important route into the UGA area. It is also an important utility corridor.*