

Media Advisory – May 13, 2008

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Cathcart plan mixes jobs, transit and green living

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon unrolled his plan Tuesday to create sustainable living, working and recreational opportunities on more than 600 acres of public land known as the Cathcart property.

Reardon's vision includes an employment cluster, housing and commercial services on 20 percent of the county owned property while protecting 80 percent for public space, parks and infrastructure.

The proposal will provide amenities for current residents in the area by linking existing walking trails and parks with new shops, public spaces, a transit hub and job center.

“We’re proposing to build an environment-friendly neighborhood, job center and transit hub that will incorporate healthy, active lifestyles within natural surroundings,” Reardon said. “Cathcart is poised to be a flagship for future development in Snohomish County”

Reardon's proposal calls for a series of public meetings to craft strict development guidelines to integrate the new project with existing residential neighborhoods; incorporate a diverse mix of commercial, public and residential uses; and protect the environment.

“We’re talking smart growth, alternative energy, low-impact and green building as well as amenities such as parks and a transportation hub,” Reardon said. “This is a rare asset that gives us the opportunity to create something special for future residents as well as those who already call the area home.”

Beginning the first week of June, Reardon and county officials will host a series of community meetings designed to engage public input on how Cathcart should look and integrate into the surrounding community. Meetings currently are scheduled for 7 to 8:30 p.m. June 4 and 24 at Willis Tucker Park.

Current ideas under discussion include a mix of housing and commercial/business development, the creation of a transit hub at the crux of Highway 9 and Cathcart Way as well as experimental agriculture and solar-energy production on the county's former landfill.

“This is a great starting point for what to do with the Cathcart property,” said County Councilman Brian Sullivan. “I look forward to working together with the executive on his proposal and believe it's a good basis from which to move forward.”

The plan seeks to maximize the benefits of low-impact development without becoming a drain to county taxpayers.

“This property right now is accruing more than \$1.4 million in annual interest,” Reardon said. “This new investment should return the property back to public use while helping pay off the initial purchase.”

The county will hold monthly meetings with stakeholders and community members from June through September 2008 on conceptual design. In October 2008 the concept and rezone will be introduced to the Snohomish County Planning Commission as a part of the annual Comprehensive Plan review process.

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