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For Immediate Release:

Downtown drop-in center highlights growth issues

Media Contacts: Jorge Vega, Bellingham Planning and Comm. Development Director or
Greg Aucutt, Bellingham Senior Planner, 360-676-6982
Hal Hart, Whatcom County Planning Director, 360-676-6907
Rick Nicholson, WTA Director of Service Development, 360-676-6843

Drop in Center Grand Opening Event:

5 p.m. Friday, May 28
120 E. Holly Street, Marketplace Building

A grand opening event for a downtown drop in center highlighting Bellingham and Whatcom County growth issues is planned for Friday May 28 at 5 p.m. The event will feature refreshments and opening remarks by Bellingham Mayor Mark Asmundson and Planning Director Jorge Vega.

Community members are invited to learn more about Bellingham and Whatcom County growth issues at the drop-in center, located in the Marketplace Building at 120 East Holly Street in Bellingham. The drop in center will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from noon to 6:00 p.m. through August. Special additional hours may be announced during the summer, accommodating special events or community demand.

Bellingham Planning Department Director Jorge Vega said it is a place where people can come learn more about how our community can work together to understand and plan for growth.

The center was created as part of efforts by city, county and Whatcom Transportation Authority officials to engage the community in a public process to develop strategies for dealing with the growth expected in our community. The "Community Forum on Growth Management" includes a series of meetings and workshops, the drop in center and other outreach efforts.

Vega said Bellingham and Whatcom County face big changes. According to projections, the county-wide population will grow by nearly 62,000 people over the next 20 years. The Bellingham area is expected to grow by more than 30,000 people.

"While we're excited about our region's potential, we're also concerned about preserving the quality of life we enjoy," he said. "Bellingham and Whatcom County are repeatedly recognized nationally as an all-around great place to live, work and play, and keeping it that way is a challenge facing us all."

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