

Emergency Services and Fairhaven Highlands DEIS
Robert P. Gibb, M.D.

I speak as an 87-year-old physician, former health care provider of Emergency Services and former Whatcom County Medical Examiner. I live at 204 Viewcrest Road in Bellingham, one block from the proposed development. My comments will be restricted to Section 3.11 entitled Public Services and Utilities, pages 3-345, 3-360 to 362 and 3-373.

It is stated that the Fire Department's goal is to meet a medical response time of 4 minutes 90 percent of the time. In 2008 in the Fairhaven Highlands area, that goal was met 13% of the time. That means that old people like me who live in that area are considered expendable. From personal experience 6 weeks ago, I accept that consideration. What I do not accept is that the 450 students in The Fairhaven Middle School are also expendable. They are our future. When the 12th Street Bridge goes into traffic gridlock, as it does every morning and afternoon, these students are at high risk in the advent of a fire or a shooting or any other incident requiring an emergency response.

Within the past month, a neighbor of mine while at the school to pick up her son at about 3 PM witnessed an ambulance with siren screaming and lights flashing totally stopped in the middle of the bridge unable to move. Such incidents may help explain the medical 4 minute response time of 13%. Were I still the Medical Examiner and aware of a death related to a medical response time greater than the 4 minute standard because of traffic gridlock, I would sign the Death Certificate as Negligent Homicide and recommend to the County Prosecutor that the Mayor, the City Council, and that the heads of the Public Service and Planning Departments be so charged.

The DEIS report recognizes that the delayed response times will be adversely impacted by all of the alternatives, except for the "No Action Alternative". On page 3-373 they list mitigation measures that include sprinklers, aerial access, speed bumps, impact fees for the School District and adequate water and waste water connections and then have the audacity to claim that if these are implemented there will be "...no significant unavoidable adverse impacts...". That conclusion is either the result of stupidity or flagrant fraud.

Time permitting I would also like to comment that the proposed development is a conglomerate of cul de sacs, each of which with a fire occurring at the opening becomes a death trap. Some cities have enacted laws prohibiting them for this and for traffic reason.

