

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVISION
Environmental Impact Statement
Addendum to Environmental Checklist
Scoping Issues (preliminary)
January 11, 2009

Introduction

The purpose of this addendum is to propose issues for review in the Environmental Impact Statement being prepared in connection with the on-going review and adoption of the revised comprehensive plan for Okanogan County. The addendum will provide a summary of the issues attached to each element, where applicable, of the comprehensive plan, zone code, subdivision regulation, critical areas, shorelines master program, fire protection plan, and hazard mitigation plan as well as elements already in place and proposed for future review and update such as the transportation and capital facilities plan.

This addendum is intended to identify issues from the perspective of the SEPA Responsible Official. Other issues may be reviewed in response to comments made during the scoping period.

Summary of Issues

The following issues are proposed for review in addition to those introduced by the Environmental Checklist:

Economic Impacts

This section will create a comparison of the alternatives coupled with the other regulatory elements to determine an estimate of the economic impacts to the area economy. This review will include an estimate of the quantity of developable land under each alternative and an attempt to quantify the potential impacts that each alternative and other regulatory elements under review have on housing stock, land value and cost of public service delivery.

Public Safety

This section will create a comparison of the alternatives coupled with other regulatory elements to determine the potential impacts to field delivery of public safety services. This review will create a discussion of the possible settlement patterns and potential transportation grid and the effect they might have on law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical. The process for review of essential capital facilities will be dealt with under the capital facilities section of the comprehensive plan.

Customs and Culture

In addition to the Cultural Resources element listed in the Environmental Checklist this section will create a comparison of the alternatives coupled with other regulatory elements to determine the potential impacts to the core values cited by the neighborhood groups. While there was not consensus amongst all the groups, or even in the groups,

there were reoccurring sentiments in terms of lifestyle options and activities that are important in terms of preserving the identity of Okanogan County for its current and future residents. These sentiments include, but are not limited to, the importance of agriculture as an element of the economy and lifestyle choice; access to recreational opportunities, often on public lands, as an element of the economy and lifestyle choice; and the importance of resource based business activities such as forestry and mining as an element of the economy and lifestyle choice. Coupled with the desire to recognize the importance of these sorts of activities was the need to preserve the health of the environment in such a manner as to makes these choices available for future generations.

Summary of Changes

The purpose of this section is to provide an executive summary of the key issues regarding the comprehensive plan update and the many components also under review.

Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan revisions under review, with the exception of the no action alternative (alternative 1), proposes changes to the base density that would be allowed in underlying zoning and a more extensive use of the resource designation. While overall density may be little changed the proposed revisions have the likelihood of concentrating growth in those areas that can support it and limiting growth in those areas with no demonstrated ability to sustain it. These decisions would now be made on a broader basis rather than the project specific basis now largely employed. The more extensive use of the resource land designation is anticipated to help protect these lands from incompatible activities or non-local regulation but is at the same time seen to limit the options of the landowner in terms of deriving value from the development potential of the land. The comprehensive plan alternatives and other components must be reviewed to find an effective balance to all concerns.

The use of sub-area designations will be eliminated where it is possible to apply the general terms in there place (Rural low density in place of Uplands-20). Where it is desired to maintain special restrictions or requirements they will appear as special restrictions sections in the appropriate code (performance standards for planned development clustering in the Methow placed in special section of cluster subdivision code). Sub-area designations will be used primarily for future study areas or in those cases where the land use designations in the revised comprehensive plan cannot be effectively applied.

No land in the revised comprehensive plan will be designated as unclassified.

All public lands will have a comprehensive plan designation.

Zone Code (OCC 17)

The following are proposed revisions to the zone code:

Agriculture-20 and Forest-20 for use in resource land designations and Agriculture-3 for use in urban resource designations.

Neighborhood Commercial Zone for use in the Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development is under review with the possibility of renaming an existing zone used in the Methow Review District for that purpose.

Minimum Requirement District will be renamed and reviewed for use in Rural-High Density Designation.

Rural-5 and Rural 10 zone will be reviewed for use in Rural-Medium Density Designation.

Rural-20 zone will be created for use in Rural-Low Density Designation.

The current zone code will be reviewed for revisions to the process for proposed text amendments to any existing zones.

Appeal section of existing zone code will be revised to make the calculation of appeal periods based on calendar days from date of publication.

Variance process will be reviewed to lend clarity to the required review elements and to create a separate process for “reasonable use exceptions”.

Review of District Use Chart to replace the terms used with terms that more accurately reflect local definitions and historic uses.

A new zone designation map will be reviewed and adopted that is consistent with the revised comprehensive plan.

Airport overlay zone will be reviewed and adoption for application to existing and future airports both public and private.

Dark Sky overlay zone will be reviewed for application county-wide or in designated areas.

Ridgeline Protection zone will be reviewed for application county-wide or in designated view shed areas.

Subdivision Regulation (OCC 16)

The subdivision regulation will be reviewed for application and review requirements that are not consistent with other applicable statutes or with local practices. Proposed amendments to the short plat code are currently under review.

The appeal section and notice requirements of the subdivision code will be revised to make the calculation of these periods based on calendar days from date of publication.

The creation of a cluster subdivision ordinance assigning density bonuses to underlying zone densities based on the application of a public benefit rating system is under review. As proposed the greatest density bonus that is achievable is 100% with the greatest weight being placed on preserving resource lands followed by open space.

Revisions to the exempt segregation and large lot subdivision process to make them consistent with other applicable statutes are under review.

Proposals for a Dark Sky and Ridgeline Protection ordinance are included for review. (Also mentioned under zone code section)

Shorelines Master Program

Draft regulation is under review pursuant to the mandatory review required by the state of Washington.

Critical Areas Ordinance

Proposed amendments to the critical areas ordinance are under review pursuant to the mandatory review required by the state of Washington. An Okanogan County critical areas map is under review consistent with the requirements of local code. Revisions regarding “triggers” for critical areas review consistent with historical practices and other applicable statutes are proposed and under review.

Flood Management

Inclusion of regulation for flood area management in the critical areas ordinance is proposed. This new section in critical areas will include special restrictions currently located in the zone code and/or sub-area plans.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan and The Fire Protection Plan will be reviewed for consistency with Critical Areas Ordinance, Subdivision Regulation, and Building Codes.