

Lauren Davidson

From: brennanbase@centurytel.net
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 12:14 PM
To: Lauren Davidson; Perry Huston; Albert Roberts
Subject: Draft Zoning and Zoning Maps Comments

Importance: High

March 27, 2016

To: Perry Huston, Director of Planning CC: Okanogan County Regional Planning Commission Chair Albert Roberts and Commissioners Phil Dart, Dave Schulz, Marlene Rawley, Tamara Porter, Mark Miller

Okanogan County Office of Planning and Development 123 Fifth Avenue North, Suite 13 Okanogan, WA 98840

Re: Draft Zoning and Zoning Code Maps, Okanogan County Code Title 17A —issued October 16, 2015

Dear Director Huston and Planning Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Zoning and Zoning Maps.

Our concerns revolve around the questions of Density, Water Resources, Wildfire, the vagueness of the Conditional Use Permits. We also have concerns regarding the District Use Chart and its role it should have in the ultimate Zoning Documents.

With regards to **Density**, the inordinate number of housing units and permitted accessory buildings allowed in the R1, R5 and R20 zones are an open invitation to future land use problems in many neighborhoods throughout the county. It is inconceivable that development of the levels of magnitude proposed by the draft Zoning—especially if permitted in steep terrains and sensitive areas—would ever be practical, much less acceptable, to citizens already living in those neighborhoods.

Provisions that allow development of multifamily housing and mobile home parks at densities of five units per acre in rural zones (including R1, R5, and R20) should be removed. Accessory housing units should not be allowed on legal pre-existing lots less than one acre in area. Most one acre zoning should be reexamined in light of available water resources and available services.

Regarding **Water Resources**, the draft Zone Code appears to rely solely on the permitting process to deal with water issues. This places the landowner and developer in the difficult position of proving the availability of legal water. Densities should be reduced in closed basins and other areas where there are serious concerns about water availability.

Certainly, the county should be well aware of the complex concerns regarding **Wildfire** by now. Any Zone Code and Mapping should include planning for risk mitigation and prevention as well as preparation, suppression and emergency response. The draft Zoning documents seem to barely recognize the link between local land use planning and the vulnerability of residents and first responders to

wildfire. The Zone Code (and Subdivision Ordinance) should require new construction and subdivisions to adhere strict standards of building materials and access. High density rural designations (R1) should be re-examined in light of wildfire risk, and the ability of local fire districts to provide protection. Adopting the 2013 Wildfire Protection Plan as written would be a good place to start.

Any granted **Conditional Use Permit** should be acceptable to the neighboring property owners and any impacts able to be mitigated. The adoption of a major new Zone Code needs to be scrupulously enforced. From what we have seen on the ground, there have been numerous violations to the current zoning that have allowed throughout the county. Code violations only breed bad blood between neighbors and others who assume their county government promotes fairness throughout its jurisdiction.

Finally, we would like to mention our concerns on the **District Use Chart** contained in the draft Zoning Plan. The District Use Chart, which should serve as the Plan's centerpiece, has been amended by the additions of the R-1, R-5 and R-20 designations. Rather than designate use districts within the County's boundaries, these designations essentially only define measurable areas of lot sizes and appear to have little or no relationship with a particular neighborhood or locale.

The R-1, R-5, and R-20 designations are clearly not "districts" per se but merely descriptors of a parcel's square area. As such, it is quite possible for them to be located anywhere within the County's boundaries, with the distinct possibility of incompatible uses occurring on adjacent properties or in nearby neighborhoods.

The chief objectives of zoning should be to segregate uses commonly thought of as incompatible and to preserve the "character" of a community or area. We feel the District Use Chart contained in the draft Zoning Plan fails to live up to its intended purpose, leaving its users dependent on a Zoning Map that contains missing elements. In a properly conceived Zoning Plan, the District Use Chart needs to drive the Zoning Map, not the other way around.

Thank you for reviewing these comments. Please include them in the appropriate public records.

Sincerely,

Jim & Gail Brennan
33 E Buttermilk Rd.
Twisp, WA 98856
509-997-5070