

JUN 17 2014

OKANOGAN COUNTY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**Kellie Conn**

From: Perry Huston
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2014 4:46 PM
To: * County Commissioners; Lalena Johns; Tanya Craig
Cc: Kellie Conn; Anna Randall
Subject: FW: Comments on County Comprehensive Plan, Interim Zoning, and Determination of Non Significance
Attachments: Prichard_CompPlanComments_June2014.pdf

From: Susan Prichard [<mailto:susanprichard@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2014 6:25 AM
To: Perry Huston
Subject: Comments on County Comprehensive Plan, Interim Zoning, and Determination of Non Significance

Perry Huston, Planning Director
123 5th Ave. North, Suite 130
Okanogan, WA 98840

Dear Mr. Huston,

I am submitting comments on the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan, Interim Zoning Ordinance and Determination of Non-significance. This is an incredibly important plan that will affect how growth will be allowed to proceed within our County. I live full time in the Methow Valley. One of the key reasons that the Methow Valley is such a prime destination for tourists is that development has been carefully managed here to ensure that the rural character is preserved. This is in sharp contrast to many rural communities in the western United States and makes the Methow Valley and other parts of Okanogan County increasingly unique.

Over the past seven years, major changes have been made to the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan and necessitate an updated Environmental Impacts Statement. At minimum, please ensure that the following are fully addressed in the Comp Plan:

1) 1) Maximum allowable subdivisions should not exceed levels that would jeopardize adequate water supplies. With a warming climate, snow will continue to melt earlier in the spring, and most summers will be much warmer in the coming years. Overallocation of current water supplies is therefore of critical importance to address and rectify in the Comp Plan and supporting documents.

- 2) 2) Similarly, the Comp Plan must provide specific protections for groundwater resources. As written, the Comp Plan fails to meet the state mandate to protect the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies.
- 3) 3) Please retain the existing zoning for the Upper and Middle Methow Valley. This is critical for our long-term tourism and to ensure that agriculture and ranching remain viable in the Methow Valley.
- 4) 4) The lower Methow Valley needs similar protection. Please provide a concrete schedule for creation of a "More Completely Planned Area" for the Methow Valley south of Gold Creek. The potential for subdivision in this area far exceeds the limited water supplies and jeopardizes this important agricultural, scenic, and tourist area.
- 5) 5) There are many contradictory elements between the existing Comp Plan, Zoning Ordinance and supporting documents and maps (e.g., the interim zoning map) that require reconciliation and accurate definition before the Comp Plan can be adopted.
- 6) 6) Community advisory groups and individuals have played key roles in commenting on earlier drafts of the Comp Plan, and these comments need to be recognized and carefully considered by County officials. Increasingly, the County appears to be guided by special, pro-development interest groups and is not following official procedures or recognizing community input, including (but certainly not limited to) the county-facilitated Neighborhood Group comments from 2008. This has not gone unnoticed and unnecessarily exposes the County to expensive litigation.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to reviewing the next set of revisions and ensuring that we have a responsible Comprehensive Plan that can guide responsible development for the coming decades. I have also attached a pdf version of my letter.



Sincerely,

Susan Prichard

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Winthrop, WA 98862

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