

Table of Contents

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Contents

Chapter One: The Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan..... 3

Executive Statement 3

Vision Statement 3

Five Year Review 3

Planning Objectives 4

Comprehensive Plan Objectives 4

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT OF ALTERNATIVES 5

Chapter Two: Population Projections 14

Chapter Three: Groundwater 16

Water Quality and Quantity 16

Water Rights 18

Chapter Four: Resource Lands 19

Agricultural Resource Lands 19

Forest Resource Lands 23

Mineral Resource Lands 24

Chapter Five: Rural Lands 27

History 27

Purpose 27

Density 28

Chapter Six: Unincorporated Towns and Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Land Use..... 29

Purpose 29

Designation Criteria 29

Future Neighborhood Commercial Centers 30

Chapter Seven: City Expansion Areas 31

History 31

Purpose 31

Designation Criteria 31

Amendment..... 32

Zoning and Project Review..... 32

Chapter Eight: More Completely Planned Areas..... 33

Purpose and Intent..... 33

Designation Criteria 33

Establishing Future More Completely Planned Areas 34

Chapter Nine – Transportation Element 35

Introduction 35

Purpose of the Transportation Element 35

The Planning Process 35

Transportation Planning In Washington 37

The Transportation Element..... 37

Land Use and Transportation..... 38

46	Okanogan County Planning Regions	38
47	Functional Classification System	38
48	Chapter Ten – Essential Public Facilities	40
49	Airport Safety.....	40
50	Capital Facilities.....	40
51	Chapter Eleven – Coordination.....	41
52	Federal Agencies	41
53	State Agencies.....	42
54	Chapter Twelve – Natural Environment.....	43
55	Critical Area Planning Objectives	43
56	Wetland Planning Objectives.....	44
57	Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Planning Objectives	44
58	Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas Planning Objectives	45
59	Frequently Flooded Areas Planning Objectives.....	47
60	Geologically Hazardous Areas Planning Objectives.....	47
61	Shorelines	48
62	Wildfire.....	48
63		
64		

Chapter One: The Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan

65

66 **Executive Statement**

67 In 2014 the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners adopted a revised
68 Comprehensive Plan. In 2017 the Board of County Commissioners ordered a review
69 of the comprehensive plan with special attention directed to the issues raised in the
70 appeals brought against the 2014 plan.

71 The Board of County Commissioners finds that over 57% of the land in Okanogan
72 County is owned by Federal and State Agencies. Over 20% of Okanogan County is
73 within the boundaries of the Colville Indian Reservation and therefore outside of the
74 direct planning and permitting authority of the County with the exception of deeded fee
75 lands. Of the remaining less than 23% of the land mass, it is estimated that 5% is not
76 suitable for development due to topography and other critical area features. The
77 remaining land mass must provide the inventory of land necessary to provide for
78 residential, industrial, and commercial needs both in and out of the incorporated cities
79 and towns. This land also supports the agricultural and natural resource based
80 activities that are important to the local economy. The land use designations used in
81 the Comprehensive Plan must recognize these needs while avoiding incompatible
82 uses.

83 **Vision Statement**

84 Okanogan County's vast land mass, clean air and water, immense areas of public land,
85 diverse recreational opportunities and long traditions of farming, ranching and use of natural
86 resources lends itself well to a rural lifestyle. Planning efforts should be made to promote this
87 lifestyle, but also to look to the future to create and cultivate new economic opportunities
88 which would create a robust and sustainable economy so that future generations may flourish.
89

90 **Five Year Review**

91 The Board of County Commissioners shall order the review of the Comprehensive
92 Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Designation Map five years from the date of the
93 first approval and every five years thereafter. The Board of County Commissioners
94 will adopt by resolution a Scope of Work describing the process for the five year
95 review.

96 *Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any future Board of County*
97 *Commissioners to review and revise every section of the Comprehensive Plan. The*
98 *level and areas of review will be identified in the Scope of Work adopted by the Board*
99 *of County Commissioners.*

100

101

102 **Planning Objectives**

103 **Introduction**

104 The Comprehensive Plan will be guided by a series of General Planning Objectives.
105 These objectives identify key planning principles and provide a framework for actively
106 involving local residents, business and property owners, the cities and towns, local
107 service providers, and the Colville Confederated Tribes. These policies have been
108 developed in an effort initiated in 2005 and refined through a series of
109 intergovernmental coordination meetings, as well as several opportunities for public
110 review.

111 The second section of this chapter is a list comprised of General Planning Objectives
112 that outline ongoing policy objectives or identify future planning activities.

113 **Comprehensive Plan Objectives**

114 • The revised Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan will be consistent with the
115 Vision Statement approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

116 • The County will develop and implement a public involvement strategy to ensure
117 the opportunity for early and continuous citizen participation throughout the
118 Comprehensive Plan update process.

119 • The County will actively consult the Colville Confederated Tribes as a
120 recognized tribe -with reservation land within the boundaries of the county when
121 updating the County Comprehensive Plan. The County will establish a protocol for
122 integrating the updated Plan with the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Tribes for
123 the Colville Reservation and Trust Lands as is necessary and appropriate.

124 • Okanogan County shall periodically review the Critical Areas Ordinance,
125 Shorelines Master Program, Flood Management Programs, and Hazard Mitigation
126 Plan as required by state law and/or at the discretion of the Board of County
127 Commissioners to ensure compliance with the land use policies contained in this
128 Comprehensive Plan.

129 • In partnership with the incorporated cities and towns, the County will establish
130 City Expansion Areas that will provide adequate land to meet projected needs of the
131 city or town.

132 • It is the intent of Okanogan County to adopt a Comprehensive Plan that
133 contains the required elements in accordance with RCW 36.70 Planning Enabling Act.
134 The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a tool to protect the customs, cultures, and
135 economic stability of Okanogan County and as a guide to promote consistency
136 amongst other adopted regulation whether mandated or elective.

137 • It is the expectation of Okanogan County that when State, Federal, or Regional
138 agencies prepare, implement, and update plans and regulations, that they are
139 consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan and adopted regulation.

140 **DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT OF ALTERNATIVES**

141 **Summary of Alternatives**

142 To facilitate the public and environmental review of the 2014 comprehensive plan
143 three different alternatives have been drafted. All of the alternatives use the
144 population growth based on the medium range projections prepared by the Office of
145 Financial Management (OFM). The OFM projects that the population in Okanogan
146 County will increase from the estimated 2017 population of 42,110 to 45,621 by the
147 year 2040. The 2010 census data shows an average of 1.8 people per household in
148 Okanogan County. Based on census data the 3511 increase in population will result
149 in an increase of 1950.55 households.
150

151 The following summarizes the different assumptions and policies contained within the
152 three alternatives. The environmental impacts of the three approaches will be
153 analyzed in a draft environmental impact statement. The final environmental impact
154 statement will analyze the preferred alternative that emerges from the public review
155 process.
156

157 Alternative 1 is the no action alternative which leaves the 2014 comprehensive plan in
158 place. The 2014 comprehensive plan was written with the assumption that many
159 existing parcels would not be developed due to an undesirable location or other
160 problems that make further development undesirable or unfeasible. The 2014
161 comprehensive plan uses a rural high density designation, a rural resource low density
162 designation and a resource recreation designation. Alternative 1 relies on site and
163 project specific review enforcing existing regulation to avoid and/or minimize
164 environmental impacts. Alternative 1 relies on the historically low population growth
165 and market demand to constrain and direct growth coupled with the availability of
166 potable water supplies and the ability of local soils to support on-site septic (OSS)
167 systems.
168

169 Alternative 2 changes the rural resource and recreation resource designations used in
170 the 2014 comprehensive plan to agricultural resource and forest resource. The city
171 expansion areas are designated in alternative 2. The rural designation follows the
172 transportation grid but does not capture as much of the areas already showing urban
173 characteristics off the transportation grid. Alternative 2 considers the historically low
174 population growth in the county and relies on market demand coupled with other
175 regulation, such as the CAO and SMP, along with a connection between growth and
176 available water to direct growth.

177
178 Alternative 3 changes the rural resource and recreation resource designations used in
179 the 2014 comprehensive plan to agricultural resource and timber resource. The city
180 expansion areas are designated in alternative 3. The rural designation follows only
181 the major transportation grid and does not extend into areas outside of fire districts or
182 into critical areas. The rural designation in alternative 3 does not capture areas
183 already showing urban characteristics that are off the major transportation grid. While
184 alternative 3 considers the historically low population growth in the county it relies on
185 the cities/towns and their expansion areas to serve most of the population growth.
186 Larger lot sizes are desired in the resource designations to avoid conflict with
187 agricultural operations and to minimize risk to residential structures from wildfire.
188 Alternative 3 uses regulation requiring where possible the consolidation of non-
189 conforming lots to achieve a higher portion of large lots in the rural areas. Alternative
190 3 additionally relies on other regulation such as the CAO and SMP, along with a
191 connection between density and available water to direct growth.
192

193 **Discussion of Alternative 1**

194 Alternative 1-No Action
195 The no-action alternative leaves the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2014 in place.
196

197 **Resource Lands**

198 The comprehensive plan adopted in 2014 adopted a recreation resource and rural
199 resource designation. No forest or agriculture resource designation was adopted but
200 policies found within the comprehensive plan support both forestry and agriculture in
201 all designations.
202 The resource recreation designation is placed on public land due to the important
203 contribution it makes to the local customs, culture, and economic base. The land in
204 recreation resource is critical to the local tourism, grazing/agriculture, and forest
205 industries as well as providing recreation opportunities.

206 **Rural Designation**

207 The rural designation in the 2014 comprehensive plan follows the transportation grid
208 and captures areas that already display urban characteristics by the existing
209 development pattern. R-1 zoning is predominate in the rural designation except in
210 those areas where local perception led to the conclusion that water supply was limited
211 or the transportation grid would not support more intense levels of development. In
212 those areas R-5 and R-20 zones were assigned.

213 The rural designation supports a wide variety of land use activities with specific
214 support for agriculture.

215 **City Expansion Areas**

216 The 2014 comprehensive plan contains policies regarding city expansion areas and
217 recognizes them as areas suitable for more intense levels of residential, commercial,
218 and industrial development. The 2014 comprehensive plan map does not adopt any
219 of the proposed city expansion areas. The 2016 zone code revision that followed the
220 2014 comprehensive plan did not adopt any city expansion areas.

221 **Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers**

222 The 2014 comprehensive plan identifies the unincorporated towns and neighborhood
223 commercial centers. The 2014 comprehensive plan map designated the area of the
224 town plats and large tracts of surrounding land. The designation as unincorporated
225 towns in the comprehensive plan made compatible the assignment of the
226 neighborhood commercial zone in the 2016 zone code. Policies in the 2014
227 comprehensive plan encourage commercial development in the unincorporated towns
228 to allow them to continue to serve as neighborhood commercial zones. Residential
229 development is allowed although subject to the same limitations imposed by water
230 supply and OSS regulations as elsewhere in the county.

231 **DISCUSSION of Alternative 2**

232 **Alternative 2-Higher level of rural development constrained by historical growth** 233 **levels**

234 Alternative 2 uses the medium range for population growth but relies on the historically
235 modest growth levels and market demand to dictate the location and intensity of
236 growth in the rural areas.

237 Development in the rural areas is tied to the physical and legal availability of potable
238 water supplies. Alternative two replaces the recreation and rural resource designation
239 with the agriculture and forest resource designation. These designations utilize
240 primarily soil classifications and current land use as criteria for designation. The
241 mineral designation is an overlay identifying existing mine sites. Agriculture and
242 residential development is allowed in all designations with underlying zoning assigned
243 in accordance with the ability of the area to support potable water supply and OSS as
244 well as proximity to the transportation grid. Unincorporated towns and neighborhood
245 commercial centers are designated in alternative 2. City expansion areas are
246 designated in alternative 2 consistent with the submittals from the cities.

247

248

249 **Resource Lands**

250 Alternative 2 designates 734,852.43 acres of land in the agricultural resource
251 designation which is 22% of the land mass of Okanogan County and 1,825,119.78
252 acres in the timber resource designation which is 54%. In designating agricultural
253 lands of long term commercial significance alternative 2 uses primarily soil
254 classification and existing crop and grazing patterns as designation criteria. Private
255 lands with a Department of Revenue (DOR) code have been assigned Agriculture
256 Resource or Forest Resource as appropriate. The agricultural resource designation
257 allows residential development and recognizes that large parcels of land tend to avoid
258 the conflict between residential development and farm operations.

259
260 Mineral lands are designated by DOR code – 85 and also by Department of Natural
261 Resources – Active Surface Mine locations. Many of these are old mining claims that
262 haven't been open for years. This also includes some of the mineral sites listed
263 above.

264 **Rural Designation**

265 Alternative 2 designates 135,794.57 acres in the rural designation which is 4% of the
266 land mass of Okanogan County. Alternative 2 shows a reduced area of rural
267 designation that follows main transportation routes.

268 **City Expansion Areas**

269 In alternative 2 the city expansion areas proposed by the cities are adopted on the
270 land use designation map. Growth is encouraged within the city expansion areas but
271 the alternative 2 does not require infill or any other specific approach to growth.
272 Alternative 2 assumes that market demand and the ability of the city to serve the CEA,
273 coupled with the historically modest growth levels throughout the county will constrain
274 growth.

275 **Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers**

276 Alternative 2 identifies the unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial
277 centers. The area designated includes the area of the original town plats and tracts of
278 surrounding land under common ownership and/or reconciled to parcel boundaries.
279 The designation as unincorporated towns in the comprehensive plan would make the
280 assignment of the neighborhood commercial zone compatible. Commercial
281 development in the unincorporated towns is encouraged to allow them to continue to
282 serve as neighborhood commercial zones. Residential development is allowed
283 although subject to the same limitations imposed by water supply and OSS
284 regulations as elsewhere in the county.

285 **DISCUSSION of Alternative 3**

286 Alternative 3-More restricted regulatory approach to rural development.
287 Alternative 3 uses the medium range population projections but directs growth to the
288 cities and towns and their designated expansion areas by taking a more restricting
289 approach to growth in the rural areas. Development in the rural areas is tied to the
290 physical and legal availability of potable water supplies. Alternative 3 replaces the
291 recreation and rural resource designation used in alternative 1 with the agriculture and
292 forest resource designation. These designations utilize primarily soil classifications
293 and current land use as criteria for designation. The mineral designation is an overlay
294 identifying existing mine sites. Agriculture and residential development is allowed in all
295 designations with underlying zoning assigned in accordance with the availability of
296 municipal water and sewer in the city and towns and their expansion areas.
297 Residential development in the resource designations relies on large lot sizes to avoid
298 conflicts between residential and agricultural uses. Residential clustering is allowed on
299 land less suited to agricultural activities if the legal and physical availability of potable
300 water supplies supports development along with proximity to the transportation grid
301 and the ability of local soils to support OSS systems. The unincorporated towns and
302 neighborhood commercial centers are designated in alternative 3 with the areas
303 designated restricted primarily to the existing town plats and immediate area.
304 Residential developments is discouraged in the unincorporated towns and
305 neighborhood commercial centers except where water and sewer systems exist or
306 where residential activities are already present and supported by legally and physically
307 available potable water supplies. City expansion areas are designated in alternative 3
308 consistent with the submittals from the cities. Both residential and commercial growth
309 is encouraged in the cities and towns and their expansion areas commensurate with
310 their ability to provide municipal services.

311

312

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319 **Resource Lands**

320 Alternative 3 designates 841,290.62 acres of land in the agricultural resource
321 designation which is 25% of the land mass of Okanogan County and 1,827,367.09
322 acres in the timber resource designation which is 54%. In designating agricultural
323 lands of long term commercial significance alternative 3 uses soil classification and
324 existing crop and graze patterns as designation criteria. Private lands with a
325 Department of Revenue (DOR) code have been assigned Agriculture Resource or
326 Forest Resource as appropriate. Other lands in state, federal, and tribal ownership
327 have been assigned Agriculture Resource or Forest Resource by land cover and
328 aerial photography. Mineral lands are designated by DOR code – 85 and also by
329 Department of Natural Resources – Active Surface Mine locations. The agricultural
330 resource designation allows residential development but requires that larger parcel
331 sizes be preserved to avoid the conflict between residential development and farm
332 operations. Non-conforming lots will be required to consolidate when contiguous and
333 under common ownership before residential development is allowed. Resource based
334 commercial activity is encouraged in the resource designations. Residential
335 development in the forest resource designation is allowed but requires larger parcel
336 sizes be preserved to minimize the vulnerability to wildfire. Non-conforming lots will
337 be required to consolidate when contiguous and under common ownership to
338 preserve larger lot sizes. All residential development in the resource designation will
339 be restricted to areas where adequate supplies of potable water are both legally and
340 physically available.
341

342 **Rural Designation**

343 Alternative 3 designates 32,408.68 acres in the rural designation which is less than
344 2% of the land mass of Okanogan County. Alternative 3 has a greatly reduced area of
345 rural designation that follows main transportation routes. Rural areas are also limited
346 to areas served by fire districts. Areas in the flood plain, steep slopes, and remote
347 areas have been removed from the rural designation resulting in most of this land
348 being designated agricultural resource.

349 **City Expansion Areas**

350 In alternative 3 the city expansion areas proposed by the cities are adopted on the
351 land use designation map. Growth is encouraged within the city expansion areas but
352 | the alternative [3](#) does not require infill or any other specific approach to growth.
353
354
355

356 **Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers**

357 Alternative 3 identifies the unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial
358 centers. Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial areas have been
359 reduced in size – limited to the immediate area of the unincorporated town. The
360 designation as unincorporated town in the comprehensive plan would make the
361 assignment of the neighborhood commercial zone compatible. Commercial
362 development in the unincorporated towns is restricted to small neighborhood retail
363 operations. Residential development is discouraged except on existing parcels
364 subject to the same requirement that potable water is both physically and legally
365 available and the lot size and soils are capable of supporting OSS systems. In the
366 unincorporated towns that already have a high level of residential development, such
367 as Malott, the subdivision of land for residential development will be allowed subject to
368 the same requirement that water is both physically and legally available and the lot
369 size and soils will support OSS systems.

370 **General Planning Objectives**

371 • Okanogan County recognizes the constitutional protection of private property
372 rights.

373 • Okanogan County will inventory essential public facilities in the County and
374 shall establish criteria for citing such essential public facilities of regional and
375 statewide significance.

376 • Okanogan County will establish economic development goals and policies
377 which support economic prosperity, opportunity, and promote employment for all
378 citizens.

379 • Okanogan County will identify capital facilities necessary to support planned
380 levels of growth and will identify funding sources and strategies that make effective
381 use of the County's limited resources.

382 • Okanogan County will establish criteria to identify and designate natural
383 resource areas including mining, timber, and agricultural lands and will provide
384 opportunities within County policy to maintain and where possible enhance the
385 traditional natural resource industries in the County.

386 • Okanogan County recognizes the important role forestland plays in our
387 economy, recreational pursuits, and cultural heritage. Okanogan County will promote
388 the responsible harvest of forest products and the protection of these lands from
389 incompatible uses. Okanogan County will require coordination from the public land
390 managers (USFS, BLM, DNR, etc) to create appropriate land use designations and
391 effective management practices to further these goals.

392

- 393 • Land use designations within rural lands must provide sufficient land for
394 housing and business activities suitable to the rural areas. These designations and
395 the projects they anticipate must be compatible with available water supplies, capacity
396 of the area for on-site septic, and the ability to provide adequate levels of public
397 services.

- 398 • Okanogan County, in cooperation and coordination with incorporated cities and
399 towns, will encourage a range of housing densities and affordability to meet the needs
400 of all economic segments of the County's population.

- 401 • An adequate inventory of affordable housing is critically important to
402 maintaining a viable agricultural economic base. Farmworker housing will be a
403 permitted use in agricultural and other compatible zones. Density for farmworker
404 housing will be determined by the ability of the site to comply with public health
405 standards.

- 406 • Agricultural activities shall be recognized and promoted in the rural and
407 resource designation.

- 408 • Okanogan County supports agricultural activity as a vital component of our
409 economic base, as the foundation of a local food supply, and an integral part of our
410 heritage. Okanogan County will protect agriculture from the impact of incompatible
411 uses by utilizing appropriate land use designations and effective review processes.

- 412

- 413 • Okanogan County will create development regulation that utilizes innovative
414 planning and development tools such as clustering and the transfer of development
415 rights along with density bonuses developed after application of a public benefit rating
416 system.

- 417 • Okanogan County will facilitate the orderly development in city expansion areas
418 by requiring development agreements for all development proposals that will identify
419 infrastructure requirements compatible with future city system extensions and that
420 encourage the platting or shadow platting of streets, alleys, and utility easements to
421 facilitate future city annexation.

- 422 • Okanogan County recognizes the importance of an effective transportation
423 system to agricultural operations in the movement of equipment, materials, stock, and
424 agricultural products. Okanogan County will consider the needs of agriculture in all
425 future transportation planning efforts. Traffic control regulation, allowing for the safe
426 and effective use of the County road system by agriculture in areas bearing a resource
427 designation, will be implemented.

- 428 • Okanogan County will adopt a circulation element that ensures the
429 maintenance and enhancement of a transportation system that is both safe and
430 efficient. Every effort will be made to support needed improvements to the
431 transportation system concurrent with new land development patterns.

- 432 • Development proposals shall be reviewed for impacts to the transportation
433 system. Conditions of approval will be identified to mitigate adverse impacts to current
434 and future levels of service. Improvements will be required based on a proportionate
435 share nexus to prevent onerous requirements on new development while at the same
436 time avoiding unreasonable impacts to the existing tax base.
- 437 • Existing unincorporated towns and cities should develop in such a manner that
438 impacts to the transportation system brought about by the increased users of the
439 services provided are mitigated to avoid degrading the level of service provided.
- 440 • Underlying zoning within unincorporated towns and cities must provide an
441 effective mix of permitted and conditional uses that provide the services appropriate to
442 a Neighborhood commercial center without impacting the ability of towns and cities to
443 develop regional services within their existing boundaries or areas.
- 444 • Existing unincorporated towns and cities act as Neighborhood commercial
445 centers that contribute positively to the social and economic status of the citizens of
446 the County. Effective planning within the existing boundaries of the unincorporated
447 towns, cities, and neighboring areas benefits the public by increasing the proximity of
448 our citizens to necessary supplies and services.
- 449 • Existing unincorporated towns and cities should develop in such a manner that
450 adequate water supplies are available and on-site septic systems are sufficient to
451 provide for the users of the services provided within them.
- 452 • Okanogan County supports voluntary compliance of landowners with good
453 management practices. Okanogan County will support and when feasible sponsor
454 water quality education programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water
455 quality issues and ramifications.
- 456 • Okanogan County will actively participate with all agencies with jurisdiction in
457 controlling the illegal diversion of surface water and illegal withdrawal of groundwater.
- 458

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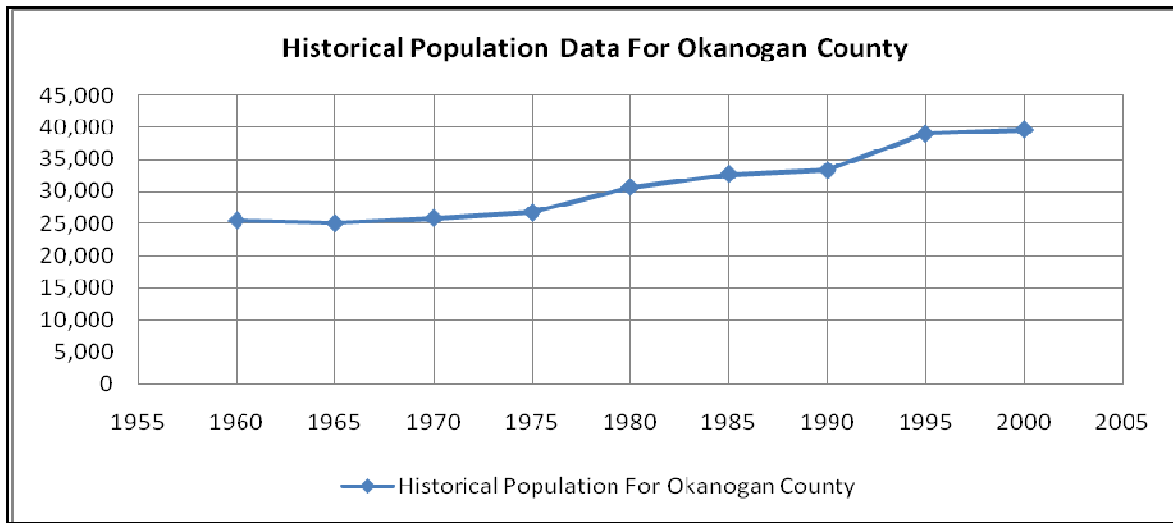
Chapter Two: Population Projections

Table 1: HISTORICAL POPULATION OF OKANOGAN COMPARED TO WASHINGTON									
MEDIUM SERIES: HISTORY 1960 TO 2000									
	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
State	2,853,214	3,065,000	3,413,250	3,567,890	4,132,353	4,415,785	4,866,663	5,407,104	5,894,121
Okanogan	25,520	25,100	25,867	26,800	30,663	32,687	33,350	38,943	39,564

Note: Census totals may differ slightly from other publications due to use of corrected or uncorrected counts. Unrounded numbers not meant to imply accuracy.
OFM/Forecasting | October 2007

463

Figure 1: Historical Population Data 1960-2000



464

465

466

467

468 **Growth Management Projections**

469

Table 2: Projections of the Total Resident Population for Growth Management 2017 GMA Projections Medium Series: 2010 to 2040							
	Census	Estimate	Projections				
	2010	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
State	6,724,540	7,310,300	7,638,415	8,085,043	8,503,178	8,894,306	9,242,022
Okanogan	41,120	42,110	43,084	44,149	44,824	45,335	45,621

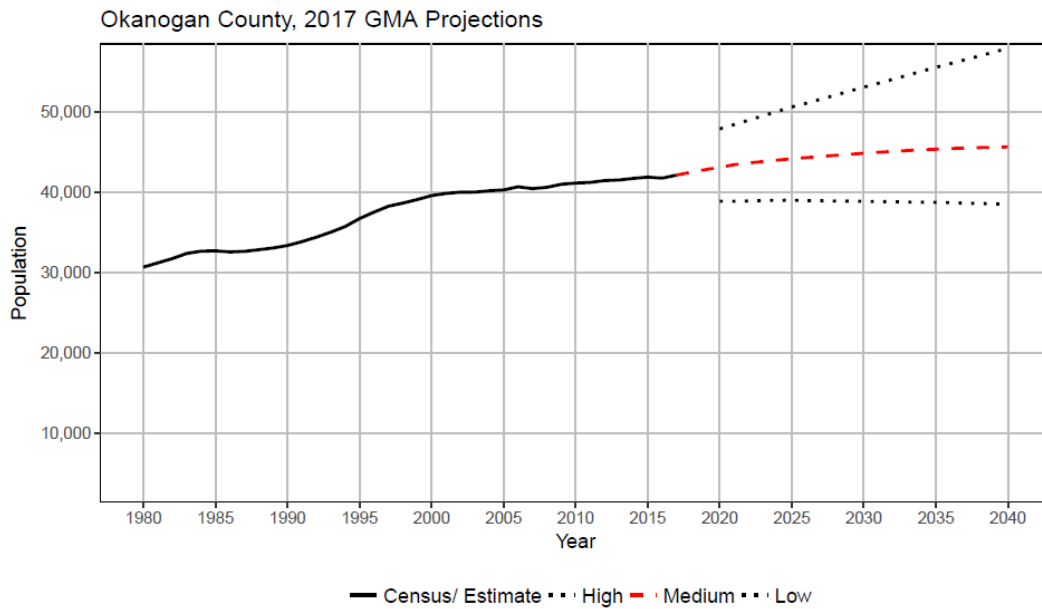
OFM/Forecasting | and Research December 2017

470

471

472

473 **Figure 2: 2017 GMA Projections**



474

475

477 **Chapter Three: Groundwater**

478 **Water Quality and Quantity**

479 This Comprehensive Plan is prepared in accordance with the authority granted in the
 480 Planning Enabling Act (RCW 36.70) and in accordance with applicable sections of the
 481 Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A). The Planning Enabling Act requires
 482 counties to “provide for protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater used for
 483 public water supplies” (RCW 36.70.330). This requirement includes not only the
 484 physical availability of water but whether legal access to physical water exists as well.

485 **GOAL 1: MAKE A CLEAR, CONSCIOUS CONNECTION BETWEEN WATERSHED** 486 **PLANNING AND LAND USE PLANNING IN OKANOGAN COUNTY**

487 When land use, water use, and other community decisions are made they should be
 488 made with the full weight of all plans ensuring that the use is compatible in all plans.
 489 Strategies to accomplish this goal may include:

490 1) Give substantial attention and weight to municipal water needs where it is
 491 demonstrated that water conservation is being practiced, where growth is planned and
 492 concentrated in the effort to control sprawl, and where utility and infrastructure
 493 planning and investments are evident.

494 2) Acknowledge that agricultural lands will be converted to other uses. . The
 495 conversion of agricultural land to other activities results in different demand on water
 496 supply. Options should be pursued to keep those lands that are not identified for such
 497 conversion in viable production.

498 3) Continue to develop detailed data for water resources in all portions of the
 499 watershed to determine and address the impacts that may be posed by continued
 500 incremental growth in rural lands.

501 4) Utilize zoning provisions to guide growth where it is appropriate, avoiding those
 502 areas for higher density subdivision where it is obvious that water is scarce and senior
 503 water rights may be affected.

504 5) Participate in water planning activities in British Columbia where most of the flow in
 505 WRIA 49 originates.

507 Due to the geology of Okanogan County, aquifers are in varying degrees of hydraulic
508 continuity with surface water bodies, and differ greatly in the amount of water they can
509 produce. While a number of studies have been conducted, no definitive study in either
510 WRIA 48 and/or 49 accurately measures or models the carrying capacity of any
511 aquifer nor does any study project the recharge rate of groundwater aquifers from
512 precipitation.

513 To ensure consistency with this Comprehensive Plan, review of the Zone Code and
514 other development regulation should consider the data that is available in terms of
515 available groundwater supplies in any given area. This coupled with considerations
516 such as access to the transportation and power grid, geologic hazard areas, frequently
517 flooded areas, proximity to services, etc. should inform the zone designations and the
518 intensity and type of development they allowed into areas best able to support it.

519 Because of the complex and differing nature of the groundwater aquifers in Okanogan
520 County, the process for site specific review of land use proposals should be created
521 so as to take into account that specific areas within larger land use designations that
522 may be capable of supporting a higher level of development.

523 In preparing the development regulation that implements this plan and subsequent
524 land use proposals, the following principles will be considered.

525 a) Okanogan County recognizes the importance of groundwater supplies to the
526 economic well-being of the area. Every effort will be made to make groundwater
527 available for beneficial use within the constraints of the law.

528 b) Nothing in this section shall be construed in a manner that impairs an existing
529 legal right to withdraw groundwater or divert surface water for beneficial use.

530 c) Okanogan County will seek funding made available to further study the carrying
531 capacity of groundwater aquifers and the rate at which they are recharged by
532 precipitation.

533 d) Okanogan County will consider opportunities to improve/create surface or
534 groundwater storage of water provided by periods of high water flow to enhance
535 groundwater supplies and to augment in-stream flow of surface waters during
536 seasonal low water periods.

537 e) Okanogan County will support the formation of water banks in areas where
538 feasible to mitigate for water uses from groundwater wells exempt from permitting in
539 accordance with RCW 90.44.050 as well as creating the opportunity for those seeking
540 an individual or group domestic water supply to obtain a water supply of sufficient
541 seniority to minimize the potential for interruption due to low in-stream flows or
542 impairment of senior water rights.

543 f) Okanogan County will craft and adopt local regulation for the administration and
544 tracking of permit exempt wells.

545 **Water Rights**

546 Okanogan County recognizes a water right as private property and affords it the same
547 protection. Okanogan County adheres to the premise of “first in time, first in right” that
548 is a foundation block of Western water law. A water right put to a beneficial use,
549 including a temporary dedication to in-stream flow, should be protected from
550 relinquishment to the state.

551 Okanogan County further recognizes that keeping the right to use water within
552 Okanogan County is critical to its economic health. Okanogan County encourages
553 water right holders to consider all other options to protect their water right or to realize
554 profit from its use before offering it for sale outside of the County. Okanogan County
555 will attempt to create incentive based programs to encourage the owner of water rights
556 to keep them in the County. Such programs might include:

- 557 • Water banking.
- 558 • Density bonuses as adopted in a Performance Based Density Bonus that
559 promotes the use of water in the County or promotes the transfer of water for
560 use in the County.
- 561 • Seeking funding for the acquisition of water rights for use in the County.
- 562 • Promote the re-issuance of water rights lost through relinquishment within
563 Okanogan County.
- 564 • Review and minimize the impacts caused by the transfer of water outside of the
565 County. This statement should not be construed in any manner to imply any
566 interference with the owner’s right to sell their water right to any buyer.

567 |

Chapter Four: Resource Lands

569 **Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan** definition of resource lands is guided by
 570 the “Minimum Guidelines to Classify Agriculture, Forest, Mineral Lands and Critical
 571 Areas” (hereafter called *Minimum Guidelines*) established by the state Department of
 572 Community, Trade and Economic Development (WAC 365-190). Each resource area
 573 is defined, below, according to the *Minimum Guidelines*.
 574

575 **Agricultural Resource Areas** are those lands primarily devoted to or important for
 576 the long-term commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy,
 577 apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, -or
 578 livestock.

579 **Forest Resource Areas** are those areas primarily useful for growing trees for
 580 commercial purposes.
 581

582 **Mineral Resource Areas** are those lands primarily devoted to the extraction of
 583 minerals or that have known or potential long-term commercial significance for the
 584 extraction of minerals.

585 **Purpose**

586 The purpose of the Resource Land Designation is to recognize the value of these
 587 lands to the economy of Okanogan County and to insure sufficient resource land is
 588 available to provide for the sustainability and future expansion of agriculture, forestry,
 589 and mineral extraction.

590 **Agricultural Resource Lands**

591 **Purpose**

592

593 The intent of Okanogan County’s Agricultural Resource land use category is to
 594 implement the Growth Management Act planning goal related to maintaining and
 595 enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes productive agricultural
 596 industries. This category is intended to preserve, stabilize, and enhance the primary
 597 agricultural land base which is being used for, or offers the greatest potential for,
 598 continued production of agricultural products and harvesting. The Agricultural
 599 Resource land use category carries out this goal by establishing a variety of zones in
 600 which agriculture is a permitted use.

601

602

603

604

605

606

607 **General Description**

608
609 Agricultural Resource Lands are those lands primarily devoted to or important for the
610 long-term commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary,
611 vegetable, and livestock.

612
613
614 The location of agriculture has been strongly influenced by the construction of
615 irrigation facilities. Cultivated agriculture and orchards in Okanogan County are heavily
616 concentrated in and around the valley floors, while grazing lands are located along
617 many of the hillsides. Many forested portions of the County that are mostly state and
618 federal lands are leased out for summer pasture.

619
620 | **Designation Criteria:**

621
622 Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-190-050 (1) states that in classifying and
623 designating agricultural resource lands, counties must approach the effort as a county-
624 wide or area-wide process. Counties should not review resource lands designations
625 solely on a parcel-by-parcel process. Reviews on a county-wide or area-wide basis
626 must *meet* the Agricultural Resource land mapping criteria.

- 627 1) Generally meets criteria for agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial
628 significance as defined by state laws and regulations.
- 629 a) May contain prime soils according to the Natural Resource Conservation
630 Service.
 - 631 b) May include "pockets" of non-agricultural land uses.
 - 632 c) May contain high-value crops; specifically, areas where tree fruits, vineyards,
633 specialty field crops.
 - 634 d) May include a variety of residential uses related to agricultural activities
635 including farm worker housing and family farm dwellings.
 - 636 e) May include compatible uses such as the marketing of regional agricultural
637 products from one or more producers; the production, marketing and
638 distribution of value added agricultural products; or packing and cold storage
639 plants.
 - 640 f) May include non-agricultural accessory uses or activities as long as they are
641 consistent with the size, scale and intensity of the existing agricultural use on a
642 property.
- 643 2) Lands located within an irrigation district and receiving water, or
644 3) Lands where dryland farming, pasture or grazing outside of irrigation districts is
645 predominant.
- 646 4) Lands enrolled in one of the current use assessment programs.
647 5) Lands located outside established city expansion areas.
648 6) Criteria for de-designating agricultural resource lands shall follow the "Agricultural
649 Resource De-designation Analytical Process" found below. The agricultural
650 resource de-designation criteria will be used for plan amendments and updates to
651 change a land use from Agricultural Resource to another land use designation.
652 The agricultural de-designation process shall not apply when re-designating
653 agricultural resource lands to some other Resource Land designation.

654

655 7) Soils considered to be an Agricultural Resource of Long Term Commercial
656 Significance are primarily those soils listed as 'Prime" in the WEB Soil Survey of
657 Okanogan County dated September 7, 2017. This list of soils, however, does not
658 include similar soils as those listed as Prime that are located on slopes with a
659 gradient higher than 2 degrees. Slopes with a gradient up to and including 15
660 degrees are considered suitable for growing tree fruit and grapes based on good
661 drainage and the ability for cold air to fall down gradient. The limiting factor for
662 slopes is one of safety when operating machinery.
663

664 **Tax Status**

665 Tax Status indicates the current land use and tax rate being claimed by the property
666 owner and reported by the Assessor. An inference can be made by looking at the
667 current tax status as to the property owners' intent for the land. This intent alone
668 cannot be considered when determining the appropriateness of the land for
669 designation as Agricultural Land of Long-term Commercial Significance, but may be
670 another indicator of the possibility of a more intense use of the land. When the
671 majority of the parcels within the study area have a tax status other than Agriculture,
672 then it is considered one factor for possible removal of the area from resource
673 designation
674

675
676 **Predominant Parcel Size**

677 Larger parcels are thought to be more suitable for commercial agriculture. Areas with
678 predominant parcel sizes of 5 acres or more that are in proximity to other lands that
679 meet other designation criteria; such as soils and current use tax classification, should
680 be considered for inclusion in the agricultural resource designation.
681

682 **Availability of Public Facilities**

683 Of the list of various public facilities provided by the County and Cities, roads, sewer
684 and water are the three whose presence could possibly add pressure to develop land
685 at a higher use. These facilities can be mapped and evaluated for their proximity to
686 agricultural lands and a determination as to the effect this proximity would have
687 regarding pressure to develop. Water and sewer are normally confined to the city and
688 its city expansion area although sewer and water systems do exist outside of
689 incorporated cities and their expansion areas
690

691 **Proximity to the City Expansion Area**

692 Parcels should be evaluated for their distance from a City Expansion Area. The further
693 away from the City Expansion Area the less influence it has on a parcel to develop at
694 some higher use. No resource land should be designated within a city expansion
695 area.
696

697
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701

702 **Land Use Settlement Patterns and Their Compatibility with Agricultural**
703 **Practices and Intensity of Nearby Uses**

704 Land Use Settlement Patterns and the Intensity of nearby uses provide similar
705 information as Proximity to Urbanized Areas in that they show residential or other
706 development that may represent prohibitive impacts to commercial agriculture. These
707 developed areas outside of the city expansion areas require consideration for their
708 potential impact to agriculture.
709

710 **History of Land Development Permits Issued Nearby**

711 The History of Development Permits Issued nearby may also serve as evidence of
712 pressure to develop at some higher use. A history of permitting activity is a way of
713 looking at nearby permitting patterns, which may give an indication of future
714 development activities.
715

716 **Final Determination**

717 A final assessment of a particular area's eligibility as Agricultural Land of Long Term
718 Commercial Significance is based on an analysis of the designation criteria, primarily
719 soils and current use tax classification, along with surrounding lot sizes and densities
720 and proximity to urban centers.
721

722 **Zoning**

723 Zone designations that support agricultural activities and encourage larger lot sizes
724 should be considered for lands in the agricultural resource designation. Smaller lots
725 and/or higher densities may be allowed in subdivisions that utilize a clustering
726 approach and that have a demonstrated legal and physical water supply.
727

728 **Agricultural Resource De-designation Criteria:**

729 WAC 190-365-050 clearly states that the Agricultural Resource mapping criteria is to
730 be used on a county-wide or area-wide basis. Within the framework and guidelines
731 established in WAC 190-365-050, the de-designation process will consider the
732 following criteria for a site-specific determination of the suitability of the land remaining
733 in the Agricultural resource designation. The criteria to be considered is as follows:

- 734 a) Soils
 - 735 b) Relationship or proximity to the City Expansion Area
 - 736 c) Predominant parcel size
 - 737 d) Changing climate or soil conditions such that the land no longer holds long term
738 commercial significance for agriculture
 - 739 e) Changing crop markets and growing requirements the land can no longer be
740 devoted primarily to agriculture hence no longer holds long term commercial
741 significance for agriculture
 - 742 f) Topographic limitations
 - 743 g) Physical availability of irrigation water
- 744
745
746
747

748 **Forest Resource Lands**

749 **Purpose**

750 The intent of Okanogan County's Forest Resource land use category is to implement
751 the Growth Management Act planning goal related to maintaining and enhancing
752 natural resource-based industries, which includes productive timber industries. This
753 category is intended to preserve, stabilize, and enhance the primary forest land base
754 which is being used for, or offers the greatest potential for, continued production of
755 forest products and harvesting. The Forest Resource Land Use Designation
756 accomplishes this goal by establishing a productive minimum lot size (20 acres), and
757 ensuring that residential use is secondary to commercial forestry. The category also
758 protects productive forest lands from incompatible uses by limiting the variety of uses
759 permitted under current zoning and encouraging parcel reconfiguration where
760 appropriate.

761 The following description and the related criteria are designed to conserve productive
762 forest lands and reduce conflicts between the forest industry and incompatible uses.

763

764 **General Description**

765 Forest Resource Lands are those areas primarily useful for growing trees for
766 commercial purposes, including Christmas trees subject to the excise tax imposed
767 under state law. In addition, stock grazing, farming, recreation and limited housing and
768 commercial activities are accommodated as compatible uses. Forest Resource lands
769 also provide important fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and
770 watershed and aquifer recharge areas.

771

772 **Mapping Criteria:**

773 WAC 365-190-060 states that in classifying and designating forest resource lands,
774 counties must approach the effort as a county-wide or regional process. Counties
775 should not review forest resource lands designations solely on a parcel-by-parcel
776 basis. The WAC further states that lands should be designated as forest resource
777 lands of long-term commercial significance based on three factors: 1) the land is not
778 already characterized by urban growth, 2) the land is used or capable of being used
779 for forestry production and 3) the land has long-term commercial significance. Those
780 three factors are the basis for the Forest Resource Areas Mapping Criteria listed
781 below.

- 782 1) Lands assessed as open space timber or forest land.
783 2) Lands located in an area where there is a predominance of the higher
784 private forest land grades, as defined by the state Department of Revenue
785 based on growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition.
786 3) Lands historically designated Forest Watershed.
787 4) Lands not located in or near the urban and suburban areas and rural
788 settlements.
789 5) Lands with predominantly large (40 acres or greater) parcel sizes in the
790 area.
791 6) Adjacent and nearby land use and settlement patterns and intensities are
792 generally compatible with forest lands of long-term commercial significance.
793 7) Lands where public services and facilities conducive to the conversion of
794 forest land are not available.

795 8) Lands that are not developing rapidly, as evidenced by few recent land
796 development permits in the vicinity.

797 **De-designation Criteria**

- 798 1) Proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the
799 land as indicated by the availability of public facilities, tax status, the
800 availability of public services, relationship or proximity to urban growth
801 areas, predominant parcel size, land use settlement patterns and their
802 compatibility with forest practices, intensity of nearby land uses, and the
803 history of land development permits issued nearby.
- 804 2) Incompatibility of surrounding land uses with timber harvest activities
- 805 3) Error was made in designation
- 806 4) Due to changing climate or soil conditions the land no longer holds long
807 term commercial significance for timber production
- 808 5) Due to changing markets and growing requirements the land can no longer
809 be devoted primarily to agriculture hence no longer holds long term
810 commercial significance for timber production
- 811

812 **Mineral Resource Lands**

813
814 **Purpose**

815 The intent of Okanogan County's Mineral Resource Overlay land use category is to
816 implement the Growth Management Act planning goal related to maintaining and
817 enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes commercially viable
818 mineral resource industries. This category is intended to identify, preserve and protect
819 the mineral resource land base which is intended to be used for, or offers the greatest
820 potential for, the continued production of aggregate products such as concrete or
821 asphalt, while allowing the underlying land use to provide interim land use direction
822 until such time that mineral extraction is permitted. The Mineral Resource Overlay land
823 use category carries out this goal by establishing a Mining zone, which identifies
824 review criteria, allowed uses, lot sizes, standards of operations and provisions for
825 revisions.

826 Okanogan County's economic well-being depends upon the availability of mineral
827 resource products specifically sand, gravel and bedrock materials. To keep pace with
828 the market demand it is important for the residents and the economy of Okanogan
829 County that at least a twenty-year supply of mineral resource areas be identified and
830 protected with the Mineral Resource Overlay designation.

831
832 **General Description**

833 Mineral resource lands are those lands primarily devoted to or important for the long-
834 term commercial production of mineral products. Areas designated as mineral
835 resource lands comprise the Mineral Resource Overlay. The Mineral Resource
836 Overlay is a land use designation that overlays an existing land use designation. The
837 overlay designation provides protection from the encroachment of competing land
838 uses by applying a buffer that places restrictions on adjacent properties. The existing
839 or underlying land use designation is intended to remain in effect until such time that
840 the area is rezoned to Mining in anticipation of pending mining operations

841

842 **Mapping Criteria:**

843 The actual location (area of deposition) of the mineral resource is the primary factor in
844 determining the future location of a mining site. Other factors that influence the
845 location of a mineral resource area include: quality of the resource, volume of the
846 resource, access suitability, the compatibility with existing or planned land uses, and
847 the proximity to existing or planned market areas. The following designation/mapping
848 criteria are based on Chapter 365-190-070 of the Washington Administrative Code –
849 *Minimum Guidelines to Classify Agriculture, Forest and Mineral Resource Lands.*

850 1) Quality of the Mineral Resource

851 The quality and type of mineral resource at the potential site shall meet any
852 of the following requirements.

853 a) The quality and type of the mineral resource must meet current and/or
854 future project and/or project specifications.

855 b) The quality and type of mineral resource must satisfy the market's
856 current and/or future demands.

857 c) The potential site must be within the DNR identified mineral resource
858 lands.

859

860 2) Volume of the Resource

861 The volume of available mineral resource at the potential site shall meet the following
862 requirements.

863 a) The volume of available mineral resource at the potential site, on single
864 or contiguous parcels, should be feasibly marketable by a mining
865 operation to supply the surrounding market demands.

866

867 3) Access Suitability

868 The potential mineral resource site must have access or potential access to
869 public and/or private roads that are suitable for truck traffic and/or are
870 capable of supporting the level of expected traffic.

871

872 ***Intent Statement*** – *It is very important that there is access to adequate public and/or*
873 *private roads to potentially lower the traffic related impacts to both the surrounding*
874 *neighbors and the environment.*

875

876 4) Compatibility with Present or Planned Land Use Patterns in the Area

877 General land use issues in the resource area to consider;

878 a) Surrounding parcel sizes and surrounding uses;

879 b) Subdivision or zoning for urban or small lots;

880 i) Designated mineral lands should not be located adjacent to any
881 zoning district boundary that has a minimum lot size greater than 1
882 dwelling units per 5 acres, where doing so would create a non-
883 conforming setback distance.

884 ii) Designated mineral resource lands should not be located in any
885 zoning district that has a minimum lot size of 1 dwelling unit per 5
886 acres.

887

888

889

- 890 c) Sites located in or adjacent to City Expansion boundaries;
891 i) Mineral resource lands should not be designated in existing City
892 Expansion Areas.
893 d) Proximity to essential public facilities (i.e. dams, bridges, etc.);
894 e) Sites located within inconsistent zoning districts;
895 f) Sites located within publicly owned lands;
896 g) Sites located within other natural resource designated areas.
897

898 The potential site must be able to mitigate impacts on and/or to adjacent existing land
899 uses.

900 ***Intent Statement*** – *It is very important that Okanogan County maintain a*
901 *sufficient amount of designated mineral resource sites close to existing and planned*
902 *market areas to ensure low cost and available supplies of construction aggregate.*

903 **Mineral Resource Areas De-designation Process**

904 The de-designation of an area previously established as a mineral resource of long-
905 term commercial significance should be considered when the resource has been
906 exhausted and reclaimed in accordance with the reclamation plan approved by the
907 State Department of Natural Resources; or in those limited situations where the
908 County has obtained substantial evidence that the designated site is unsuitable for the
909 mineral resource overlay designation. The re-classification of a land use designation
910 underlying the Mineral Resource Overlay should be approved after it has been
911 determined that the proposed new land use designation is compatible with and will not
912 preclude the availability of the mineral resource.

913 **Mapping**

914 The Okanogan County Comprehensive Land Use Map identifies those areas
915 designated as Resource Lands. The map designations are directed by the chosen
916 criteria but have been reconciled to parcel boundary lines.

917

Chapter Five: Rural Lands

918

919 **History**

920

921 Lands in the rural designation will contain the greatest mix of existing and
922 potential uses because of the tremendous diversity of these lands. A wide range
923 of compatible uses should be considered with reliance on the underlying zoning
924 to ensure compatibility of proposed activities in regards to existing uses and
925 historical characteristics of the neighboring area. Comprehensive review of land
926 use proposals to identify probable impacts and to ensure compatibility with
927 existing and/or planned activities will be necessary to prevent conflicts. The
928 objective of zoning in the rural designation is to provide an effective mix of land
929 uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, tourist, and
930 recreational opportunities.

931

932

933 **Purpose**

934

935 In the course of comprehensive planning, the County specifically identifies and
936 designates city expansion areas and resource lands. Incorporated city limits are
937 established by law and fall under the jurisdiction of the legislative bodies of those
938 cities and towns. All other lands are designated rural.

939

940 The objective of the rural designation is to provide an adequate inventory of land
941 for residential and other uses while avoiding unnecessary conflicts.
942 Neighborhood commercial centers, in the form of unincorporated villages, exist
943 throughout the county and will become more important as population increases.
944 The existing mix of agricultural and resourced based activities, recreation, and
945 tourism should be recognized for the diversity it provides to the economic base.
946 A mix of residential densities should be allowed to provide an adequate inventory
947 of housing sites for those seeking a rural lifestyle and to provide worker housing
948 in proximity to employment providers.

949

950 Okanogan County is large in size and varied in topography and climate. For
951 these reasons, lands in the rural designation will exhibit great differences in
952 terms of its ability to support residential density and other land use activities.
953 Underlying zoning and/or the review processes that support and implement this
954 Plan must be established with consideration for the ability of the land to support
955 the proposed land use activity.

956

957

958

959

960 The ability of lands in the rural designation to support density and
961 permitted/conditional uses will be affected by other bodies of required regulation
962 such as Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program. This must be
963 taken into account when the adequacy of land in the rural designation is
964 reviewed.

965

966 **Density**

967

968 Residential uses are consistent with the rural designation. Lot sizes, setbacks,
969 height restrictions, and other considerations will be specifically addressed in the
970 underlying zone, subdivision regulation, and other regulation as appropriate. The
971 lot sizes and overall density allowed in underlying zoning should consider the
972 following criteria:

973

- Proximity to transportation system

974

- Proximity to city centers

975

- Availability of potable water supplies and water delivery systems

976

- Availability of fire protection, police, and other emergency services

977

978 Minimum lots should be sufficient in size to allow compliance with on-site sewage
979 disposal and the protection of potable water sources. Lots in areas served by a
980 sanitary sewer system, and so designated by the Board of County
981 Commissioners, will be required to be served by the sewer system.

982

983 **Compatible Uses**

984

985 The rural designation is consistent with a wide array of permitted and conditional
986 uses. The specific mix of permitted uses will be determined by the underlying
987 zone.

988

989 The rural designation is suitable for agricultural activities until such time as
990 increased urbanization creates conflict between what can be incompatible land
991 uses.

992

993

994 **Chapter Six: Unincorporated Towns and Neighborhood**
995 **Commercial Centers Land Use**

996

997 **Purpose**

998 Unincorporated towns are residential and commercial centers located in
999 Okanogan County that are not incorporated cities. The County recognizes the
1000 important role they play as service centers and focal points for the surrounding
1001 neighborhoods. The area within the designation should provide sufficient land to
1002 provide needed local goods and services. Future expansion of the
1003 unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers will be based upon
1004 the needs of the residents and the ability of the area to provide services.

1005 This Comprehensive Plan for Okanogan County recognizes the following
1006 unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers and establishes
1007 these policies for future planning and development of them.

- 1008 • Methow
- 1009 • Carlton
- 1010 • Malott
- 1011 • Loomis
- 1012 • Wauconda
- 1013 • Chesaw
- 1014 • Molson
- 1015 • Ellisforde
- 1016 • Mazama
- 1017 • Monse
- 1018 • Nighthawk
- 1019 • Havillah

1020

1021 **Designation Criteria**

1022 Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers will be designation
1023 and developed based on the following criteria:

- 1024 • Existence of services such as neighborhood retail, tourist retail, and
1025 government services.
- 1026 • Existence of more intense residential development than the surrounding
1027 areas.
- 1028 • Historical value as past settlement with existing tourist activities.
- 1029 • Ability to support more intense development.

1030 **Future Neighborhood Commercial Centers**

1031 Due to the vast size of Okanogan County, it is important to locate necessary
1032 services in proximity to the residents. Settlement patterns will be driven by
1033 expansion of agriculture, forestry, and mining in rural areas in addition to
1034 expansion of tourism. New service centers should be considered to minimize
1035 impacts to the transportation system brought about by longer trips to obtain basic
1036 services.

1037 The unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers also serve as
1038 focal points for area residents providing for a sense of community. The demand
1039 for new neighborhood commercial centers will be created by the needs of the
1040 area residents and landowners.

1041 Proposals for new neighborhood commercial centers should be reviewed in
1042 accordance with the designation criteria and general planning objectives found
1043 previously stated in this section.

1044

1045

Chapter Seven: City Expansion Areas

1047

1048 **History**

1049 Okanogan County and the cities and towns therein, recognize that a cooperative
1050 effort between local governments is needed to effectively and efficiently serve the
1051 needs of the citizens. The City Expansion Area designation is used to identify
1052 those lands into which the city or town intends to grow through a twenty year
1053 planning window. The policies and procedures contained in this Comprehensive
1054 Plan, supplemented by intergovernmental agreements as needed, are designed
1055 to give clear direction for the process to designate, review, and amend City
1056 Expansion Areas. Subsequent project review and land use decisions, while
1057 under the sole authority of the County until such times as the lands annex, are
1058 carried out in accordance with the agreed upon processes.

1059

1060 **Purpose**

1061 As stated above, a clear and cooperative approach to land use planning and
1062 decision making between the County and its cities and towns, is necessary to
1063 successfully conduct the business of the people. The adoption of agreed upon
1064 City Expansion Areas into the County Comprehensive Plan accomplishes two
1065 specific goals. Cities and towns have the ability to plan infrastructure and service
1066 requirements for a specific growth area. The city or town can propose pre-
1067 annexation designations to promote a predictable growth pattern, efficient
1068 extension of infrastructure, and to ensure sufficient inventory of land for
1069 residential, commercial, and other development. The County can incorporate
1070 into their Plan the city or town proposed use of the CEA. This allows the County
1071 to accurately analyze the inventory of land available for uses best suited to
1072 densely populated areas and to coordinate uses in the rural areas accordingly.

1073

1074

1075 **Designation Criteria**

1076

1077 Requests for specific City Expansion Areas, and any amendments thereto, will
1078 be processed by the Planning Commission as amendments to this Plan. Only
1079 the municipalities shall propose CEA boundaries. In reviewing proposals for CEA
1080 designation, the municipality should consider the following factors in considering
1081 a proposed map change:

1082

- Current inventory of developable land in the incorporated boundaries.

- 1083 • Inventory of land necessary to provide for projected growth including
- 1084 affordable housing.
- 1085 • Analysis of ability to provide sewer, water, and other public services to
- 1086 designated CEA.
- 1087 • Benefits and impacts to existing resource and recreational activities.

1088 **Amendment**

1089 Only the affected municipality may propose amendments to the designated City
1090 Expansion Area. Landowners in or adjoining the City Expansion Area must
1091 petition the affected municipality to present their request for amendment. Review
1092 of proposed amendments shall consider the criteria used in designating City
1093 Expansion Areas.

1094 **Zoning and Project Review**

1095 The County has the sole authority for land use and project review on lands within
1096 the CEA but outside the incorporated boundary. The County, in considering an
1097 application for land use/project in the CEA, shall consider the following:

- 1098 • Compatibility with any sub-designations by the municipality within the
- 1099 CEA.
- 1100 • Impact of the project or proposal on municipal services.
- 1101 • Compatibility with surrounding uses.
- 1102 • Impact of the project or proposal on the municipal transportation system.

1103 |

1104 |

Chapter Eight: More Completely Planned Areas

Purpose and Intent

It is the intent of the County to ensure the updated Comprehensive Plan remains responsive to the wide range of landscapes and demographics within the County's borders. To reflect these differences, the County may create and adopt More Completely Planned Areas ("MCPA") to help inform development regulations such as Zoning and Subdivision Codes.

Since 1971, Okanogan County has utilized MCPA Plans to provide for land use planning at a sub-area scale, including the Methow Valley. It is the intent of the County to continue to utilize these MCPA Plans for the Methow Valley, and to consider the creation of new MCPAs in the future as deemed appropriate and necessary to most effectively reflect the desires of the communities which comprise Okanogan County.

The goals and policies developed within a MCPA Plan adopted by the County shall apply **only** to the geographic area of the MCPA as the Board of County Commissioners has defined its geographic boundaries at the time of MCPA Plan adoption. The content of MCPA Plans shall not be applied outside of the area for which it has been created and adopted.

Two existing MCPA's have been reviewed and revised along with the Comprehensive Plan. They are the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area and the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A. These MCPA's will be adopted following adoption of the comprehensive plan. Any modifications to planning or land use designations within the Methow Valley More completely Planned Area and the Methow Valley More completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A shall be compatible with the goals and policies of these plans.

Designation Criteria

The geographic boundaries of a MCPA shall be determined by the Board of County Commissioners after consideration of the following:

- Logical natural and physical boundaries (highways, other MCPA planning area boundaries, watersheds, etc.);
- Landowner interest;
- Community identification within the MCPA;
- Other factors as may be identified by the County and deemed important in providing for logical land use planning areas;

1149 **Establishing Future More Completely Planned Areas**

1150

1151 Future MCPAs may be established by the County Commissioners.

1152 A diverse Advisory Committee of individuals owning property within the proposed

1153 MCPA shall lead MCPA planning efforts. The County Commissioners shall

1154 appoint Advisory Committee members after a publicly advertised recruitment

1155 period.

1156

1157 All future MCPA Plan development processes shall provide for properly

1158 advertised public meetings to be hosted by the Advisory Committee, in

1159 coordination with the Okanogan County Planning Department, to provide

1160 opportunities for general public participation.

1161

1162 Draft MCPA Plans shall be forwarded to the Planning Commission with a

1163 recommendation from the MCPA Advisory Committee and shall be processed in

1164 accordance with the County's process for Comprehensive Plan amendments. At

1165 a minimum, MCPA Plans shall include the elements required for Comprehensive

1166 Plans under RCW 36.70.330 but not exceed the requirements of the Planning

1167 Enabling Act or those portions of the Growth Management Act applicable to non-

1168 GMA counties.

1169

Chapter Nine – Transportation Element

1170

1171 **Introduction**

1172 Okanogan County has experienced modest growth activity in the past which is
1173 expected to continue in coming years. To effectively and efficiently accommodate
1174 this growth in an orderly fashion, Okanogan County, the Confederated Tribes of
1175 the Colville Reservation, and the cities and towns in the county have recognized
1176 the need for a transportation plan that describes the transportation system as it
1177 exists today and addresses the transportation needs for the next 20 years. This
1178 Transportation Element is the first to be prepared for Okanogan County and is an
1179 important milestone in achieving a coordinated transportation system which
1180 integrates the needs of each of the County's jurisdictions and the unincorporated
1181 rural areas, within the context of the larger North Central Washington Region.

1182 **Purpose of the Transportation Element**

1183 As the first countywide transportation element, this document serves several
1184 purposes. It serves as an investigation into how the County's transportation
1185 system and transportation usage is structured, and is an important resource for
1186 the County, its jurisdictions, its citizens, and the Okanogan Council of
1187 Governments acting as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization
1188 (RTPO). It examines the need to provide for different types and levels of
1189 transportation services, particularly in regard to the needs of urban versus rural
1190 areas.

1191 The countywide Transportation Element is a critical component of the County's
1192 overall Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Element is intended to guide
1193 an ongoing planning and decision making process that shapes the transportation
1194 system and ensures that needs are addressed within the available resources
1195 between the public and private sectors.

1196 **The Planning Process**

1197 The process of developing the Okanogan County Transportation Element took
1198 place over a period of approximately 12 months and involved numerous citizens,
1199 staff from each of the cities within the County, County Staff, the Confederated
1200 Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and Washington State Department of
1201 Transportation (WSDOT) representation. The transportation planning process
1202 began with an assessment of existing conditions. This was followed by a
1203 discussion of future conditions through goal setting and forecasting. Anticipated
1204 future transportation system needs were analyzed and organized into an
1205 implementation plan. Outlined below are the steps that were taken in the
1206 development of the Transportation Element.

- 1207 • **Early and Continuous Public Participation-** Public participation was
1208 central to development of the Transportation Element. Opportunities for
1209 community involvement were provided in the form of Regional
1210 Transportation Advisory Group (RTAG) meetings that were open to the
1211 public, in addition to formal public hearings.
- 1212 • **Determine the Characteristics of the Current Transportation System-**
1213 An inventory and description of the current transportation system was
1214 prepared to serve as the foundation of the element. This information was
1215 supplemented with an inventory of the existing demographic and land use
1216 conditions as well as recent development patterns.
- 1217 • **Identify Issues: Constraints and Opportunities-** A series of community
1218 workshops were held throughout Okanogan County to identify both real
1219 and perceived constraints affecting the transportation system and
1220 opportunities for improvements.
- 1221 • **Establish Countywide Level Of Service Standards-** The Transportation
1222 Element established countywide Level of Service standards, and also
1223 energy conservation and air quality guidelines.
- 1224 • **Establish Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies-** The
1225 Element contains transportation goals, objectives, and policies resulting
1226 from discussions with representation from each city, planning region, and
1227 planning department in the County.
- 1228 • **Forecast Future Transportation/Travel Demand-** Six-year and 20-year
1229 traffic forecasts were completed based upon forecasted growth.
1230 Anticipated land use patterns were also provided in this effort.
- 1231 • **Identify Future Deficiencies-** Based upon the forecasted travel demand,
1232 potential system deficiencies were analyzed and alternative methods were
1233 identified.
- 1234 • **Identify Environmental Impacts-** The Transportation Element
1235 considered the environmental impacts of proposed system improvements,
1236 in addition to appropriate mitigation measures.
- 1237 • **Establish a Six-Year Financial Plan and Implementation Program-**
1238 The Transportation Element references the county's six year
1239 Transportation Improvement Plan, which identifies the necessary tasks,
1240 priorities, and identifies the agency(s) responsible for implementation with
1241 consideration to the County's funding capacity.

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1247 **Transportation Planning In Washington**

1248 In 1990, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Growth Management Act
1249 (GMA) which set a new course for the development of transportation plans.
1250 Traditionally, Washington communities have planned for land use and
1251 transportation independent of one another. Most transportation system
1252 improvements were planned for in reaction to congestion or safety concerns.
1253 The GMA asserts that land use and transportation system planning must be
1254 coordinated to better provide for safe use. Furthermore, GMA requires that land
1255 use planning and development approvals be linked with the provision of available
1256 transportation facilities through the concurrency requirement.

1257 Although Okanogan County is not currently subject to the requirements of the
1258 GMA, these requirements have served as basic guidelines in the preparation of
1259 the Transportation Element.

1260 As part of the Growth Management Program, State Legislature authorized the
1261 formation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) whose
1262 purpose is to plan for the development and use of regional transportation
1263 facilities and services. Okanogan, Douglas, and Chelan Counties are the three
1264 counties located within the North Central RTPO. The North Central RTPO is a
1265 newer organization to be designated in Washington State (June of 1993) and has
1266 not yet completed its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is a key function
1267 of the RTPO.

1268 This Transportation Element, along with those prepared/being prepared by
1269 Chelan and Douglas Counties, together will serve as important groundwork for
1270 the development of the North Central RTP.

1271 **The Transportation Element**

1272 The Okanogan County Transportation Element will be incorporated within the
1273 County Comprehensive Plan. Although the County is not subject to the
1274 requirements of GMA, and is preparing its Transportation Element independent
1275 of its Land Use Element, land use characteristics, both current and projected,
1276 have been carefully considered in the preparation of this document.

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1282 **Land Use and Transportation**

1283 The Transportation Element establishes a vital link between land use and the
1284 transportation facilities and services needed to meet current system deficiencies
1285 and to support current growth. The anticipated types, intensity, and timing of
1286 land development in the County will largely determine the mode of transportation,
1287 provided its effectiveness in moving people, and the travel behavior of people
1288 using the land. In addition, land use decisions outside of the County impact the
1289 transportation system and as a result, attention must be given to the anticipated
1290 trends in these peripheral areas.

1291 The County's resources are limited; therefore the County must achieve a balance
1292 among the needs within each of the four regions, accommodate both rural and
1293 urban areas, and various modes of transportation to maximize person carrying
1294 capacity instead of vehicle-moving capacity. With large expanses of sparsely
1295 populated land, most travel in Okanogan County tends to be by private vehicle.
1296 However, even in a largely rural county, there are opportunities to accommodate
1297 transportation alternatives other than the single occupant vehicle. A clear
1298 understanding of land use development patterns will enable the County to
1299 effectively provide for these alternatives.

1300 In the preparation of this Element, the available existing land use information and
1301 future land use plans for cities and towns, the County, and the Confederated
1302 Tribes of the Colville Reservation have been examined. Based on this
1303 information, modes of transportation alternatives have been developed and
1304 analyzed in terms of implications to meet future transportation needs.

1305 **Okanogan County Planning Regions**

1306 Okanogan County is divided into four (4) planning regions: North, Central, South,
1307 and Methow. By dividing the County into these four regions, the specific needs
1308 of each local jurisdictions and surrounding development in rural areas can be
1309 better addressed. Figure 1-1 identifies the boundaries of the planning regions.
1310 The transportation study for the Central Region was completed in May of 1994.
1311 The results of that study are incorporated into the Transportation Element.

1312 **Functional Classification System**

1313 Classification of streets and highways in the State of Washington is based upon
1314 guidelines prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Streets are
1315 classified based upon the degree to which they provide travel movement and
1316 land access functions. Specific criteria defining streets includes the following:

- 1317 • Character and relative length of trips.
- 1318 • Anticipated or projected traffic volume.
- 1319 • The relationship of a street to the land use it serves.

1320 Each local jurisdiction is responsible for defining its transportation system into the
1321 following functional classifications:

1322 **Principal Arterial: (01 Rural/Interstate)-** Streets and highways which
1323 contain the greatest portion of movement or long-distance travel. Such
1324 facilities serve high-volume travel corridors that connect major generators
1325 of traffic. The selected routes provide an integrated system for complete
1326 circulation of traffic, including ties to the major rural highways entering
1327 urban area. Generally, principal arterials include high traffic volume
1328 streets.

1329 **Minor Arterial: (06 Rural/ Minor)-** Streets and highways which connect
1330 with remaining arterial and collector roads that extend into the urban area.
1331 Minor arterial streets and highways serve less concentrated traffic-
1332 generating areas such as neighborhood shopping centers and schools.
1333 Minor arterial streets serve as boundaries to neighborhoods and collect
1334 traffic from collector streets. Although the predominant function of minor
1335 arterial streets is the movement of traffic, they also provide for
1336 considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the
1337 corridor.

1338 **Major Collector: (07 Rural Major Collector -** These routes should provide
1339 service to the county seat if not on an arterial route, to larger towns not
1340 directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of
1341 equivalent inter-county importance, such as consolidated schools,
1342 shipping points, county parks, important agricultural areas, etc. In
1343 addition, these routes should link larger towns and/or cities with routes of
1344 higher classification and should serve the more important inter-county
1345 travel corridors.

1346 **Minor Collector: (08 Rural Minor Collector)-** These routes should be
1347 spaced at intervals consistent with population density, collect traffic from
1348 local roads, and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of
1349 a collector road. In addition, these routes should provide service to the
1350 remaining smaller communities and link the locally important traffic
1351 generators with their rural counterparts.

1352 **Local Access: (09 Rural Unclassified)-** Streets not selected for inclusion
1353 in the arterial or collector classes. They allow access to individual homes,
1354 shops, and similar destinations. Direct access to abutting land is essential
1355 for all traffic originating from, or is destined to, abutting land. Through
1356 traffic should be discouraged by appropriate geometric design and/or
1357 traffic control devices.

1358 Functional classification of major roads and State Routes in Okanogan County
1359 are shown on Figure 1-2, and detailed in Appendix A-1 and A-2.

Chapter Ten – Essential Public Facilities

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1362 **Airport Safety**

1363 The general aviation, non-general aviation, and private airstrips in Okanogan
1364 County provide a vital transportation link and are tangible assets to the economic
1365 base of the County. Air transportation provides important support to emergency
1366 services by enabling the rapid importation of vital supplies and the transportation
1367 of injured or ill people to larger or specialized medical facilities. The airports
1368 provide the opportunity to capitalize infrastructure for the siting of compatible
1369 industrial and commercial businesses.

1370 The Comprehensive Plan creates policy designed to guide zoning and other
1371 development regulation to protect airports from incompatible land uses both on-
1372 site and on adjacent lands as required by the Revised Code of Washington and
1373 Federal Regulation.

1374 Aviation facilities are mapped as terminals on the Transportation and Essential
1375 Public Facilities Map, Map 3, and may be adjusted as the size, shape, or number
1376 of facilities is modified.

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1378 **Capital Facilities**

1379 The Okanogan County Capital Facilities Plan identifies the need for new capital
1380 facilities and major enhancements to existing facilities through a twenty year
1381 planning window. Proposed or anticipated funding and the critical timeline for
1382 implementation is identified for the first six years of the plan. The Capital
1383 Facilities Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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Chapter Eleven – Coordination

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1387 **Federal Agencies**

1388 Local government has the responsibility to protect the local tax base, value of
1389 private property, economic stability, and in general, the well-being of the local
1390 community. These critical functions are closely entangled with federal and state
1391 management decisions.

1392 Congress has long recognized the importance of local governance to the
1393 effective management of the nation's resources. It has provided for the
1394 involvement of local authority in every federal land use statute passed in the past
1395 35 years. In many of these statutes, Congress has mandated that the federal
1396 land use agencies "coordinate" their policies and management activities with
1397 local government.

1398 Coordination means the federal agencies shall give prior notice to the local
1399 government of agency plans and management activities and also, among other
1400 criteria, requires agencies to make their policies and management activities
1401 consistent with local plans. Congress has directed federal agencies to
1402 coordinate with local government because they recognize local authority must be
1403 consulted and involved in the decision making process before the public input
1404 process.

1405 The federal agencies, primarily the United States Forest Service and the Bureau
1406 of Land Management manage a total of 1,571,208 acres in Okanogan County.
1407 This land is critical to the customs, culture, and economy of Okanogan County.
1408 The Federal Agencies claim a pre-emption of land use permitting authority on
1409 federal land. As such the comprehensive plan designates federal land by the
1410 agency that manages it and the resources located on the property. Forest land
1411 of long term commercial significance, agricultural land, and mineral lands are
1412 identified in an overlay on the comprehensive plan map. The federal agencies
1413 must try to make their land management decisions consistent with local plans
1414 and policies.

1415 The land management decisions made by the federal agencies controls the
1416 economic activity on federal land. Their decisions have a direct impact on local
1417 revenue collected from timber harvest taxes and indirectly impacts other revenue
1418 sources generated through other natural resource jobs.

1419

1420 Because of the large amount of land in Okanogan County that is managed by the
1421 federal agencies payment in lieu of taxes and the secure rural schools and
1422 communities payments are important revenue sources for the county. Okanogan
1423 County believes the annual PILT and SRSC payments must be guaranteed by
1424 law at a fixed amount with an identified CPI index for annual increases.

1425 Okanogan County will require the federal agencies to comply with federal law by
1426 notifying the Board of County Commissioners as early as possible in the
1427 formative stages of the formation of a proposed change in any land management
1428 policy or regulation or immediate upon receipt of an application or proposal from
1429 any non-governmental organization or other agency. Notification shall take place
1430 prior to the issuance of any notice to the public.

1431 Okanogan County expects the federal agencies to maximize the use of federal
1432 land for agricultural and tourist/recreation activities in absence of a compelling
1433 need to curtail such activities for protection of the sustainability of the resource.

1434 **State Agencies**

1435 The State Environmental Policy Act RCW 43.21C sets forth a consistent process
1436 for review of probable, significant, and adverse impacts brought about by land
1437 use decisions, both project specific and on a program level basis. The actions of
1438 State Agencies, with few specifically enumerated exemptions, are subject to
1439 review under SEPA. It is clear the intent of the Legislature was for State
1440 Agencies to coordinate closely with local government to ensure Agency decisions
1441 are consistent with local plans. As local government is charged with the
1442 responsibility for delivery of a wide array of critical services it is critical that State
1443 Agencies interact with counties in an effective and open manner. Okanogan
1444 County adopted OCC Section 18 Coordination, to identify clear protocols to
1445 inform Federal and State.

1446 State agencies are required to comply with local zoning and other land use
1447 permits on the lands they manage. Land managed by the state agencies is not
1448 identified by ownership and bears the same land use designations, consistent
1449 with the applicable criteria, as privately owned land in Okanogan County.

1450 Several state agencies own land in Okanogan County including Fish and Wildlife,
1451 State Parks, Department of Transportation, and Department of Natural
1452 Resources. It is the policy position of Okanogan County that state agencies
1453 should consolidate their land holdings by divesting land that contributes to a
1454 checkerboard ownership and the commensurate increase in land management
1455 difficulties. Conversely state agencies should obtain additional land only when
1456 doing so creates an ownership pattern conducive to more efficient management.

1457

Chapter Twelve – Natural Environment

1458

Critical Area Planning Objectives

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- Promote public health, safety and welfare, economic and environmental well-being in the County for present and future citizens by identifying and protecting critical areas.

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- Recognize the importance of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas while at the same time working towards a balance between preservation of those lands and the continuation of agriculture, forestry, mining and managed growth.

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- Utilize floodplain planning to protect human life and health as well as the riparian ecosystem in order to minimize public and private economic losses and expenditures related to flood control and to protect and preserve wildlife habitat.

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- Reduce the threat posed to the health and safety of citizens that could occur when development is sited in areas of significant geologic hazard.

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- Ensure an adequate, safe water supply through the protection of both the quantity and quality of ground and surface water for a variety of beneficial uses such as public consumption, agriculture, industry, and habitat protection.

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- Okanogan County will consider wildfire protection policy when creating land use zoning that will protect both the private landowner and public lands from wildfire. When the use of forested lands is changed, the party doing the changing is responsible for providing a fire resistant buffer around the property.

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- Okanogan County supports the purchase of conservation easements or fee simple purchase of land by private or public agencies where critical areas regulation has significantly reduced the value of the property and/or the ability of the landowner to lawfully use the property.

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- Okanogan County will utilize the State Environmental Policy Act as a means to review projects for impacts that are not otherwise mitigated by existing regulation. Projects with a physical and functional relationship that individually are categorically exempt are combined for environmental review under a single environmental checklist. The accumulative impacts of related projects and/or projects that are developed in phases are considered and where appropriate conditions imposed to mitigate the identified impacts. The use of development agreements, which are recorded against the title of the property will assure that development standards and required mitigations are enforceable through the life of the project.

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- Okanogan County will utilize the State Environmental Policy Act as a means to review the project site of development proposals for physical evidence of soil and groundwater contamination. The SEPA process will be used to identify mitigation measures to mediate contaminated sites and/or to prevent contaminated sites from impacting public health and safety.
- Okanogan County will utilize the State Environmental Policy Act, in conjunction with existing critical areas regulation, to review project proposals for impacts brought about by anticipated construction activities such as clearing, dredging, and road construction and propose appropriate conditions to mitigate identified impacts.

Wetland Planning Objectives

- Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.
- Okanogan County recognizes wetlands are fragile ecosystems that assist in reducing erosion, siltation, flooding, ground and surface water pollution, and provide wildlife, plant, and fisheries habitats.
- Okanogan County will utilize best available science by following the Washington State Rating System for Eastern Washington to differentiate between wetlands based on their sensitivity to disturbance, their significance, their rarity and our ability to replace them and the functions that they provide.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Planning Objectives

- Fish and Wildlife habitat conservation areas are areas that serve a critical role in sustaining needed habitats and species for the functional integrity of the ecosystem, and which, if altered, may reduce the likelihood that the species will persist over the long term. These areas may include, but are not limited to, rare or vulnerable ecological systems, communities, and habitat or habitat elements including seasonal ranges, breeding habitat, winter range, and movement corridors; and areas with high relative population density or species richness.
- Okanogan County will reference WDFW Priority Habitat and Species data and maps for information on location of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

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Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas Planning Objectives

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Defined -

Aquifer Recharge Areas - Areas which, due to the presence of certain soils, geology, and surface water, act to recharge ground water by percolation.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas - Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water.

Aquifer Recharge Areas serve the vital function of replenishing groundwater resources which provide potable water, an essential life sustaining element. Aquifers not only provide water for domestic use but influence water availability for fish, wildlife, recreation and agriculture in wetlands, lakes, rivers and streams. Groundwater contributes to these water bodies while they return the favor when groundwater supplies become depressed. This, in turn, lowers surface water levels, thus, risking the viability of those dependent on these water sources.

Water quantity, of course, is not the only concern. Once ground water is contaminated it is difficult, costly, and sometimes impossible to clean up. Preventing contamination is necessary to avoid potential physical harm to people, hardships, and exorbitant rehabilitation and clean-up costs. Preserving aquifer recharge areas is also critical in the replenishing of the city's ground water supply. Okanogan County will work with the Department of Ecology, Department of Health and other agencies with jurisdiction to identify areas that are contaminated or have a high risk of future contamination. Okanogan County, through its development regulation will require adherence to OSS regulation and where necessary require the construction of more effective on-site septic systems and/or where available requiring developers to connect to existing sanitary systems in areas with demonstrated contamination or a high likelihood of groundwater contamination.

1583 **Classification**

1584

1585 To date (1994), no specific aquifer recharge studies have been performed in
1586 Okanogan County. However, it is generally acknowledged that the following
1587 areas have the potential to be aquifer recharge areas: rivers and creeks
1588 especially at their headwaters, wetlands, lakes and ponds, alluvial fans, areas
1589 within the 100 year flood plain. These areas are usually lower in elevation than
1590 their surrounding landscape. Therefore, coupled with certain porous soil types
1591 as identified by the Soil Conservation Service, 1980 Soil Survey of Okanogan
1592 County, Washington, these areas are considered to have high potential for
1593 aquifer recharge should be afforded a higher degree of protection than other
1594 areas. The following is a three level classification scheme that should be used to
1595 determine the level of protection necessary for land areas:

1596

1597 **Critical Potential -**

1598 Rivers, creeks, wetlands, lakes and ponds; and, lands that have been specifically
1599 identified as critical recharge areas based on reliable scientific data.

1600

1601 **High Potential -**

1602 Lands adjacent to rivers, creeks, wetlands, lakes and ponds that include soils
1603 that show permeability ratings in the county soil survey of more than 20 inches
1604 per hour within 60 inches of the soil surface.

1605

1606 **Moderate Potential -**

1607 Lands with soils that show permeability ratings in the county soil survey of more
1608 than 20 inches per hour within 60 inches of the soil surface.

1609

1610 **Low Potential -**

1611 Areas where soil impermeability is limited to under 20 inches per hour by soil
1612 type or natural barriers.

1613

1614 **Goals**

1615

- 1616 • Maintain a high standard of quality for both groundwater and surface water
- 1617 resources.
- 1618 • Increase and maintain an awareness, of the roles and functions of various
- 1619 natural systems in maintaining water quality and quantity.

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1627 **Policies**

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- 1629 • Indiscriminate release of hazardous wastes or materials, regardless of
1630 their risk potential, should be discouraged. Okanogan County through its
1631 own regulation and by actively participating with all agencies with
1632 jurisdiction will work to control the illegal discharge of wastes to both
1633 surface and groundwater bodies.
- 1634 • Shorelines, zoning and floodplain regulations should include provisions
1635 that appropriately limit impervious lot coverage.
- 1636 • Lands that are classified, based on reliable data, as having high or
1637 moderate potential recharge should be identified in zoning overlay maps
1638 and a lower allowable impervious surface coverage should be applied.

1639

1640 **Frequently Flooded Areas Planning Objectives**

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- 1642 • Frequently Flooded areas are lands in the flood plain subject to at least a
1643 one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, or within
1644 areas subject to flooding due to high groundwater. These areas include,
1645 but are not limited to, streams, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, wetlands, and
1646 areas where high groundwater forms ponds on the ground surface.
- 1647 • Okanogan County will reference Federal Emergency Management
1648 Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the 100 year floodplain
- 1649 • Okanogan County will also utilize historical knowledge of areas outside
1650 Flood Insurance Rate Maps that have flooded in the past when
1651 designating frequently flooded areas.
- 1652 • Okanogan County will reference the most current Multi-Hazard Mitigation
1653 Plan as amended.

1654

1655 **Geologically Hazardous Areas Planning Objectives**

1656

- 1657 • Geologically Hazardous areas are areas that because of their
1658 susceptibility to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events,
1659 are not suited to siting commercial, residential, or industrial development
consistent with public health or safety concerns.
- 1660 • Okanogan County will reference Washington State Department of Natural
1661 Resources mapping regarding landslides, earthquakes, and volcanoes.
- 1662 • Okanogan County maintains a map of known mine hazards.
- 1663 • Okanogan County will reference the Methow River Comprehensive Flood
1664 Hazard Management Plan and the Okanogan and Lower Similkameen
1665 River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan regarding channel
1666 migration areas.
- 1667 • Okanogan County will reference the most current Multi-Hazard Mitigation
1668 Plan as amended.

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Shorelines

- The Shoreline Master Program Goals and Policies are adopted by reference into this Comprehensive Plan.

Wildfire

- To reduce the area of Wildland Urban Interface land burned and losses experienced because of wildfires
- Prioritize the protection of people, structures, infrastructure, and unique ecosystems contributing to our way of life and the sustainability of the local and regional economy
- Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface (WUI)
- Establish mitigation priorities and develop mitigation strategies in Okanogan County
- Strategically locate and plan fuel reduction projects
- Provide recommendations for alternative treatment methods, such as modifying forest stand density, herbicide treatments, fuel reduction techniques, and disposal or removal of treated slash
- Meet or exceed the requirements of the National Fire Plan and FEMA for a County-level Wildfire Protection Plan
- Okanogan County will reference the most current Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan as amended.
- Okanogan County will consult with the fire districts, Department of National Resources, and private sector fire protection businesses to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan to develop educational materials and incentive and regulation based requirements to:
 - Improve the fire resistance of residential structures in both the suburban and rural areas
 - Review county road standards to require defensible ingress and egress roadways constructed to adequate standards to allow the passage of firefighting equipment and other emergency vehicles.
 - Create subdivision processes that allow clustering of residential structures in areas where the risk of loss by wildfire is minimized.
 - Review county-wide zoning to correlate allowed density with areas of increased risk to wildfire or where due to topography there are greater obstacles to wildfire suppression.