

Rocky Robbins

From: brennanbase@centurytel.net
Sent: Monday, December 31, 2018 11:31 AM
To: Rocky Robbins
Subject: Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan Scoping

Dear Okanogan County Commissioners,

After reviewing the current alternative proposals for the new Comprehensive Plan, let me present my comments on the scoping process and the general outlines of a draft plan that I hope would be adopted. At the very least, there must be a well thought out consensus going forward on several important land use issues including how the county uses its water resources, planning for future wildfires, developing common sense transportation infrastructure and preserving critical areas from environmental degradation.

WATER RESOURCES

Let's be honest in recognizing towns and municipalities are inextricably tied to their relationship with water—both groundwater and in nearby streams and rivers. The County should count itself blessed with the existing watersheds and rivers that flow through its boundaries but, in an era of climate change, this relationship between a region and its water supplies becomes paramount. To zone for development in areas where there is inadequate water supplies, seems to me folly at best. Care should be taken to allow development only where there is provable water for domestic and agricultural use that does not rob Peter to pay Paul. If stream flows are cut or groundwater diminished, the cost/benefit analysis becomes shattered and our future becomes much less positive. The county must utilize the best and most recent science available to analyze where and how much development should be allowed.

PLANNING FOR WILDFIRES

I can't imagine any Okanogan County citizen or business owner who has not been affected by wildfires during the last several years. Any Comprehensive Plan adopted by the county must consider how and where to zone future development to avoid the worst case scenario. There are areas that because of their proximity to wildfire fuels, location, and topography should absolutely not be developed. Again, let's utilize the best resources and science available to identify these locations and avoid zoning for development near them and discourage home building in areas of increased risk to firefighters.

TRANSPORTATION

Because of the large land area contained within Okanogan County's boundaries, the final Comprehensive Plan must assure that affordable and necessary services can be delivered to new homes and businesses. Any new roads must be easily accessed using existing county and state roads and highways and all neighborhoods should be assured decent escape routes in case of future wildfires in their vicinity.

CRITICAL AREAS

An adopted Comprehensive Plan must identify areas critical to stream health, wildlife migration, soil preservation and aesthetics. The county should recognize it has many areas that simply should not be zoned for development. The county needs to recognize these areas and steer development away from them while planning for proper mitigation where it is called for. Degrading any critical area is simply not in the county's interest. There are existing mapping resources and scientific tools available that should be part of the process in creating this section of any future Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for considering my opinions,

Jim Brennan
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