

## Cortney Ingle

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**From:** Phil Millam <phil.millam@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 19, 2019 12:00 PM  
**To:** Cortney Ingle  
**Subject:** Comments on Comprehensive Plan

We want to thank the Planning Commission (PC) for extending the comment period on the draft Comprehensive Plan. We are full-time residents who are frustrated by inadequacies and illegalities of the existing Comp Plan. We hope and expect that the Count can get it right this time.

Our comments are below:

We found the Comp Plan to be difficult to decipher and lacking organization. It would seem advisable to follow the required elements of a Comp Plan as laid out in the Planning Enabling Act. If so, then the land use element would be one chapter instead of being scattered throughout the document. And there would be a recreation element, now missing. Please, *please* ask the Planning Department to hire a consultant to redraft the Comp Plan in a coherent manner.

That said, there is some information that is salvageable in the draft, but the Plan is silent or vague on the following:

**General:** We found Alternative 4 to be a comprehensive list of desirable elements, but the draft picked and chose only a few of those ideas. Combining some elements of Alternative 3 and most of Alternative 4 would produce a workable Comp Plan. The do-nothing alternative 1 and do almost-nothing Alternative 2 are non-starters.

**Water:** The Planning Enabling Act requires the Comp Plan to assist in meeting the instream flow rules for Okanogan County, yet the document never commits to that objective. The draft seems to be saying that there is plenty of water and buildable lots, but makes no connection between rampant growth and instream flows. The number of new homes now being constructed in the Methow Valley seem to contradict the growth projections in the DEIS. We do support the goal of providing additional water to the incorporated towns which will hopefully absorb most of the growth on municipal water systems.

**Grading, Clearing, and Excavation (GCE):** It is outrageous that this county does not have an ordinance regulating large GCE developments. The Comp Plan is the place to commit to such an ordinance to prevent erosion, dust, and private roads that are not safe for emergency vehicles.

**Wildfire:** The Comp Plan should commit the County to an ordinance to require less flammable building materials in new construction, and perhaps some "hardening" of existing structures. Homes can be fuel, accelerating the spread of wildfire. Neighbors and firefighters should be protected.

**Ridgetop Development:** We do not want to see more homes built on the skyline, obliterating views that should belong to all. Some communities will want to restrict such development, while others may not.. Okanogan County is certainly large enough to accept different planning restrictions for different locations. One size does not fit all. In this vein, we support More Completely Planned Areas and advisory groups within those areas.

**Critical Areas:** The County is grossly late in updating the CAO as required by law, resulting in a untenable planning do-loop, Unless critical areas are designated it is not possible to protect or appropriately regulate

human interaction in and near wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat, frequently flooded areas, and geological hazard areas. If the revised CAO had been in place as required, the Comp Plan could have been the vehicle to set out policies to protect and regulate. Instead, the Comp Plan should commit to an updated CAO within six months of the final Comp Plan, followed by a revision to the Comp Plan as necessary to meet the CAO objectives.

Dark Skies: We support the goals and objectives of the Dark Skies movement, as well as enforcement when those ordinances and policies are in place.

We would like to thank the PC for volunteering to deal with this challenging task.

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