

Cortney Ingle

From: Therese Grant <theresemgrant@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2019 2:57 PM
To: Cortney Ingle
Cc: Andy Hover
Subject: Comments for Planning Commission on the Comprehensive Plan

Dear Planning Commission,

Thank you for extending the comment period for citizens to respond to the County Comprehensive Plan.

My concerns are these:

The Plan does not seem to meet the basic standards required by law and fails to clearly articulate the differences between alternatives. A Plan that does not meet legal requirements leads to a waste of county resources on unnecessary legal actions.

The Comprehensive Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement are not organized in a way that allows for a meaningful analysis of the impacts of the alternatives presented. This is not helpful for decision-making. In addition, they lack any meaningful analysis of the proposed fourth alternative (Citizens' Alternative).

There are no protections for people and property from wildfires. The draft Plan simply calls for more studies and updates.

The Plan does not deal adequately with the need for sub-area planning in the Methow valley or elsewhere.

The Plan provides inadequate provisions to protect water quantity including senior water rights holders, farms and ranches, fish and wildlife, and recreation.

The Plan provides inadequate protections for working farms and forests.

The Plan does not adequately address Recreation as a critical element of the county's economy.

The Plan is not integrated with the county road system, meaning planned development will either cost taxpayer's money to resolve safety and capacity problems or leave the problems unaddressed.

What I do support, along with many others in this community:

The Draft Comp Plan in its current form does not address the issues raised by the public during Scoping. As mentioned above, the DEIS does not adequately compare alternatives. It appears that parts of Alternatives 3 and 4 are the most viable approaches because they:

- Concentrate most growth closer to towns
- Take a conservative approach to addressing water supplies
- Conserve natural resources and promote land uses that support local agriculture
- Encourage resilience to wildfires

- Protect wildlife and migration corridors
- Minimize conflict between residential and other uses of Rural lands by creating different designations
- Improve and enhance recreational opportunities

I support sub-area planning, guided by local advisory committees, that recognizes the unique culture and geography of our large county.

I support including the entire Methow Watershed within the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area (MVMCPA).

Dark Sky Recommendations

I support the following policy for the Comprehensive Plan, with implementation measures as articulated by the Methow Valley Citizens Council.

Policy: Provide for an ordinance allowing overlays that require buildings and other developments to achieve Dark Sky compliance

Implementation Measures:

1. This policy will be implemented by Overlay in the Zone Code. Communities can “opt in” to the Overlay by a process to be determined.
2. Should the citizens of the MVMCPA choose to pursue International Dark Sky Association recognition for all or part of their District as a Dark Sky Reserve, adoption of the Overlay will facilitate this in those areas that are controlled by the county, and facilitate discussions with appropriate state and federal agencies that manage tracts of land within the district to obtain their consent.
3. For each town within the MVMCPA that chooses to pursue International Dark Sky Association recognition as a Dark Sky Community, provide a "Zone of Influence" surrounding the community within which the community's local lighting ordinance will apply.

Finally, and importantly, I recommend the county hire a qualified professional to assist in drafting the final Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement. The job is too large and complex to be accomplished in a reasonable time-frame by one person.

Thank you for considering these issues.

Sincerely,

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