

Cortney Ingle

From: Cameron Green <camerongreencatering@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2019 4:18 PM
To: Cortney Ingle
Subject: Comment on the proposed Okanogan County Comp Plan

Dear Planning Commissioners-

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed comp plan and DEIS for Okanogan County, and for your work in this process thus far. This is a crucial document that will determine the future of our county and communities, and it feels very important to take our time and do our current residents, and future generations justice in creating a viable, working document to manage future growth. The proposed comp plan (and DEIS) DOES NOT address several issues relative to our county's smart growth and development for the present, and for the future. I am asking that the planning commissioners take a step back, go back to the drawing table, and look again at the issues critical to our county with a new lens.

In particular, I encourage the Planning Commission to address the issues of water conservation, wildfire mitigation, recreation, and the critical areas ordinance (CAOs). I am a small farmer in Carlton- this is my livelihood, and I am extremely concerned about the future of our watershed and water sources, both in stream and ground water availability, particularly after witnessing my neighbor drill three new wells on his property this summer in preparation for sub-dividing and selling his property. The fact that the proposed comp plan and the DEIS does little to nothing to address the issue of water and future development troubles me greatly. This is absolutely something that the comp plan should include and have guidelines around to ensure adequate water for agriculture and other land uses, and not continue forward as if this is an indefinitely renewal resource- with climate change, water is sure to be a keystone issue for Okanogan County, and the comp plan should consider this as the important issue that it is.

I have lived through the major wildfires here in Okanogan County, as many of us have, and the comp plan must have some mandates around new development and land use in relation to increased mega-fire potential. I helped my neighbors defend their homes in the Carlton Complex in 2014, and it was only because of smart building practices and vegetation control that we were able to save his home from burning. The comp plan should absolutely have guidelines in place for new developments/buildings to consider wildfire mitigation, and encourage current buildings/neighborhoods to adopt FireWise strategies. Again, with a changing climate the county comprehensive plan should be on the upside of anticipating these changes to protect our communities in the future.

Guidelines around recreation should also be included in the comp plan, where it now includes almost no reference to recreation use. In the Methow Valley in particular, recreation is a key economic driver. There should be some stipulations on how we can have multi-use recreation that can benefit the whole county. And that some recreation should be restricted to certain areas. As the county continues to grow, I encourage the planning commission to consider the positive and negative impacts of recreation on our communities. To not address recreation at all is negligent.

Finally, I encourage you to take a deeper look at Critical Areas Ordinances. We are currently operating on a completely outdated and insufficient CAO from 1994, having missed two mandated updates. The comp plan should take into consideration how wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat, frequently flooded areas and other geological hazards will be protected if they are not currently identified and designated, or if they are, how they will be protected into the future. CAOs are another critical component of our county's future management that is currently missing from the existing comp plan and DEIS. They should be included and designated as assets for our county's future.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the future of our communities and county. And I acknowledge the job of the planning commissioners is no easy task- thank you for your service. But we can do better than this. Okanogan County can be a leader in Eastern Washington to manage smart growth and development that takes into consideration our economy, our wildlands, our agricultural heritage, and our viable water sources. There is a lot that can be done with the comp plan to set up Okanogan County for a strong and vibrant future, instead of going along with a hands-off, business as usual approach, and then in 20 years, have our children and grandchildren asking us what we did to protect our watersheds, our forests, our agricultural lands, our mule deer habitat, from disappearing. We can do better, and I hope you will consider re-drafting the comp plan with the comments of the citizens you have heard from in mind.

Thank you very much.

Best Regards,

Cameron Green

Carlton, WA

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"The future will not be a new, big tower of power... Our hope for the future lies in the well-trodden paths going from house to house."- Raimundo Panikkar