

Cortney Ingle

From: Peter Morgan <ptrmrgn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2019 12:46 PM
To: Cortney Ingle
Subject: Comments on the Comprehensive Plan

Okanogan County Planning Commission
123 5th Ave N.
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Dear Okanogan County Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the most recent draft of the Comprehensive Plan for Okanogan County and the need to take a critical look at the future of the County. My understanding is that a comprehensive plan does not get into the details of zoning codes and regulations per se but that it should articulate a vision of the future of the County that would guide the development of such things. I don't feel the current draft plan provides a coherent vision and think a lot more should be done.

I have heard a number of people at hearings bemoan the changes that have taken place in the County, would like Okanogan County to be like it used to be, and blame regulations for all that has gone wrong. In fact, the County has changed for many reasons, many of them economic and climate related, and the future promises to be even more dramatic. I hope you can oversee a process that acknowledges that change is inexorable and a well crafted comprehensive plan gives us an opportunity to guide or react to the forces of change in a way that best addresses the needs of our citizens, our businesses, as well as the natural environment that sustains us all.

My particular interest is that the Comprehensive Plan provide guidance on land use and development that acknowledges the future of our water supply, both in stream and ground water, is very uncertain and water issues are likely to become every more contentious over time. The Plan should address the differences in water availability from place to place and ensure that land use policies and subsequent zoning practices do not exacerbate conflicts over water or run afoul of state law and or existing water rights.

Another issue seems to be the growing prevalence of wild fires. Given the rural nature of the County and its susceptibility to fires, the Comprehensive Plan should guide development in a way that minimizes the risk to human life, property loss and the public expense of defending against fires. The plan should also address issues related to roads and egress, which become critical in emergency situations.

Finally, I think the Comprehensive Plan should specifically address the need for More Completely Planned Areas that recognize the unique characteristics of sub areas of the county. The unique topography, hydrology, and vegetation of different areas suggest that a "one size fits all" approach to planning for the County does not respect these features and should allow local communities more say in the development of sub area plans.

Thank you for listening and for the work you are doing to gather input from the community and to develop the comprehensive plan. I don't feel the current draft is adequate and think we should take the time to do it right.

Peter Morgan

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