

Cortney Ingle

From: Phil Millam <phil.millam@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 18, 2019 1:04 PM
To: Cortney Ingle
Subject: Comp Plan Comments

Please accept these comments and forward them to the Planning Commission members.

First, I want to thank the volunteers on the PC for taking on this immense task. It has been a long and difficult road, but I ask them to persevere even though it means taking one medium step back in order to take a huge step ahead for the future.

Second, I want to add my voice to that of others in asking for a two week extension to the comment period. With August being prime vacation time and the Labor Day weekend coming up, I am hearing frustration from friends and neighbors that they cannot comment in the time given.

Third, I think the comp plan needs to be reorganized and rewritten by an experienced consultant. Clearly, county staff are overwhelmed and assistance should be provided.

My specific comments are below:

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I found the document to be virtually useless in doing its job, which is to inform the public and decision makers as to the relative merits of the alternatives. There is some good information in the document about growth projections and the like, but otherwise it does not meet the legal requirement for an EIS and it do not see how it can be helpful to the PC or the BOCC. However, I would like to see more scarce count resources devoted to fixing the Comp Plan than fixing the EIS, which seems hopeless unless we start over.

The Comp Plan:

General: In looking at the Planning Enabling Act which lays out the requirements of a Comp Plan, I see that the Okanogan County comp plan lacks key requirements, and/or is disorganized. For example, there is no land use element as required, although there is some land use information and policies scattered throughout the document. Why not organize the document along the requirements of the PEA?

Wildfire: I comp plan is nearly silent about setting objectives for new construction materials and fire ingress and egress. More studies are not needed. What is needed is biting the bullet and accepting the reality that our present building code is not adequate to save homes and lives. And I fear that the private insurance industry will cease writing homeowners policies unless something changes. This is a case where public safety and welfare trump individual rights to build flammable houses with no escape routes. It is the children and firefighters who must pay for such intransigence with their lives.

Water: Nowhere in the document could I find an acknowledgement that growth will adversely affect instream flows, and nowhere in the document do I see the required commitment of the county to plan and zone to attain instream flows. This needs to change.



Growth: The DEIS seems to indicate that there is allegedly plenty of water for growth in six of the seven reaches with a 2.0 cfs reserve, and that there are thousands of buildable lots. Growth projections for the county do not seem to be realistic for the Methow Valley given the number of new homes under construction. Is this what we want? Thousands of more people filling every available lot? Not this voter!

Grading and Excavation: I understand that Okanogan County does not have an ordinance which regulates grading and excavation projects above a certain threshold. I have seen too many road cuts on steep slopes that are not only ugly, but promote erosion. Clearly, this is something that the comp plan should address.

I could go on and on, but pointing out other deficiencies in the DEIS and Comp Plan, but the points above stand out to me.

Thank you for considering my comments. And again, thanks to the PC for all their work!

Mary Morgan
Winthrop