

This document includes all changes discussed through the September 10, 2008 meeting. Please review the wording of these revisions to make sure that the intent and point of emphasis has been accurately reflected. If you have any comments or afterthoughts, please forward them to Angie Hubbard at [ahubbard@co.okanogan.wa.us](mailto:ahubbard@co.okanogan.wa.us) or 507-422-7090. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Wednesday **Ocotber 8**, 2008 at 6 pm at the Local Café. In the interim period, please review Chapter 4 of the draft County Comprehensive Plan for consistency with the local goals and policies. In addition, please don't hesitate to send your thoughts and comments to Angie via email and she will forward them to the group prior to the meeting.

**Your participation has been greatly appreciated.**

### **Middle Methow Valley Vision Statement**

The Methow Valley has long been valued and revered for its intense natural beauty, strong sense of community, and for the self-reliance and motivation of its residents. Presently, as we face an acceleration of growth and development, it is our intention to institute and embrace a vision for the Methow Valley that fosters and preserves the rural character that define this valley. It is evident that protecting our high quality of life is of vital importance to us today, as well as into the foreseeable future and beyond.

Upon entering the Methow Valley, one is instantly greeted with a sense of awe and inspiration. Within the sheer natural splendor of this place, one notices the large tracts of agriculturally productive land on the valley floor that support family-owned farms, orchards, dairies, and livestock ranches. The hillsides surrounding these lands are comprised of functioning shrub-steppe and forest habitats that support healthy populations of native plants and animals. Ridgelines of the valley allow for unobstructed views of the surrounding mountains. The wildlife migration corridors that exist between and among these areas are protected as conservation lands for the benefit of the ecosystems and its inhabitants. Through this vibrant landscape **flows** the Methow River and its tributaries, which are teeming with self-sustaining populations of native aquatic life and surrounded by functioning floodplains and riparian forests. We vision our Methow Valley as a place characterized by self-reliant and sustainable ecological systems including **fish and wildlife, with both wild and working lands**. Integral to this vision are the human inhabitants who, through considerate stewardship of land, water and community, have created a place where all inhabitants have the opportunity to thrive in harmonious unity. One has the sense that the people who call this place home honor and revere the land and understand that the careful stewardship and preservation of the environment is vital to sustainable pathways to the future.

The Methow Valley is also remarkable for its rich and flourishing local economy. Small, locally owned and operated businesses provide residents and visitors alike with a multitude of goods and services. The towns of the Methow Valley are the focal points of this economy. They are gathering places that promote the economic and social health of the community, serving as a model for innovative and inspiring economic and community development. Housing and commercial development within the growth management zones of the towns has been planned to maximize open spaces and greenways that link the facilities and amenities each town has to offer. Buildings have been constructed and located so as to maximize their energy efficiency whilst minimizing their impact on the land and community. The people who live here have taken the time and energy to invest in their community, their quality of life, and the stewardship of the land. It is evident that there is a deep connection to place that flows through the people who call this special place home and they have been willing to protect and enhance our natural heritage, the thriving local economy and the diverse ecological communities for today and the future.

We realize that it can be difficult to define or quantify what constitutes a high quality of life, as these values

cannot be bought, sold, or traded in a commercial sense. However, if the values that make for a high quality of life are considered ephemeral or of lesser importance than the acquisition of wealth, it will be diminished. We who now live in the Middle Methow Valley enjoy what we believe to be the highest level of quality of life that we can hope for. While there is always room for improvement in the quality of our lives, it is our vision to plan, control, and allow only the amount of growth, **at a slow sustainable rate**, that will permit and preserve the lifestyle that present residents of the Middle Methow enjoy and which people moving to our community so strongly seek to be part of. The quality of life and the style of life we enjoy is not only a benefit to our community that is difficult to quantify, it is also the absolute bedrock basis of the present day economy of the Middle Methow community. The Middle Methow is a highly desirable place to live. This attribute is a magnet which draws people to our community, who **buy land and build homes** and businesses to support themselves in their life here. To the extent we damage or diminish our quality of life, we also damage and diminish the foundation of our local economy. **In addition, past errors in planning and omissions in regulations have led to some scarring and degradation of the landscapes and produced threats to the ecosystem. Also, the evolution of the valley communities and their economy has presented past and ongoing problems of employment and affordable housing. As a result, this comprehensive plan must include both pathways to protect what remains as well as to alleviate and correct the problems of the past.**

Our vision is to keep the Middle Methow Valley the way it is and allow for only that growth which sustains, promotes, and protects the way of life we now have here. The rate of growth that we experience must be slow so that the elements of change can be integrated into the present environment and our lives without displacing or overwhelming the attributes we so highly value, which includes:

- clean air;
- clean water;
- low pollution of all types (noise, light, air, water);
- strong and connected sense of community;
- low interpersonal conflict;
- low crime rate;
- large undeveloped areas of public land;
- large undeveloped areas of private land;
- a natural ecosystem which is still intact and which continues to support all the native fish, plants, animals, insects and other forms of life which are part of this ecosystem;
- peacefulness; and
- a personal sense of well-being and safeness.

In accordance with this vision for our community, we have prepared the following Goals and Policies for inclusion in the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan.

### **Middle Methow Valley Goals:**

10/8/2008



1. Preserve and protect the natural environment, fisheries, wildlife, agricultural lands, and open space.
2. Prevent sprawl and require that new growth and development be directed to areas that are consistent with the policies of this Plan.
3. Agricultural lands shall be preserved. **[Delete it's in #1]**
4. New development activities must be consistent with the historical and rural character of the Methow Valley as defined in the Vision Statement, the policies of this plan, and the Methow Conservancy *Good Neighbor Handbook*.
5. Require that Project Sponsors pay for the full costs associated with serving their new developments and to fully mitigate potential adverse impacts.

#### **Land Use Policies:**

1. New developments should not be permitted unless Project Sponsors can demonstrate an adequate supply of water **without degrading existing uses and values.**
2. The scale and intensity of new development activities should be consistent with existing neighboring development.
3. New development should not adversely affect existing wells, senior water rights, or water and air quality
  1. This analysis shall include consideration of the State Climatologist's forecasts of declining rain and snow.
3. Twisp and Winthrop, in consultation with the County, should establish urban growth area boundaries that are consistent with the projected need for urban types of development and that reflect the logical outer boundary of urban services.
3. Identify, prioritize, and designate open space for preservation with an emphasis on larger parcels.
3. The County should establish and implement "Dark Sky" regulations to limit and control the location, direction, and intensity of outdoor lighting. All public lighting and private lighting shall be shaded so that light is cast only directly downward. All lighting on private properties shall be shaded so that no light from any outdoor lighting shall be cast beyond the boundaries of the private property upon which the light is placed.

3. The County shall adopt standards to limit ridgeline development to keep structures below the topographic profile in order to avoid adverse visual impacts.
3. New Planned Destination Resorts shall not be permitted in the Methow Review District.
3. Property owners should **[delete - "be required to" if how isn't stipulated]** manage their lands to minimize the risk of wildfires.
3. All new development must be designed to preclude adverse topographical effects such as erosion, visual impacts, scaring, unstable slopes, and interruption of wildlife corridors, **watershed function**, etc.
3. Project Sponsors must document that proposed developments do not exceed the carrying capacity of natural systems.
3. The use of off road vehicles shall be restricted to designated areas.

**Natural Environment Policies:**

1. Identify and prioritize high value fish and wildlife habitat and migration corridors for their protection.
2. Identify and adopt measures to protect locally endangered/significant plant and animal species and critical areas.
3. Do not permit new development that adversely affects designated critical areas, critical fish and wildlife habitat areas, **watershed function** and/or designated wildlife corridors.
4. Critical area ordinances will be enforced by the County to protect species of special concern, as well as threatened and endangered species.
5. Revise County Development Regulations to include provisions for wildlife friendly fencing standards.
6. Adopt dog control measures to protect deer and livestock. The County shall adopt and actively enforce ordinances that require dogs to be leashed or under the direct control of owners at all times **when off their residential property**.
7. Protect fisheries habitat by maintaining adequate stream flows, while protecting historic uses of existing water rights.
8. The County should adopt and implement a flood hazard plan.

9. No structures for permanent human habitation or any sewage or industrial waste disposal shall be allowed in 100 year floodplains **and/or severe channel migration zone whichever provides a greater area of protection.**
10. Protect and enhance the natural character and geomorphic processes of the Methow, Chewack, and Twisp Rivers, their shorelines, and their tributaries **including intermittent streams and other water courses.**
11. Outdoor burning should be prohibited during air inversion periods.
12. The County should support the development and implementation of an ongoing water quality monitoring plan.
13. In order to protect air quality, the County shall adopt standards to limit the use of wood burning stoves when pollution levels are at risk of exceeding state air quality standards and/or during periods of air stagnation.
14. Property owners and public agencies should be encouraged to avoid the use of fertilizers and pesticides that could have an adverse impact on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and neighboring properties.
15. It is recognized that genetically modified organisms can have an adverse impact on the environment. As a result, the County shall prohibit the propagation, cultivation, raising, or growing of genetically engineered organisms, including but not limited to plants, animals, and micro-organisms.
16. Buildings in forested areas shall not be permitted without an approved wildfire protection plan that includes fire-resistant construction, adequate road access, and defensible space that are consistent with *Firewise Guidelines* from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Resource Lands Policies:

1. **Designate and provide public non-motorized access to public lands in the Methow.**
2. **Protect existing access and designate and identify future non-motorized access to all public lands.**
3. **Require County approval and public process for the exchange or sale of Public Lands.**
4. **Develop a local review process in the Middle Methow to review the public land sales and exchanges.**
5. **Develop a Public Lands designation for resource lands.**
6. **Develop a map of the designated Public Land resource lands.**
7. **Develop regulations within the Public Lands designation using the best available science.**

**Agricultural Policies:**

1. Designate and prioritize agricultural lands for preservation including lands currently used or suitable for agriculture.
2. The County shall implement measures to preserve agricultural lands such as transfer of development rights and current use taxation which encourages agriculture, open space, and forest uses.
3. Protect existing irrigation uses and water rights dedicated to support agriculture.
4. Do not support the conversion of water rights dedicated to support agricultural uses to incompatible non-agricultural uses, provided that this policy should not adversely affect the Town of Twisp's efforts to secure additional water rights to serve their Urban Growth Area.
5. Encourage **citizen use of public and private open space lands through access or development of public easements.**
6. Encourage and support the local agricultural economy so that it may achieve and maintain self sufficiency.

**Upland Use Policies:**

1. Identify and prioritize forested areas and shrub-steppe lands for protection.
2. Avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts on critical wildlife and fisheries areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and designated natural resource lands.

**Residential Development Policies:**

1. Direct subdivisions, planned developments, resorts and related types of developments to areas where such development is compatible with neighboring land uses and where required services exist or can be provided in an environmentally sensitive manner.
2. Require Project Sponsors to provide affordable housing to mitigate adverse community impacts associated with new development such as a lack of available housing, increased traffic, increased commuting distances, etc.
3. New residential developments shall be screened from State highways and County arterials with



vegetation.

4. Require that Project Sponsors pay for and fully mitigate the public costs and the adverse impacts associated with new development, such as impacts on public services, roads, sewer and water systems, schools, emergency services, etc.
5. Energy efficient alternative residential building materials and designs should be encouraged and permitted.
6. Existing standards governing home businesses should be retained and consistently and actively enforced.
7. The County should actively research the feasibility of establishing size standards for new houses so that they are comparable in size to neighboring buildings.
8. The County should actively pursue and implement opportunities to promote more affordable housing in the community.
9. Gated communities shall not be permitted.
10. County regulations and permitting procedures shall be revised to preclude practices intended to circumvent the principal of no more than one primary and one accessory dwelling unit per lot
  1. Accessory buildings shall not be converted to dwelling units without a permit(s) issued by the County and full compliance with the requirements for primary or accessory dwelling units.
  2. New non-residential accessory buildings capable of being converted to a dwelling unit shall not be permitted without a note recorded on the Title and/or other measures clearly prohibiting the conversion or unauthorized uses. This shall include, but is not limited to, accessory buildings designed to accommodate the subsequent addition of a kitchen.
  3. . This shall include, but is not limited to connecting buildings designed to be free standing with breezeways.
11. Require new residential septic systems to be located outside channel migration zones.
12. Require residential development to be located outside channel migration zones.
13. Only one building shall be allowed with a plumbed kitchen per tax parcel except where otherwise allowed as an accessory building.

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**Commercial Development Policies:**

1. New commercial development should be directed to appropriately zoned sites in the incorporated and unincorporated towns of Twisp, Winthrop, Methow, and Carlton.
  1. New commercial development should emphasize local ownership and **be** sized to serve the local community.
  2. Retail facilities greater than 10,000 sq. ft. shall not be permitted.
  3. Strip development shall not be permitted.
2. Adopt and consistently implement new sign standards with an emphasis on:
  1. The limitation of off-site signs to designated public areas;
  2. Limiting the size, height, and illumination of on-site signs; and
  3. The use of natural materials.
3. New commercial developments shall be screened from State highways and County arterials with vegetation **including a required maintenance plan, and a replacement plan for all dead vegetation.**  
*BOND*
4. New commercial developments shall be screened from non-commercial zones with vegetation, including a required maintenance plan and a replacement plan for all dead vegetation.

**Industrial Development Policies:**

1. New industrial development should be directed to appropriately zoned sites in the incorporated and unincorporated towns of Twisp, Winthrop, Methow, and Carlton.
2. Permit industrial development only upon the issuance of a conditional use permit that adequately mitigates potential adverse affects, such as impacts on public services, roads, sewer and water systems, schools, emergency services, and minimizes impacts of noise and light.



3. New industrial developments shall be screened from State highways and County arterials and adjoining non-industrial zones with vegetation **including a required maintenance plan and a replacement plan for all dead vegetation.**

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### **Transportation Policies:**

1. The County shall prepare and implement access control plans for state highways and county roads to promote safety and protect wildlife by limiting the number of individual access points and that promote shared or joint use driveways.
2. The County shall require that roads be designed and constructed to provide safe crossings, utilizing such features as underpasses and overpasses.
  1. The County shall identify, prioritize, design, and construct a system of trails or by-ways that can safely be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians. These should utilize public property and such features as right-of ways, easements, and irrigation ditches while connecting communities, schools, parks, and public places.
4. Project Sponsors shall be required to submit traffic studies and plans with their applications that fully mitigate potential adverse traffic impacts associated with their proposed development.
5. Traffic speeds shall be slowed to protect the public health and safety in wildlife corridors, recreation areas, cities and towns, and in areas with higher frequency of accidents
5. The County shall require the use of asphalt or asphalt overlays on arterials to minimize noise.
5. Standards to limit off-site signage should be established and enforced with a particular emphasis on areas that are not covered by the National Scenic By-Ways standards for signage, which should be applied and enforced on all State highways and County roads
  1. Video display signs shall not be permitted.
5. Develop a highway information system that provides adequate information to travelers without degrading the environment.
5. No new airports or runways shall be permitted and existing runways shall not be lengthened or widened.

### **Parks and Recreation Policies:**

1. The County shall prepare and implement a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan that includes:

1. A comprehensive trail plan for walking, hiking, jogging, bicycling, skiing, and equestrians that connect communities, schools, parks, and public places utilizing public property and such features as right-of -ways, easements, and irrigation ditches;
2. Preservation of existing public access points to the Methow River and provides additional opportunities for public access for swimming, non-motorized boat access, picnicking, and passive enjoyment; and
3. A countywide park that includes facilities for active and passive enjoyment including ball fields, picnicking, and nature walks, etc.

**Sewer and Water Policies:**

1. The County should support the development and implementation of an ongoing water quality monitoring plan.
2. Water rights should not be transferred outside of the Methow Valley **nor from agricultural to other uses.**
3. Project Sponsors must demonstrate that they have fully provided sewer and water service to new commercial, industrial, and large-scale residential developments that does not adversely impact the environment.
4. Septic tanks and drain fields shall not be permitted in environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, designated critical areas, and in areas where septic effluent could degrade the quality of surface and ground waters.
5. Project Sponsors shall be required to pay for the costs associated with providing water and sewer service.
6. Sponsors of projects involving five or more residential units shall be required to prove that new wells will not adversely affect existing wells.
  1. The burden of proof shall be on Project Sponsors.
  2. Project Sponsors shall be responsible for adverse impacts on existing wells and for reparations.
7. Project Sponsors shall be required to restore areas disturbed during the installation of new utilities to

prevent noxious weeds and erosion.

8. New developments shall utilize water conservation measures including, but not limited to: gray water recycling, low flow shower and toilets; and drip irrigation or micro sprinkler systems.
9. Meters shall be installed on new exempt wells. Exempt well withdrawals shall be limited by ordinance to a quantity that closely reflects actual, typical residential usage (200-800 GPD).

**Utility Policies:**

1. Minimize visual impacts of new utility construction and installation.
2. Utility lines should be placed underground unless physically not feasible or it would cause substantial adverse environmental impacts.
3. Support the undergrounding of existing utilities.
4. The County shall encourage and permit alternative sources of energy including but not limited to the distributive generation of electricity through zoning and housing code regulations.
5. New developments shall use energy conservation measures.

**Administrative Policies:**

1. All development activities must comply with adopted codes and regulations.
  1. All plats involving 5 or more lots shall be processed through the Planned Development process and shall be designed to promote open space and clustering. .
2. The County shall establish and maintain an active code enforcement program.
3. The County shall revise and enforce legally defensible noise standards.
4. Priority consideration shall be given to scheduling public hearings and meetings in the vicinity of proposed projects and to rotating the location of Planning Commission meetings throughout the County.
5. The County shall establish and implement procedures to notify and provide neighboring and affected property owners with timely and meaningful opportunities to comment on proposed comprehensive plan



amendments, rezones, and development proposals.

6. Development Agreements should not be utilized in the Middle Methow Valley. However, if the County adopts provisions that authorizes the execution of development agreements throughout the county, then the County shall notify affected communities at the earliest possible opportunity of its intent to negotiate a development agreement(s) with a Project Sponsor and shall provide early and continuous opportunities for public involvement. In addition, all public meetings and required public hearings shall be scheduled in the vicinity of the proposed project in order to facilitate local involvement throughout the decision making process. At a minimum, development agreements shall include provisions that :
  1. Establishes specific performance requirements and timeframes that if not met shall render agreements null and void;
  2. Clearly enables the County to impose new or subsequent requirements necessary to protect the public health and safety;
  3. Limits and documents what, if any, rights are vested and the timeframes in which the vested rights need to be exercised or become void;
  4. Clearly enables the County to require additional environmental reviews and/or impose additional mitigation measures to address changes in conditions or new information; and
  5. Establishes monitoring protocols to ensure that conditions of approval have been met, are being maintained and enforced, and are functioned as intended producing the desired results.
7. Clearing and grading threshold requirements should be lowered and the governing standards increased within one year of the adoption of these goals and policies in order to avoid fragmentation and degradation of habitat.
8. The regulations governing Planned Developments must be upgraded to be consistent with the Goals and Policies in this Plan.
9. All subdivision in ~~Natural Resource Lands~~ shall be clustered under a planned development.
10. The County shall maintain or increase the minimum lot size requirements in the Methow 5 and Methow 20 Zones.
  1. Rounding off, incentives, density bonuses, or other means of increasing the base density shall not be utilized except in clustered planned developments.
  2. In order to subdivide a parcel, the minimum lot size for property zoned one dwelling unit per five

acres shall be ten acres, and ~~the~~ the for a property zoned for one dwelling unit per twenty acres shall be forty acres.

3. Regulations shall be revised to more clearly describe lot size requirements to avoid gaps in coverage, such as 5 or more acres, or less than 5 acres, etc.
11. Urban Growth Area Boundaries should be periodically reviewed ~~and~~ and adjusted to reflect more contemporary assessments of future needs, the ability to provide urban services, and the suitability of land for development.
  1. Parcels should not be bisected by Urban Growth Area boundary lines, and adjustments should be made so that the parcel is entirely in or out of the Urban Growth Area.
12. Parcels should not be bisected by zoning district boundaries. Parcels with more than one zoning district shall be subject to the zoning requirements of the district that applies to a majority of the lot area.
13. Future Land Use and Zoning designations should be consistent with the Adaptive Water Management Plan to be prepared by the Methow Watershed Council.
14. The County regulations governing Accessory Dwelling Units, Chapter 17.14.040 shall be amended to include the following provisions to govern new accessory dwelling units in all zones in the Middle Methow Valley:
  1. The minimum lot size for properties seeking to add an accessory dwelling unit shall be 7.5 acres;
  2. Accessory dwelling units shall not exceed 600 sq. ft.; and
  3. Accessory dwelling units must be located within 50 feet of the primary residence.
15. The County shall establish fees for new development that fully cover the costs of plan review, permit issuance, inspection, compliance monitoring, and a comprehensive development regulation and code enforcement program.
16. The County should review and revise tax policies to limit tax increases on long-standing, lower-, and fixed income property owners.
17. The County should recognize and support three separate local advisory groups to serve Mazama, the Middle Methow Valley, and Lower Methow Valley communities. These advisory groups should be actively consulted by the County and should be provided with adequate information and support to make timely and meaningful comments on proposed policy and regulatory changes, rezones, and specific development proposals.

1. The County should also promote and support discussions between the local advisory groups on matters of sub-regional or county-wide concern.
18. The County shall actively advertise vacancies on the Planning Commission and advisory boards utilizing local newspapers, newsletters, emails, websites, and community based organizations.
19. The County shall open a part-time office of the Planning Department in the Methow Valley supported by fees on new developments.