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Okanogon County Draft Comprehensive Plan

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Comprehensive Plan guides policy decisions for future actions of Okanogan County. Adopted by County Commissioners, this plan presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives that provide a framework for growth and development over the next 20 years.

1.2 Executive Statement

The Board of County Commissioners finds that over 57% of the land in Okanogan County is owned by Federal and State Agencies. Over 20% of Okanogan County is within the boundaries of the Colville Indian Reservation and therefore outside of the direct planning and permitting authority of the County with the exception of deeded fee lands. Of the remaining less than 23% of the land mass, it is estimated that 5% is not suitable for development due to topography and other critical area features. The remaining land mass must provide the inventory of land necessary to provide for residential, industrial, and commercial needs both in and out of the incorporated cities and towns. This land also supports the agricultural and natural resource-based activities that are important to the local economy. The land use designations used in the Comprehensive Plan must recognize these needs while avoiding incompatible uses.

The Comprehensive Plan was first adopted by the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners in 1965 and amended most recently in 2014 and 2021.

1.3 Relationship to Other Plans, Statutes, and Regulations

1.3.1 Compliance with State Laws

This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in compliance with the Planning Enabling Act (Chapter 36.70 RCW). The purpose of the Act is to "...provide the authority for, and the procedures to be followed in, guiding and regulating the physical development of a county or region through correlating both public and private projects and coordinating their execution with respect to all subject matters utilized in developing and servicing land, all to the end of assuring the highest standards of environment for living, and the operation of commerce, industry, agriculture, and recreation, and assuring maximum economies and conserving the highest degree of public health, safety, morals and welfare" (RCW 36.70.010).

Although the County does not Plan under the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) (GMA), as appropriate, this Plan includes elements under the GMA, including the designation, conservation, and protection of resource lands and critical areas.

1.3.2 Community Plans and Community Planning Areas

Okanogan County has several diverse areas that have an individual sense of community. It is recognized that these areas may benefit from a more focused planning approach. This plan supports future creation and revision to sub-area plans.

Previously, two subarea plans were adopted as part of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan:

- Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area
- Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A

The County will review and update those plans to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Once they have been updated, they will once again be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.3.3 Comprehensive Plans of Incorporated Cities and Towns

This Comprehensive Plan applies to the unincorporated lands of Okanogan County. The comprehensive plans of individual cities and towns serve as the plans for incorporated areas in the County.

1.3.4 Development Regulations

In accordance with the Planning Enabling Act, the County's development regulations implement the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Regulations include standards and procedures for development, and address topics such as zoning, subdivisions, roads and bridges, utilities, and environmental protection. The County reviews and updates its development regulations to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

2 Vision Statement and General Objectives

2.1 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

Okanogan County, with pride in our Native American heritage, and pioneer and mining history, looks forward to bringing up another generation informed by tradition. We share a love of a rural lifestyle surrounded by natural beauty, open spaces, thriving fish and wildlife populations, abundant recreational opportunities and nourished by clean air, clean water and a healthy environment.

Okanogan County is vast and beautiful. The diverse and rugged natural environment has fostered a range of historic uses and distinct communities. This plan supports the opportunity for the residents of geographically and culturally distinct areas to develop sub-area plans that reflect their community values.

Okanogan County recognizes that wise stewardship of natural resources is fundamental to our rural economy. Forests in the highlands provide timber, grazing for our cattle industry and recreational opportunities. Rich valley soils support our long-standing agricultural heritage. Clean water provides the lifeblood of agriculture in our orchards, vineyards, fields and verdant gardens.

2.2 Guiding Principles

Our vision for the future involves the following guiding principles:

- Sustaining agriculture, forestry, tourism and commerce that provide a wide range of family-supporting employment opportunities.
- Honoring and supporting the many traditional uses and lifestyles while accommodating orderly development.
- Support of a broad range of housing options, supported by efficient public services.
- Wise and efficient use of water, to protect senior water rights and ecosystems and allow for sustainable development.
- Recognize distinct communities in Okanogan County through sub-area plans.

2.3 Comprehensive Plan General Objectives

- G-1.** The County will develop and implement a public involvement strategy to ensure the opportunity for early and continuous citizen participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process and future updates to development regulations. This strategy will be open to all individuals and groups including those who have not traditionally participated in the planning process.

- G-2.** The County will seek the participation of the Colville Confederated Tribes as a recognized tribe with reservation land within the boundaries of the County when updating the Comprehensive Plan. The County will establish a protocol for integrating the updated Comprehensive Plan with the comprehensive plan prepared by the Tribes for the Colville Reservation and Trust Lands as is necessary and appropriate.
- G-3.** The County will seek the participation of the Yakama Nation as a recognized tribe with special interests in Okanogan County as their Usual and Accustomed areas.
- G-4.** Okanogan County shall periodically review the Critical Areas Ordinance, Shorelines Master Program, Flood Management Programs, and Hazard Mitigation Plan as required by state law and/or at the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners to ensure compliance with the land use policies contained in this Comprehensive Plan.
- G-5.** The County will, at the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners, revise and update the More Completely Planned Area (MCPA) plans, including the Methow Valley MCPA Plan and Methow Valley MCPA Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A, for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- G-6.** In partnership with the incorporated cities and towns, the County will establish City Expansion Areas that will provide adequate land to meet projected needs of the city or town.
- G-7.** It is the intent of Okanogan County to adopt a Comprehensive Plan that contains the required elements in accordance with RCW 36.70, the Planning Enabling Act, and any required elements of the GMA. The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a tool to protect the customs, cultures, and economic stability of Okanogan County and as a guide to promote consistency amongst other adopted regulations whether mandated or elective.
- G-8.** It is the expectation of Okanogan County that when State, Federal, or Regional agencies prepare, implement, and update plans and regulations, that they are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan and adopted regulations.

3 Background and Population Projections

Okanogan County is located in North Central Washington, bordered on the north by British Columbia, Canada, the Columbia River to the south, the Cascade Mountains to the west, and Ferry County to the east. The County covers 5,281 square miles, making it the largest county in Washington. Less than 23% of the land within the County is in private ownership due to the amount of state and federal land. The Colville Indian Reservation, located in the southeast corner of the County, occupies approximately 700,000 acres of Okanogan County and is an integral part of the heritage of the County.¹ Incorporated cities and towns in the County occupy approximately 13.8 square miles.

3.1 Current and Historic Demographics

The current population of Okanogan County according to U.S. Census in 2020 was 43,130. Of the state's 39 counties, Okanogan County ranks 27th in terms of population. Table 1 summarizes population in the County between 1970-2020, including distribution of population between unincorporated and incorporated areas. Figure 1 shows the rate of population growth in unincorporated and incorporated areas since 1970. The rate of population growth has slowed in both unincorporated and incorporated areas.

Table 1. Population in Unincorporated and Incorporated Areas, 1970-2020.

Year	Total Population	Incorporated Areas		Unincorporated Areas	
		Population	Percent Total	Population	Percent Total
1970	25,867	13,541	52.3	12,326	47.7
1980	30,663	14,208	46.3	16,455	53.7
1990	33,350	14,056	42.1	19,294	57.9
2000	39,564	15,917	40.2	23,647	59.8
2010	41,120	16,340	39.7	24,780	60.3
2020	43,130	16,910	39.2	26,220	60.8

Source: Office of Financial Management, September 2021. Census totals may differ slightly from other publications due to use of corrected or uncorrected counts. Unrounded numbers not meant to imply accuracy.

¹ Okanogan County Demographics webpage, https://www.okanogancounty.org/residents/about_us/demographics.php

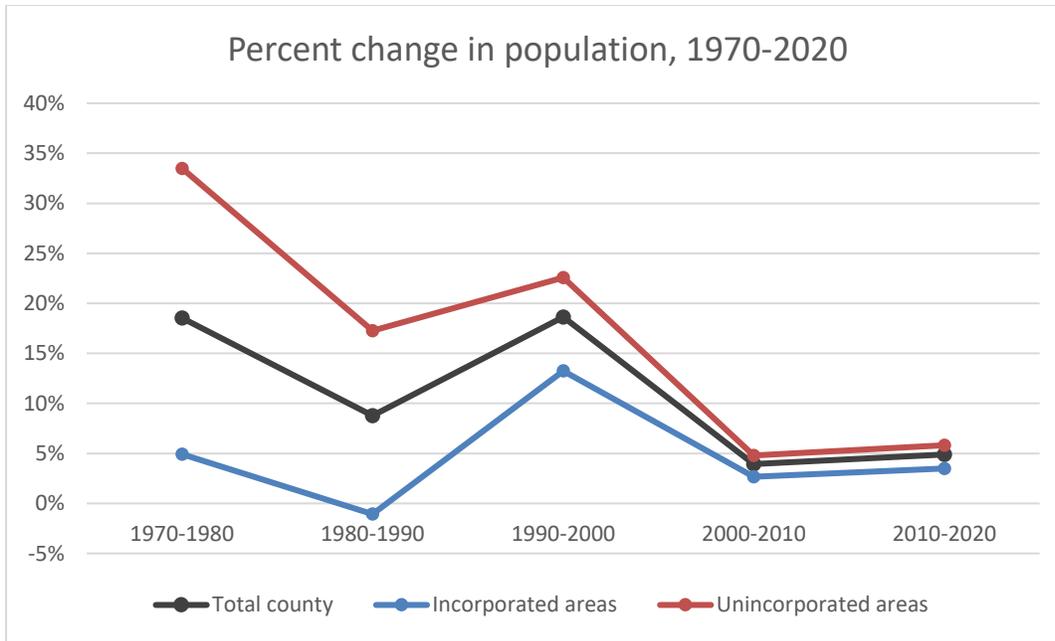


Figure 1. Percent change in population in unincorporated and incorporated areas since 1970. Source: Office of Financial Management, September 2021.

According to the 2020 Census, the County’s average population density is 8.19 persons per square mile. This is significantly lower than the statewide average population density of 115.21 persons per square mile. Table 2 shows the change in population density for incorporated areas and the County as a whole since 1980.

Table 2. Population density since 1980.

Year	Population density (persons per square mile)	
	Cities combined	County (includes federal and state lands) Percent Total
1980	1,325.1	5.8
1990	1,313.3	6.3
2000	1,238.5	7.5
2010	1,134.1	7.8
2020	1,159.3	8.2

Source: Office of Financial Management, September 2021.

Figure 2 shows age distribution in Okanogan County in 2020. Compared to Washington State, the County has a higher percentage of individuals aged 60 years or older and a lower percentage of individuals aged 20-50 years.

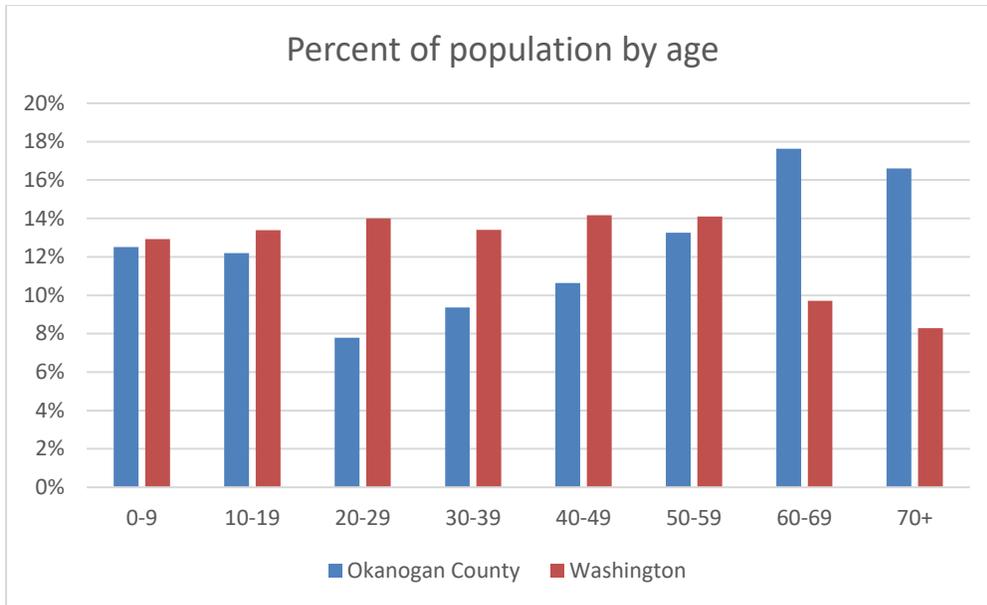


Figure 2. Percent population by age for Okanogon County and Washington State. Source: Office of Financial Management, September 2021.

3.2 Growth Management Population Forecast

In accordance with RCW 43.62.035, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) produces population forecasts every five years. The forecasts are provided as a range of low, medium, or high growth (Figure 3).

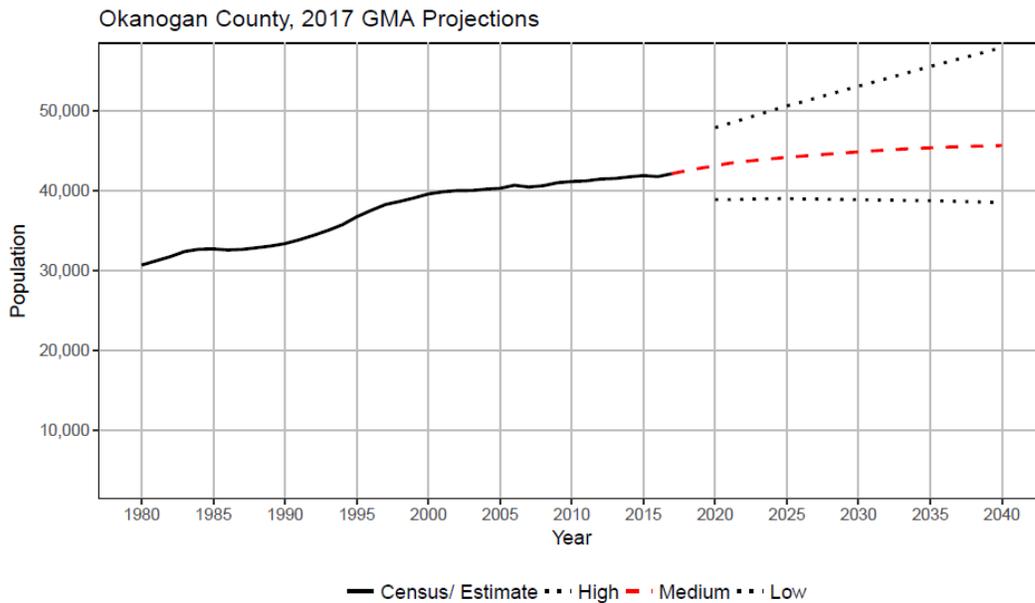


Figure 3. 2017 OFM population growth projections, showing high, medium, and low scenarios. Source: OFM, 2017.

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The Board of County Commissioners elected to adopt the medium growth target for population in the County in the next 20 years. Table 3 shows the medium OFM projection published in 2017, which are the most current projections as of the date of this document.

Table 3. 2017 OFM Projections of the Total Resident Population: Medium Series, 2010 to 2040

	Census	Estimate	Projections				
	2010	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
State	6,724,540	7,310,300	7,638,415	8,085,043	8,503,178	8,894,306	9,242,022
Okanogan	41,120	42,110	43,084	44,149	44,824	45,335	45,621

Source: OFM/Forecasting and Research, December 2017.

The OFM projection anticipates that the population in Okanogan County will increase from the estimated 2020 population of 43,084² to 45,621 by the year 2040. The 2020 Census data shows an average of 2.38 people per household in Okanogan County. The projected increase of 2,537 people is projected to result in an increase of 1,066 households. Maintaining the 2020 distribution of population between unincorporated and incorporated areas, the population in unincorporated Okanogan County would increase by 1,542, and the number of households would increase by 648.

² Population statistics for the County vary slightly by source. According to the U.S. Census, the 2020 population of the County was 43,130.

4 Economic Development Element

4.1 Introduction

Agriculture and forestry are the major economic generators for the County and are the foundation for the region, employing approximately 5,756 people. Government, retail trade, services, tribal enterprises, and manufacturing are a few of the major employers within the County. Omak, the regional center for services and trade, is experiencing a great deal of growth. There is also increasing development pressure in the area between the Canadian border and Oroville. The Confederated Tribe of the Colville Reservation is one of the largest employers in Okanogan County, employing from 800 to 1,200 seasonal, part-time, and permanent positions.

Okanogan County conducts economic development planning through coordination with various private and public agencies such as the Economic Alliance and North Central Washington Economic Development District (NCWEDD). These partnerships are necessary to provide a coordinated strategy and ongoing economic development programs for the County and region. Following the catastrophic wildfires in 2014 and 2015, the NCWEDD developed the Okanogan Economic Recovery Plan (OERP). Developed in collaboration with affected communities, local municipal staff and chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders, the OERP provides recommendations for recovering, strengthening, and diversifying local and regional economies. The recommendations address ten focus areas, including:

- Developing redundancy in critical infrastructure and improving basic infrastructure capacity;
- Developing space and marketing to support growth in industry and tourism throughout the County;
- Targeting manufacturing industries to mitigate commodity-based industry vulnerabilities; and
- Diversifying the agriculture, timber, and mining industries and exploring further opportunities for processing, manufacturing, and sale at local markets.³

4.2 Economic Development Goals and Objectives

GOAL ED-1: Continue to form partnerships to create an environment to nurture and support business and industry.

³ Okanogan Economic Recovery Plan – Interactive Online Plan:
<http://www.okanoganeconomicrecovery.com/the-plan.html>

Objectives:

- ED-1.1** Encourage efforts to diversify the existing economic base to focus on long-term sustainable economic development throughout the County.
- ED-1.2** Promote the diversification of the economic base through sustainable economic development that can help provide job opportunities as well as a healthy, stable and growing economy.
- ED-1.3** Seek to attract businesses and industries that complement and build upon existing business and industry.
- ED-1.4** Encourage the retention and growth of recreational and tourist-based industries consistent with the comprehensive and recreation plans.
- ED-1.5** Create and promote opportunities to strengthen and build upon the many tourist and recreational amenities and the locational advantages the County has to offer.
- ED-1.6** Encourage local economic development efforts to promote the advantages of working and living in Okanogan County, such as availability of work, job security and stability, access to recreational and cultural activities, educational opportunities, quality health care, and affordable housing.

5 Environment and Natural Resources Element

5.1 Introduction

Okanogan County has a diverse and rugged landscape, plentiful natural resources and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The purpose of this plan is to promote resource compatible development by including goals and objectives to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment and the stewardship of the land for current and future generations while balancing the interest of property owners.

Okanogan County is blessed with wildlife abundance and diversity. Okanogan County contains the largest mule deer herd in Washington State migrating between winter and summer ranges. One of the states only populations of Sharp-tailed grouse lives within the shrub-steppe lands of the Tunk Valley and surrounding areas of central Okanogan valley. Many other species such as wolves, lynx, grizzly bear, big-horn sheep, elk, and white-tailed deer to name just a few consider the valley home. This wildlife diversity occurs in unification with the rural agricultural character of Okanogan County.

5.2 Shorelines

The Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58) requires Okanogan County to develop and implement a Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The SMP governs lakes over 20 acres and streams and rivers with more than 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) mean annual flow. Upland shorelands extend 200 feet from the ordinary high-water mark or the floodway if it has been delineated as well as associated wetlands. Shorelines of statewide significance include lakes at least 1,000 acres in size and rivers flowing 200 cfs mean annual flow in Eastern Washington and associated wetlands.

The Shoreline Management Act establishes preferred shoreline uses that are consistent with preventing damage to the natural environment or are unique to or dependent on the use of Washington's shorelines. Priority uses include single family residences, shoreline recreation uses, water dependent industrial and commercial developments, and other developments which provide public access.

Agriculture in Okanogan County largely exists on or near the shoreline due to proximity to water and soil composition important to the types of agriculture here. The SMP provisions are not intended to modify or limit existing agricultural uses and activities occurring on agricultural lands.

Okanogan County's SMP was updated in June 2018. Shorelines of the state governed by the Okanogan County SMP are mapped in the SMP Environment Designations Mapbook, included as an appendix to this Comprehensive Plan.

5.2.1 Shoreline Master Program Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives from the most current Okanogan County Shoreline Master Program are incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by reference and included in the Appendix of this document.

5.3 Water Resource Inventory Areas

Okanogan County has seven (7) different Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA), of which five (5) are located only partially within the County. WRIA 50 (Foster) and WRIA 52 (Sanpoil) are located partially within the boundary of the Colville Indian Reservation. WRIA 51 (Nespelem) is located completely within the boundary of the Colville Indian Reservation. WRIA 60 (Kettle) is located partially within Ferry County. WRIA 47 (Chelan) has a very small portion located within Okanogan County. WRIA 48 (Methow) and 49 (Okanogan) are located completely within Okanogan County.

WRIA 48 has a watershed plan adopted in 2005. The watershed council is now working on the implementation phase of the plan. WRIA 48 has an instream flow rule that regulates water withdrawals.⁴ Areas that are in hydraulic continuity with closed surface waters are closed to further appropriation. Seven (7) reaches have a two (2) cfs set-aside for single domestic and stock use, that has priority over the instream flows. Currently, the County is working on a well tracking system to monitor consumptive water usage against the two (2) cfs set-aside.

WRIA 49 has an instream flow rule that regulates water withdrawals.⁵ WRIA 49 has a watershed plan that was developed in 2009. The legislature enacted Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6091, codified under Chapter 90.94 RCW (“Streamflow Restoration Act”), which required an addendum to this plan evaluating consumptive use of permit exempt wells and the offsets necessary for those uses including net ecological benefit. The Streamflow Restoration Act allowed wells for new domestic permit-exempt withdrawals while a watershed plan addendum was developed. The addendum was completed in October 2020 and addresses development impacts and mitigation strategies through 2038.

5.3.1 Water Resource Inventory Area Goals and Objectives

Goal WR-1: Make a clear, conscious connection between watershed planning and land use planning in Okanogan County.

When land use, water use, and other community decisions are made they should be made with the full weight of all plans ensuring that the use is compatible in all plans.

⁴⁴ WAC 173-548.

⁵ WAC 173-549.

Objectives:

- WR-1.1** Utilize existing and future information and current scientific information to identify areas where water is legally and physically available; use the Comprehensive Plan and zoning to direct development to such areas to avoid over development elsewhere.
- WR-1.2** Give substantial attention and weight to municipal water needs where it is demonstrated that water conservation is being practiced, where growth is planned and concentrated in an effort to control sprawl, and where utility and infrastructure planning and investments are evident.
- WR-1.3** Acknowledge that agricultural lands will be converted to other uses. The conversion of agricultural land to other activities results in different demand on water supply. Options should be pursued to keep those lands that are not identified for such conversion in viable agricultural production.
- WR-1.4** Acknowledge that climate change is reducing the water stored in snow packs and pursue mitigation strategies that avoid future water shortages.
- WR-1.5** Continue to develop detailed data for water resources in all portions of the watershed to determine and address the impacts that may be posed by continued incremental growth in rural lands.
- WR-1.6** Participate in water planning activities in British Columbia where most of the flow in WRIA 49 originates.

Goal WR-2: Conduct further study of aquifers in WRIA 48 and WRIA 49 and other applicable water resource inventory areas.

Due to the geology of Okanogan County, aquifers differ greatly in the amount of water they can store and transmit. While a number of studies have been conducted, no definitive study in either WRIA 48 or WRIA 49 accurately measures or models the carrying capacity of any aquifer.

Objectives:

- WR-2.1** Okanogan County will seek funding made available to further study the carrying capacity of groundwater aquifers and the rate at which they are recharged by precipitation.

Goal WR-3: Protect the water supply for existing and future uses.

Note: Nothing in this section shall be construed in a manner that impairs an existing legal right to withdraw groundwater or divert surface water for beneficial use.

Objectives:

- WR-3.1** To ensure consistency with this Comprehensive Plan, review of the Zone Code and other development regulations should consider, increase and improve the data that is available in terms of available water supplies in any given area. This, coupled with considerations such as access to the transportation and power grid, geologic hazard areas, frequently flooded areas, proximity to services, etc., should inform the zone designations and the intensity and type of development allowed into areas best able to support it.
- WR-3.2** Okanogan County recognizes the importance of groundwater supplies to the economic well-being of the area. Every effort will be made to make groundwater available for beneficial use within the constraints of the law.
- WR-3.3** Okanogan County will consider opportunities to improve/create environmentally responsible surface or groundwater storage of water provided by periods of high-water flow to enhance groundwater supplies and to augment in-stream flow of surface waters during seasonal low water periods.
- WR-3.4** Okanogan County will support the formation of water banks in areas where feasible to mitigate for water uses from groundwater wells exempt from permitting in accordance with RCW 90.44.050 as well as creating the opportunity for those seeking to obtain a water supply of sufficient seniority to minimize the potential for interruption due to low in-stream flows or impairment of senior water rights.
- WR-3.5** Okanogan County will continue to utilize data developed by various sources of consumptive water use.
- WR-3.6** Okanogan County will actively participate with all agencies with jurisdiction in controlling the illegal diversion of surface water and illegal withdrawal of groundwater.
- WR-3.7** Encourage further study of areas where physical availability of water is limited and development of policies for future growth.
- WR-3.8** Support water mitigation measures including infrastructure projects that improve instream flows, fish and wildlife habitat, and human use.
- WR-3.9** Support analysis of water bank options where instream resources are exhausted and where there are concerns over legal and physical availability of water.
- WR-3.10** Encourage the development of educational material to explain water quality and availability issues.
- WR-3.11** Continue consultation with the Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, Tribal treaty resource managers, and watershed

planning units to address water quantity and quality including instream flows.

Goal WR-4: Protect water quality.

Objectives:

- WR-4.1** Use existing and future information and studies regarding aquifer recharge and other sensitive areas to inform future policy (for example, the Methow Watershed Plan and the Okanogan Watershed Plan).
- WR-4.2** Implement development regulations to manage stormwater to protect water and habitat resources, protect private and public property and infrastructure, and protect public safety, health, and welfare.
- WR-4.3** Support and, when feasible, sponsor water quality education programs that inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues and ramifications.
- WR-4.4** Support data collection for water quality.
- WR-4.5** Support the development of a clearing and grading ordinance to protect water quality and habitat resources.
- WR-4.6** Encourage and support future and ongoing water quality monitoring programs.
- WR-4.7** Encourage enforcement of water quality violations that affect rivers, lakes, and streams.
- WR-4.8** Encourage working with Okanogan County Public Health on the development of policies for onsite septic systems near critical aquifer recharge areas.

Goal WR-5: Protect instream flow water resources.

Objectives:

- WR-5.1** Encourage development of internal policies for the implementation of instream flow rules Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-548 and 173-549.
- WR-5.2** Continue the ongoing development and implementation of well tracking software to help quantify the consumptive use in WRIA 48 and WRIA 49.
- WR-5.3** Encourage the evaluation of the impacts of future population growth on instream flows in WRIA 48 and WRIA 49.

5.4 Water Rights

Okanogan County acknowledges that the State of Washington’s responsible management of water resources includes issuing the right to use water put to beneficial use, as well as protecting instream resources. Okanogan County and Washington State adhere to western water law principle of “first in time, first in right”, which protects in full senior water right holders from impairment by junior appropriators. A water right put to a beneficial use, including a temporary dedication to in-stream flow, should be protected from relinquishment to the state.⁶

Okanogan County further recognizes that keeping the right to use water within Okanogan County is critical to its economic health. Okanogan County encourages water right holders to consider all other options to protect their water rights.

5.4.1 Water Rights Goals and Objectives

Goal WT-1: Protect water rights.

Objectives:

- WT-1.1** Okanogan County will attempt to create incentive-based programs to encourage holders of water rights to use them in the County. Such programs might include:
- a. Water banking.
 - b. Density bonuses as adopted in a Performance Based Density Bonus that promotes the use of water in the County or promotes the transfer of water for use in the County.
 - c. Seeking funding for the acquisition of water rights for water banking purposes.
 - d. Where water rights within the County have been lost through relinquishment, support the reappropriation of such water by third parties for use within Okanogan County.
 - e. Review and minimize the impacts caused by the transfer of water outside of the County. This statement should not be construed in any manner to imply any interference with the owner’s right to sell their water right to any buyer.

5.5 Wildfire

Wildfire is becoming a natural part of Okanogan County’s climate and environment. Unfortunately, changes in the climate are making wildfires more frequent and larger. More houses are being built in areas with a high risk of wildfire. These changes mean that wildfires are a serious and growing problem in Okanogan County. The County is still recovering from the catastrophic 2014 Carlton Complex and 2015 Okanogan

⁶ 1917 Washington Water Law “Prior Appropriation Doctrine.”

Complex Fires. The Carlton Complex Fire burned 256,108 acres. The complex destroyed 353 homes in Okanogan County. The Okanogan Complex Fire burned over 304,782 acres, forcing evacuations of numerous towns. The County has more recently experienced the devastation of the Cold Springs and Pearl Hill Fires that destroyed approximately a combined 413,673 acres.

5.5.1 Wildfire Goals and Objectives

Goal WF-1: Protect life and property in Okanogan County from fire hazards.

Objectives:

- WF-1.1** Promote best practices in structural fire resistance design for new construction.
- WF-1.2** Encourage cluster developments to reduce the wildland urban interface areas.
- WF-1.3** Review county road standards to require defensible ingress and egress roadways constructed to adequate standards to allow the passage of firefighting equipment and other emergency vehicles. After development of the road is reviewed and accepted it is up to the landowner to maintain the road to that standard.
- WF-1.4** Encourage where feasible the undergrounding of electrical utilities to reduce their exposure to fire.
- WF-1.5** Encourage, where feasible, that new developments in high-risk areas include secondary egress.
- WF-1.6** Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland urban interface.
- WF-1.7** Develop required plat note on new subdivision proposals stating “This property is in a high wildfire risk area. If there is not adequate ingress/egress and defensible space, fire fighter safety shall be prioritized over protection of property”.
- WF-1.8** Support programs available for firesafe communities’ i.e. Fire Wise etc.
- WF-1.9** Support increased science-based forest resource management for fire resiliency.
- WF-1.10** Support responsible science-based shrub-steppe management for fire resiliency.
- WF-1.11** Promote post fire rehabilitation and flood mitigation.
- WF-1.12** Provide educational materials on fire safe construction and landscaping.
- WF-1.13** Encourage and support the education of property owners and new developers on creating defensible spaces and using fire wise designs to protect their homes.
- WF-1.14** Promote working towards providing a land use pattern that reduces the risk of wildfire ignitions, is manageable for wildland fire fighting agencies, protects life and property, and does not interfere with science-based and sustainable fire management in forest lands, shrub-steppe areas, and other lands.

WF-1.15 Encourage programs to lessen the impacts of smoke on the human environment.

5.6 Critical Areas

The legislature of the state of Washington has in Chapter 36.70A RCW mandated each county (including those that are not otherwise obligated to comply with the GMA) to designate critical areas and adopt development regulations that protect these areas pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170. The protection measures shall be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan adopted pursuant to chapter 36.70 RCW.

“Critical Areas” include the following:

Wetlands

“Wetlands” are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland sites, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. However, wetlands may include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland areas to mitigate conversion of wetlands, if permitted by the county or city.⁷

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

"Critical aquifer recharge areas" are areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water, or is susceptible to reduced recharge.⁸

Frequently Flooded Areas

"Frequently flooded areas" are lands in the flood plain subject to at least a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, or within areas subject to flooding due to high groundwater. These areas include, but are not limited to, streams, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, wetlands, and areas where high groundwater forms ponds on the ground surface.⁹

⁷ WAC 365-190-030(22).

⁸ WAC 365-190-030(3).

⁹ WAC 365-190-030(8).

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas

"Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas" are areas that serve a critical role in sustaining needed habitats and species for the functional integrity of the ecosystem, and which, if altered, may reduce the likelihood that the species will persist over the long term. These areas may include, but are not limited to, rare or vulnerable ecological systems, communities, and habitat or habitat elements including seasonal ranges, breeding habitat, winter range, and movement corridors; and areas with high relative population density or species richness. Counties and cities may also designate locally important habitats and species.¹⁰ Reference locally developed existing habitat and species studies.

Geologically Hazardous Areas

"Geologically hazardous areas" are areas that because of their susceptibility to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events, are not suited to siting commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns. Projects will need additional engineering requirements and possibly studies.¹¹ This includes debris flows.

5.6.1 Critical Area Goals and Objectives

Goal CA-1: Promote public health, safety and welfare, economic and environmental well-being in the County for present and future citizens by identifying and protecting critical areas.

Objectives:

- CA-1.1** In designating and protecting critical areas, include the best available science in developing Objectives and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas.
- CA-1.2** Provide technical assistance and education to applicants and interested parties on critical areas and applicable regulations.
- CA-1.3** Prepare materials which enable citizens to clearly understand the location of critical areas on and adjacent to their property, what obligations, rights, and opportunities they have regarding those critical areas and how those critical areas affect future land use management practices and options.
- CA-1.4** Provide methods to avoid, minimize, and mitigate, when addressing critical areas, including innovative techniques such as wetland banking, vegetation management, clustered development, planned unit development, replacement ratios, density limitations, and enhancement option.

¹⁰ WAC 365-190-030(6)(a).

¹¹ WAC 365-190-030(9).

CA-1.5 Reference WDFW Priority Habitat and Species data and maps for information on location of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

Goal CA-2: Recognize the importance of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas while at the same time working towards a balance between preservation of those lands and the continuation of agriculture, forestry, mining and managed growth.

Objectives:

CA-2.1 Balance the regulation of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas with the needs of existing resource activities (agriculture, grazing, forestry, and mining).

CA-2.2 Support continued participation in the Voluntary Stewardship Program for protection and enhancement of critical areas and maintenance and promotion of agricultural viability

CA-2.3 Give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

CA-2.4 Support the purchase of conservation easements or fee simple purchase of land by private or public agencies where critical areas regulation has significantly reduced the value of the property and/or the ability of the landowner to lawfully use the property.

Goal CA-3: Utilize floodplain planning to protect human life and health as well as the riparian ecosystem in order to minimize public and private economic losses and expenditures related to flood control and to protect and preserve wildlife habitat.

Objectives:

CA-3.1 Reference Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the 100-year floodplain and manage these areas through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

CA-3.2 Utilize historical knowledge of areas outside Flood Insurance Rate Maps that have flooded in the past when designating frequently flooded areas.

CA-3.3 Reference the most current Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan as amended.

CA-3.4 Reference the most current soil types and channel migration zones.

Goal CA-4: Reduce the threat posed to the health and safety of citizens that could occur when development is sited in areas of significant geologic hazard.

Objective:

CA-4.1 Implement development regulations that minimize risk to the public health safety, and welfare in areas of significant geologic hazard.

Goal CA-5: Ensure an adequate, safe water supply through the protection of both the quantity and quality of ground and surface water for a variety of beneficial uses such as public consumption, agriculture, industry, and habitat protection.

Objectives:

- CA-5.1** Implement development regulations to manage stormwater to protect water and habitat resources, protect private and public property and infrastructure, and protect public safety, health, and welfare.
- CA-5.2** Support and when feasible sponsor water quality education programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues, and ramifications.

Goal CA-6: Protect aquifer recharge areas.

Objectives:

- CA-6.1** Implement development regulations to include siting requirements for land use which assist in the protection of groundwater aquifer recharge and protection of existing and future groundwater supplies.
- CA-6.2** Limit impervious surfaces on lands that are classified as having a high or moderate potential recharge and identify these areas in zoning overlay maps.
- CA-6.3** Encourage the development of regulations that protect water quality and the availability of potable water.
- CA-6.4** Encourage restoration of contaminated ground water resources.

Goal CA-7: Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Objectives:

- CA-7.1** Encourage restoration of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas that have been degraded.
- CA-7.2** Encourage voluntary restoration and enhancement of fish and wildlife conservation areas.
- CA-7.3** Encourage the development of policies to require dredging and filling activities to minimize the introduction of suspended solids, leaching of contaminants, or habitat disturbance.
- CA-7.4** Encourage the incorporation of recommendations in Endangered Species Recovery Plans.
- CA-7.5** Support Ridgetop to River Restoration of Salmon Habitat.
- CA-7.6** Encourage deer passable fencing in Mule Deer Migration areas.

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- CA-7.7** Encourage the development of educational materials using native plants in landscape design.
- CA-7.8** Support the continuing education regarding noxious weeds and prevention.
- CA-7.9** Continue to engage tribal treaty resource managers about important habitats and ecosystem functions that need protection to sustain tribal treaty resources such as fish and wildlife.

6 Land Use Element

6.1 Introduction

The Land Use Element provides a broad framework for future development in Okanogan County. This Comprehensive Plan, in part, develops strategies on how new growth should occur in an orderly manner to accommodate population growth while protecting the County's resources. Okanogan County is large in size and varied in topography and climate. For these reasons, lands will exhibit great differences in terms of their ability to support residential densities and other land uses. The ability to support density and permitted/conditional uses will be affected by other required regulations, such as the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Shoreline Master Program.

Over 57% of the land in Okanogan County is owned by Federal and State Agencies. Over 20% of Okanogan County is within the boundaries of the Colville Indian Reservation and therefore outside of the direct planning and permitting authority of the County with the exception of deeded fee lands. Of the remaining less than 23% of the land mass, it is estimated that 5% is not suitable for development due to topography and other critical area features. This land also supports the agricultural and natural resource-based activities that are important to the local economy. The remaining land mass must provide the inventory of land necessary to provide for residential, industrial, and commercial needs both in and out of the incorporated cities and towns. The land use designations used in the Comprehensive Plan must recognize these needs while avoiding incompatible uses.

6.2 Land Use Designations

The Planning Enabling Act requires that the Land Use Element designate the proposed general distribution and extent of land uses in the County to direct population densities, building intensity, and future population growth. The Comprehensive Plan includes five land use designations: Rural, Neighborhood Commercial Center, Agricultural Resource, Forest Resource, and Mineral Resource. Table 4 summarizes the land area within each designation.

Land Use Designation	Area (acres)	Percent of County acreage (%)
Rural	135,795	4
Neighborhood Commercial Center	5,762	0.2
Agricultural Resource	734,852	22
Forest Resource	1,825,120	54
Mineral Resource	849	0

Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan identifies Unincorporated Towns and More Completely Planned Areas as overlays to the land use designations. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan adopts the City Expansion Areas developed together with incorporated cities in the County.

Map 1 shows the distribution and extent of the land use designations and overlays in the County.

6.3 General Land Use Goals and Objectives

Goal LU-1: Direct and manage development that is orderly, resource conscious, and fiscally responsible.

Objectives:

- LU-1.1** Guide future growth and development by defining appropriate land uses and densities.
- LU-1.2** Land use designations within rural lands must provide sufficient land for housing and business activities suitable to the rural areas. These designations must be compatible with physical and legally available water supplies, capacity of the area for on-site septic, and the ability to provide adequate levels of public services.
- LU-1.3** Support existing and ongoing affordable housing studies and use that information to address housing shortage issues.

Goal LU-2: Support continuance of farming, ranching, mining, and logging for the production of food, fiber and minerals in rural areas.

Objectives:

- LU-2.1** Encourage enrollment in the Voluntary Stewardship program.
- LU-2.2** Encourage affordable housing to address the need for farmworkers and allow farmworker housing as a permitted use in Agricultural and other appropriate zones.
- LU-2.3** Okanogan County should protect agriculture from the impact of incompatible uses by utilizing appropriate land use designations and effective review processes.

6.4 Rural Lands

6.4.1 Purpose

The objective of the rural designation is to provide an adequate inventory of land for residential and other uses while avoiding unnecessary conflicts. Lands in the rural designation will contain the greatest mix of existing and potential uses because of the tremendous diversity of these lands. A wide range of compatible uses should be considered with reliance on the underlying zoning to ensure compatibility of proposed activities in regard to existing uses and historical characteristics of the neighboring area. Comprehensive review of land use proposals is used to identify probable impacts and to

ensure compatibility with existing and/or planned activities to prevent conflicts. The objective of zoning in the rural designation is to provide an effective mix of land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, tourist, and recreational opportunities.

Lot sizes, setbacks, height restrictions, and other considerations will be specifically addressed in the underlying zone regulation, subdivision regulation, and other regulation as appropriate. The lot sizes and overall density allowed in underlying zoning should consider the following criteria:

- Proximity to transportation system
- Proximity to city centers
- Availability of potable water supplies and water delivery systems and sewer systems.
- Availability of fire protection, police, and other emergency services

Minimum lot size should be sufficient to allow compliance with on-site sewage disposal and the protection of potable water sources. Lots in areas served by a sanitary sewer system, and so designated by the Board of County Commissioners, will be required to be served by the sewer system.

6.4.2 Designation Criteria

In the course of comprehensive planning, the County specifically identifies and designates city expansion areas and resource lands. Incorporated city limits are established by law and fall under the jurisdiction of the legislative bodies of those cities and towns. Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers are residential and commercial centers located in Okanogan County that are not incorporated cities. All other lands are designated rural.

Okanogan County is large in size and varied in topography and climate. For these reasons, lands in the rural designation will exhibit great differences in terms of their ability to support residential density and other land use activities. Underlying zoning and/or the review processes that support and implement this Plan must be established with consideration for the ability of the land to support the proposed land use activity.

The ability of lands in the rural designation to support density and permitted/conditional uses will be further affected by other bodies of required regulation such as the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Shoreline Master Program. These factors must be taken into account when the adequacy of land in the rural designation is reviewed.

6.4.3 Rural Designation Goals and Objectives

Goal RU-1: Residential uses are consistent with the Rural designation.

Objectives:

- RU-1.1** Improve and Update the Zone Code to guide and manage density influence on Rural Lands.
- RU-1.2** Encourage proximity to city centers, schools and transportation systems for greater densities.
- RU-1.3** Legal and physical water supplies will guide development locations and densities.
- RU-1.4** Minimum lot size shall be adequate to provide land for septic and well installations without cross contamination.
- RU-1.5** Utilizing available sewer systems is encouraged when possible and may be required in specific areas.
- RU-1.6** Future densities depend upon the proximity and availability of fire protection, police, medical emergency services.
- RU-1.7** Residential densities shall reflect the need for adequate farmworker housing in proximity to employment and housing sites for those seeking a rural lifestyle.

Goal RU-2: Economic diversity is best achieved by a mix of agriculture and resource-based activities, with recreational, tourism, commercial and industrial activities in a rural setting.

Objectives:

- RU-2.1** Acknowledge agricultural activities, including value-added processing, warehousing and shipping, along with other related resource activities as the historic method for diversity in rural economy.
- RU-2.2** Encourage ag-tourism and on-site wine-tasting, and family businesses to develop.
- RU-2.3** Acknowledge that families are the traditional occupants of rural businesses and encourage their ability to continue from generation to generation.
- RU-2.4** Allow permitted and conditional uses that are compatible and appropriate to existing uses.

6.5 Resource Lands

Designation criteria, goals, and objectives for resource land designations are found in Chapter 7, Resource Lands Element.

6.6 Unincorporated Towns and Neighborhood Commercial Centers

6.6.1 Purpose

Unincorporated towns are residential and commercial centers located in Okanogan County that are not incorporated cities. The County recognizes the important role they play as service centers and focal points for the surrounding neighborhoods. The area within the designation should provide sufficient land to provide needed local goods and services.

Neighborhood commercial centers, in the form of unincorporated villages, exist throughout the County and will become more important as population increases. The existing mix of agricultural and resource-based activities, recreation, and tourism should be recognized for the diversity it provides to the economic base. A mix of residential densities should be allowed to provide an adequate inventory of housing sites for those seeking a rural lifestyle and to provide worker housing in proximity to employment providers.

Future expansion of the unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers will be based upon the needs of the residents and the ability of the area to provide services.

This Comprehensive Plan for Okanogan County recognizes the following unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers and establishes goals and objectives for their future planning and development:

- Methow
- Carlton
- Malott
- Loomis
- Wauconda
- Chesaw
- Molson
- Ellisforde
- Mazama

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- Monse
- Nighthawk
- Havillah

6.6.2 Designation Criteria

Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers should be designated and developed based on the following criteria:

- Existence of services such as neighborhood retail, tourist retail, and government services.
- Existence of more intense residential development than the surrounding areas.
- Historical value as past settlement with existing tourist activities.
- Ability to support more intense development.

6.6.3 Unincorporated Towns and Neighborhood Commercial Centers Goals and Objectives

Goal UN-1: Manage residential expansion areas around unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers while maintaining rural character while protecting water quality and quantity.

Objectives:

- UN-1.1** Protect water quality by increasing lot size adjacent to and outside of platted unincorporated towns.
- UN-1.2** County road counts, availability of fire suppression, and emergency services shall be considered in allowing of more intense density development.
- UN-1.3** Encourage agriculture, logging and mining which are considered permitted uses in Rural Residential Lands.

Goal UN-2: Create a pathway to allow future Neighborhood Commercial Centers to meet local needs of area residents.

Objectives:

- UN-2.1** Encourage the establishment of services, such as neighborhood retail, tourist retail, and governmental services.
- UN-2.2** Encourage the establishment of more intense residential development than the surrounding area.
- UN-2.3** Establish the existence of tourist activities in the settlement with historical value.

- UN-2.4** Establish the ability to support a more intense development.
- UN-2.5** Establish the existence of adequate roads, water, sewage/septic, power, fire suppression, and internet to support a more intense development.

6.6.4 Future Neighborhood Commercial Centers:

Due to the vast size of Okanogan County, it is important to locate necessary services in proximity to the residents. Settlement patterns will be driven by expansion of agriculture, forestry, and mining in rural areas in addition to expansion of tourism. New service centers should be considered to minimize impacts to the transportation system brought about by longer trips to obtain basic services.

The unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers also serve as focal points for area residents providing for a sense of community. The demand for new neighborhood commercial centers will be created by the needs of the area residents and landowners.

Proposals for new neighborhood commercial centers should be reviewed in accordance with the designation criteria and general planning objectives identified above in this section.

6.7 City Expansion Areas

6.7.1 Purpose

Okanogan County and the cities and towns therein, recognize that a cooperative effort between local governments is needed to effectively and efficiently serve the needs of the citizens. The City Expansion Area (CEA) designation is used to identify those lands into which the city or town intends to grow through a twenty-year planning window. The objectives and procedures contained in this Comprehensive Plan, supplemented by intergovernmental agreements as needed, are designed to give clear direction for the process to designate, review, and amend CEAs. Subsequent project review and land use decisions, while under the sole authority of the County until such times as the lands annex, are carried out in accordance with the agreed upon processes.

The adoption of agreed upon CEAs into the County Comprehensive Plan accomplishes two specific goals. Cities and towns have the ability to plan infrastructure and service requirements for a specific growth area. The city or town can propose pre-annexation designations to promote a predictable growth pattern, efficient extension of infrastructure, and to ensure sufficient inventory of land for residential, commercial, and other development. The County can incorporate into the Comprehensive Plan the city or town proposed use of the CEA. This allows the County to accurately analyze the inventory of land available for uses best suited to densely populated areas and to coordinate uses in the rural areas accordingly.

6.7.2 Designation Criteria

Requests for specific CEAs, and any amendments thereto, will be processed by the Planning Commission as amendments to this Plan. Only the municipalities shall propose CEA boundaries, as municipalities must plan for the eventual provision of city services and potential annexation of these areas. In reviewing proposals for CEA designation, the municipality should consider the following factors in considering a proposed map change:

- Current inventory of developable land in the incorporated boundaries.
- Inventory of land necessary to provide for projected growth including affordable housing.
- Analysis of ability to provide sewer, water, and other public services to designated CEA.
- Benefits and impacts to existing resource and recreational activities.

Only the affected municipality may propose amendments to the designated CEA. Landowners in or adjoining the CEA must petition the affected municipality to present their request for amendment. Review of proposed amendments shall consider the designation criteria above.

6.7.3 Implementation

The County has the sole authority for land use and project review on lands within the CEA but outside the incorporated boundary. The County, in considering an application for land use/development in the CEA, shall consider the following:

- Compatibility with any sub-designations by the municipality within the CEA.
- Impact of the project or proposal on municipal services.
- Compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Impact of the project or proposal on the municipal transportation system.

6.7.4 City Expansion Areas Goals and Objectives

Goal CE-1: Coordination and cooperation between local governments.

Objectives:

- CE-1.1** Encourage cooperation and coordination efforts between local governments to effectively and efficiently serve the needs of citizens of Okanogan County.

- CE-1.2** Encourage coordinated planning efforts to identify lands that a city or town intends to expand into through the next 20-year planning window.
- CE-1.3** Encourage intergovernmental agreements to give clear direction for a process to designate, review, and amend city expansion areas.
- CE-1.4** Encourage cities and towns to plan for future infrastructure and service growth into a specific identified area.

6.8 More Completely Planned Areas:

6.8.1 Purpose

It is the intent of the County to ensure the updated Comprehensive Plan remains responsive to the wide range of landscapes and demographics within the County's borders. To reflect these differences, the County may create and adopt More Completely Planned Areas (MCPA) to help inform development regulations such as Zoning and Subdivision Codes. Since 1971, Okanogan County has utilized MCPA Plans to provide for land use planning at a sub-area scale, and will consider the creation of new MCPAs in the future as deemed appropriate and necessary to most effectively reflect the desires of the communities which comprise Okanogan County.

The goals and policies developed within a MCPA Plan adopted by the County shall apply **only** to the geographic area of the MCPA as the Board of County Commissioners has defined its geographic boundaries at the time of MCPA Plan adoption. The content of MCPA Plans shall not be applied outside of the area for which it has been created and adopted.

Two existing MCPAs— the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area and the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A— were adopted as part of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. Prior to readoption of these plans, they will be revised after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the land use designations and goals and policies within the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area and the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A are compatible with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

6.8.2 Designation Criteria

The geographic boundaries of a MCPA shall be determined by the Board of County Commissioners after consideration of the following:

- Logical natural and physical boundaries (highways, other MCPA planning area boundaries, watersheds, etc.);
- Landowner interest;

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- Community identification within the MCPA; and
- Other factors as may be identified by the County and deemed important in providing for logical land use planning areas.

6.8.3 More Completely Planned Areas Goals and Objectives

Goal MP-1: Foster joint planning efforts at a community advisory level.

Objectives:

- MP-1.1** Encourage the community advisory groups to continue their planning efforts.
- MP-1.2** Ensure cooperation and coordination between Okanogan County and MCPA Advisory Committees.

6.8.4 Future More Completely Planned Areas

Future MCPAs may be established by the County Commissioners.

A diverse Advisory Committee of individuals owning property within the proposed MCPA shall lead MCPA planning efforts. The County Commissioners shall appoint Advisory Committee members after a publicly advertised recruitment period.

All future MCPA Plan development processes shall provide for properly advertised public meetings to be hosted by the Advisory Committee, in coordination with the Okanogan County Planning Department, to provide opportunities for general public participation.

Draft MCPA Plans shall be forwarded to the Planning Commission with a recommendation from the MCPA Advisory Committee and shall be processed in accordance with the County's process for Comprehensive Plan amendments. At a minimum, MCPA Plans shall include the elements required for Comprehensive Plans under RCW 36.70.330 but not exceed the requirements of the Planning Enabling Act or those portions of the GMA applicable to non-GMA counties.

7 Resource Lands Element

7.1 Introduction

Agriculture and forestry are the major economic generators for the county and are the foundation for the region. In 2019, agriculture, forestry, and fishing accounted for over 26 percent of total covered employment.¹² The Resource Lands Element provides a framework for designation, use, and protection of resource lands in the county, including Agricultural Resource Lands, Forest Resource Lands, and Mineral Resource Lands. Within each designation, the primary and preferred uses are the growing, managing, harvesting or extracting, and processing of natural resources.

7.2 Agricultural Resource Lands

Agricultural land means land primarily devoted to or important for the long-term commercial production of horticultural, viticulture, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees not subject to the excise tax imposed by RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, finfish in upland hatcheries, or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production. Lands designated cannot be characterized by urban growth. The land must be capable of being used for agricultural production based on its physical and geographic characteristics.

The location of agriculture has been strongly influenced by the construction of irrigation facilities. Cultivated agriculture and orchards in Okanogan County are heavily concentrated in and around the valley floors, while grazing lands are located along many of the hillsides. Many forested portions of the County that are mostly state and federal lands are leased out for summer pasture.

7.2.1 Purpose

The intent of Okanogan County's agricultural resource land use category is to implement the GMA planning goal related to maintaining and enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes productive agricultural industries. This category is intended to preserve, stabilize, and enhance the primary agricultural land base which is being used for, or offers the greatest potential for, continued production of agricultural products and harvesting. The agricultural resource land use category carries out this goal by establishing a variety of zones in which agriculture is a permitted use. Residential development in the agricultural resource land use category may also be allowed per underlying zoning, which is assigned in accordance with the ability of an area to support potable water supply and on-site sewage as well as proximity to the transportation grid.

¹² Washington Employment Security Department, September 2021.

Zone designations that support agricultural activities and encourage larger lot sizes should be considered for lands in the agricultural resource designation. Where residential development is allowed and there is a demonstrated legal and physical water supply, smaller lots and/or higher density developments that utilize a clustering approach are preferred in order to maximize retention of agricultural land. Smaller lots and/or higher densities may be allowed in subdivisions that utilize a clustering approach and that have a demonstrated legal and physical water supply.

7.2.2 Designation Criteria

Agricultural resource lands are designated using primary soil classifications and current land use. WAC 365-190-050(1) states that in classifying and designating agricultural resource lands, counties must approach the effort as a county-wide or area-wide process. Counties should not review resource lands designations solely on a parcel-by-parcel process. Reviews on a county-wide or area-wide basis must meet the agricultural resource land mapping criteria which includes:

- 1) Generally, meets criteria for agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance as defined by state laws and regulations.
 - a) May contain prime soils according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service.
 - b) May include "pockets" of non-agricultural land uses.
 - c) May contain high-value crops; specifically, tree fruits, vineyards, and specialty field crops.
 - d) May include a variety of residential uses related to agricultural activities including farm worker housing and family farm dwellings.
 - e) May include compatible uses such as the marketing of regional agricultural products from one or more producers; the production, marketing and distribution of value-added agricultural products; or packing and cold storage plants.
 - f) May include non-agricultural accessory uses or activities as long as they are consistent with the size, scale and intensity of the existing agricultural use on a property.
- 2) Lands located within an irrigation district and receiving water.
- 3) Lands where dryland farming, pasture or grazing outside of irrigation districts is predominant.
- 4) Lands enrolled in one of the current use assessment programs.
- 5) Lands located outside established city expansion areas.
- 6) Criteria for de-designating agricultural resource lands shall follow the "Agricultural Resource De-Designation Analytical Process" found below. The agricultural resource de-designation criteria will be used for plan amendments and updates to change a land use from Agricultural Resource to another land use designation. The agricultural de-designation process shall not apply when re-designating agricultural resource lands to some other Resource Land designation.
- 7) Soils considered to be an agricultural resource of long-term commercial significance are primarily those soils listed as "Prime" in the WEB Soil Survey of Okanogan County dated September 7, 2017. This list of soils, however, does not include similar soils as those listed as Prime that are located on slopes with a gradient higher than

2 degrees. Slopes with a gradient up to and including 15 degrees are considered suitable for growing tree fruit and grapes based on good drainage and the ability for cold air to fall down gradient. The limiting factor for slopes is one of safety when operating machinery.

Additional detail about application of the designation criteria is provided below.

Tax Status

Tax status indicates the current land use and tax rate being claimed by the property owner and reported by the Assessor. An inference can be made by looking at the current tax status as to the property owners' intent for the land. This intent alone cannot be considered when determining the appropriateness of the land for designation as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance, but may be another indicator of the possibility of a more intense use of the land. When the majority of the parcels within the study area have a tax status other than agriculture, then it is considered one factor for possible removal of the area from resource designation

Predominant Parcel Size

Larger parcels are thought to be more suitable for commercial agriculture. Areas with predominant parcel sizes of 5 acres or more that are in proximity to other lands that meet other designation criteria; such as soils and current use tax classification, should be considered for inclusion in the agricultural resource designation.

Availability of Public Facilities

Of the list of various public facilities provided by the County and Cities, roads, sewer and water are the three whose presence could possibly add pressure to develop land at a higher use. These facilities can be mapped and evaluated for their proximity to agricultural lands and a determination as to the effect this proximity would have regarding pressure to develop. Water and sewer are normally confined to the city and its city expansion area although sewer and water systems do exist outside of incorporated cities and their expansion areas.

Proximity to the City Expansion Area

Parcels should be evaluated for their distance from a CEA. The further away from the CEA, the less influence it has on a parcel to develop at some higher use. No resource land should be designated within a CEA.

Land Use Settlement Patterns and Their Compatibility with Agricultural Practices and Intensity of Nearby Uses

Land use settlement patterns and the intensity of nearby uses provide similar information as proximity to urbanized areas in that they show residential or other development that may represent prohibitive impacts to commercial agriculture. These

developed areas outside of the city expansion areas require consideration for their potential impact to agriculture.

History of Land Development Permits Issued Nearby

The history of development permits issued nearby may also serve as evidence of pressure to develop at some higher use. A history of permitting activity is a way of looking at nearby permitting patterns, which may give an indication of future development activities.

Final Determination

A final assessment of a particular area's eligibility as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance is based on an analysis of the designation criteria, primarily soils and current use tax classification, along with surrounding lot sizes and densities and proximity to urban centers.

The Okanogan County Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map 1) identifies those areas designated as Agricultural Resource Lands. The map designations are directed by the above criteria but have been reconciled to parcel boundary lines.

7.2.3 De-Designation Criteria

WAC 190-365-050 clearly states that the agricultural resource mapping criteria is to be used on a county-wide or area-wide basis. Within the framework and guidelines established in WAC 190-365-050, the de-designation process will consider the following criteria for a site-specific determination of the suitability of the land remaining in the agricultural resource designation. The criteria to be considered are as follows:

- a) Soils
- b) Relationship or proximity to the CEA
- c) Predominant parcel size
- d) Changing climate or soil conditions such that the land no longer holds long term commercial significance for agriculture
- e) Changing crop markets and growing requirements the land can no longer be devoted primarily to agriculture hence no longer holds long term commercial significance for agriculture
- f) Topographic limitations
- g) Physical availability of irrigation water

7.2.4 Agricultural Lands Goals and Objectives

Goal AG-1: Agricultural lands will be preserved to the greatest extent possible for the extensive contribution to the economic viability of Okanogan County.

Objectives:

- AG-1.1** Encourage the protection of agriculture from the impact of incompatible uses by utilizing appropriate land use designations and zones and effective review processes.
- AG-1.2** Encourage the retention of agricultural lands and prevent haphazard growth into these areas.
- AG-1.3** Encourage the maintenance and viability of agricultural land.
- AG-1.4** Encourage the use of agricultural value assessment, open space designations, and/or other tax benefits that help retain the economic viability of farming practices.
- AG-1.5** Encourage farm-based businesses as accessory uses in agricultural areas that supplement farm income.
- AG-1.6** Encourage home-based occupations providing farm income.
- AG-1.7** Encourage Agri-tourism accessory uses.
- AG-1.8** Allow recreational activities and other commercial and/or industrial uses that can be conducted in a manner that results in no negative impacts to agricultural operations.
- AG-1.9** Encourage clustering of residential development in areas designated for agriculture, promoting a balance between future non-farm developments and protecting agricultural activities from incompatible uses.
- AG-1.10** Encourage preservation of agricultural land during land acquisition and conservation easements by keeping all or a portion in agricultural production.
- AG-1.11** Encourage enrollment in the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

7.3 Forest Lands

Forest resource lands are those areas primarily useful for growing trees for commercial purposes, including Christmas trees subject to the excise tax imposed under state law. In addition, stock grazing, farming, recreation and limited housing and commercial activities are accommodated as compatible uses. Forest resource lands also provide important fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and watershed and aquifer recharge areas.

7.3.1 Purpose

The intent of Okanogan County's forest resource land use category is to implement the planning goal of the GMA related to maintaining and enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes productive timber industries. This category is intended to preserve, stabilize, and enhance the primary forest land base which is being used for, or offers the greatest potential for, continued production of forest products and harvesting. The forest resource land use designation accomplishes this goal by establishing a productive minimum lot size (20 acres), and ensuring that residential use is secondary to commercial forestry. The category also protects productive forest lands from

incompatible uses by limiting the variety of uses permitted under current zoning and encouraging parcel reconfiguration where appropriate.

7.3.2 Designation Criteria

WAC 365-190-060 states that in classifying and designating forest resource lands, counties must approach the effort as a county-wide or regional process. Counties should not review forest resource lands designations solely on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The WAC further states that lands should be designated as forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance based on three factors: 1) the land is not already characterized by urban growth, 2) the land is used or capable of being used for forestry production, and 3) the land has long-term commercial significance. Those three factors are the basis for the Forest Resource Areas Mapping Criteria listed below.

- 1) Lands assessed as open space timber or forest land.
- 2) Lands located in an area where there is a predominance of the higher private forest land grades, as defined by the state Department of Revenue based on growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition.
- 3) Lands historically designated Forest Watershed.
- 4) Lands not located in or near the urban and suburban areas and rural settlements.
- 5) Lands with predominantly large (40 acres or greater) parcel sizes in the area.
- 6) Adjacent and nearby land use and settlement patterns and intensities are generally compatible with forest lands of long-term commercial significance.
- 7) Lands where public services and facilities conducive to the conversion of forest land are not available.
- 8) Lands that are not developing rapidly, as evidenced by few recent land development permits in the vicinity.

The Okanogan County Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map 1) identifies those areas designated as forest resource lands. The map designations are directed by the above criteria but have been reconciled to parcel boundary lines.

7.3.3 De-designation Criteria

- 1) Proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the land as indicated by the availability of public facilities, tax status, the availability of public services, relationship or proximity to urban growth areas, predominant parcel size, land use settlement patterns and their compatibility

with forest practices, intensity of nearby land uses, and the history of land development permits issued nearby.

- 2) Incompatibility of surrounding land uses with timber harvest activities.
- 3) Error was made in designation.
- 4) Due to changing climate or soil conditions, the land no longer holds long term commercial significance for timber production.
- 5) Due to changing markets and growing requirements, the land can no longer be devoted primarily to forest production and hence no longer holds long term commercial significance for timber production.

7.3.4 Forest Lands Goals and Objectives

Goal FL-1: Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries including timber industries.

Objectives:

- FL-1.1** Encourage management of land use activities within designated forest resource lands to minimize conflicts with forestry practices.
- FL-1.2** Support the maintenance of forest lands in timber and current use property tax classifications consistent with RCW 84.33 and 84.34.
- FL-1.3** Ensure forestry and related activities regulated by Okanogan County are conducted in a manner that will minimize their adverse impacts on water quality, habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas pursuant to County and state regulations.
- FL-1.4** Provide for resource use, particularly agricultural and timber uses, in rural, smallholding and remote areas.
- FL-1.5** Encourage local and regional infrastructure and/or manufacturing facilities that use or support forest products in proximity to forest resource lands.
- FL-1.6** Encourage innovative tools, such as limited subdivision of clustered small lots and conservation easements that enable families to plan for succession of their resource-based business.
- FL-1.7** Support Okanogan County participation in the Forest Health Collaborative.

Goal FL-2: Recognize the public benefits of forest resource lands including environmental, recreational, scenic beauty, habitat protection, and quality of life.

Objectives:

- FL-2.1** Accept multiple-use management of forestland to promote the primary use and provide for other compatible uses, including but not limited to tourism, recreation, grazing, and preservation of open space.
- FL-2.2** Work with state and federal agencies to improve recreational access on public lands.
- FL-2.3** Consider impacts to the timber industry when reviewing proposed recreation facilities near forest resource lands.
- FL-2.4** Okanogan County should promote the responsible harvest of forest products and the protection of these lands from incompatible uses. Okanogan County will require coordination from the public land managers (USFS, BLM, DNR, etc.) to create appropriate land use designations and effective management practices to further these goals.

7.4 Mineral Resource Lands

Mineral resource lands are those lands primarily devoted to or important for the long-term commercial production of mineral products. Areas designated as mineral resource lands comprise the mineral resource overlay. The mineral resource overlay is a land use designation that overlays an existing land use designation. The overlay designation provides protection from the encroachment of competing land uses by applying a buffer that places restrictions on adjacent properties. The existing or underlying land use designation is intended to remain in effect until such time that the area is rezoned to mining in anticipation of pending mining operations.

7.4.1 Purpose

The intent of Okanogan County's mineral resource overlay land use category is to implement the GMA planning goal related to maintaining and enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes commercially viable mineral resource industries. This category is intended to identify, preserve and protect the mineral resource land base, which is intended to be used for, or offers the greatest potential for, the continued production of aggregate products such as concrete or asphalt, while allowing the underlying land use to provide interim land use direction until such time that mineral extraction is permitted. The mineral resource overlay land use category carries out this goal by establishing a mining zone, which identifies review criteria, allowed uses, lot sizes, standards of operations and provisions for revisions.

Okanogan County's economic well-being depends upon the availability of mineral resource products specifically sand, gravel and bedrock materials. To keep pace with the market demand it is important for the residents and the economy of Okanogan County that at least a twenty-year supply of mineral resource areas be identified and protected with the mineral resource overlay designation.

7.4.2 Designation Criteria

The actual location (area of deposition) of the mineral resource is the primary factor in determining the future location of a mining site. Other factors that influence the location of a mineral resource area include: quality of the resource, volume of the resource, access suitability, the compatibility with existing or planned land uses, and the proximity to existing or planned market areas. The following designation/mapping criteria are based on WAC 365-190-070 – *Minimum Guidelines to Classify Agriculture, Forest and Mineral Resource Lands*.

1) Quality of the Mineral Resource

The quality and type of mineral resource at the potential site shall meet any of the following requirements

- a) The quality and type of the mineral resource must meet current and/or future project and/or project specifications.
- b) The quality and type of mineral resource must satisfy the market's current and/or future demands.
- c) The potential site must be within the DNR identified mineral resource lands.

2) Volume of the Resource

The volume of available mineral resource at the potential site shall meet the following requirements:

- a) The volume of available mineral resource at the potential site, on single or contiguous parcels, should be feasibly marketable by a mining operation to supply the surrounding market demands.

3) Access Suitability

The potential mineral resource site must have access or potential access to public and/or private roads that are suitable for truck traffic and/or are capable of supporting the level of expected traffic.

4) Compatibility with Present or Planned Land Use Patterns in the Area

General land use issues in the resource area to consider include:

- a) Surrounding parcel sizes and surrounding uses;
- b) Subdivision or zoning for urban or small lots;

- i) Designated mineral lands should not be located adjacent to any zoning district boundary that has a minimum lot size greater than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, where doing so would create a non-conforming setback distance.
- ii) Designated mineral resource lands should not be located in any zoning district that has a minimum lot size of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.
- c) Sites located in or adjacent to CEA boundaries;
 - i) Mineral resource lands should not be designated in existing CEAs.
- d) Proximity to essential public facilities (i.e. dams, bridges, etc.);
- e) Sites located within inconsistent zoning districts;
- f) Sites located within publicly owned lands;
- g) Sites located within other natural resource designated areas.

The potential site must be able to mitigate impacts on and/or to adjacent existing land uses.

The Okanogan County Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map 1) identifies those areas designated as mineral resource lands. The map designations are directed by the above criteria but have been reconciled to parcel boundary lines.

7.4.3 De-Designation Criteria

The de-designation of an area previously established as a mineral resource of long-term commercial significance should be considered when the resource has been exhausted and reclaimed in accordance with the reclamation plan approved by the State Department of Natural Resources; or in those limited situations where the County has obtained substantial evidence that the designated site is unsuitable for the mineral resource overlay designation. The re-classification of a land use designation underlying the mineral resource overlay should be approved after it has been determined that the proposed new land use designation is compatible with and will not preclude the availability of the mineral resource.

7.4.4 Mineral Lands Goals and Objectives:

Goal ML-1: Support local mineral lands as an important component of the County's economy.

Objectives:

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- ML-1.1** Maintain a sufficient amount of designated mineral resource sites close to existing and planned market areas to ensure low cost and available supplies of construction aggregate.
- ML-1.2** Ensure that mineral lands have suitable access and are sited to be compatible with home sites in the area.
- ML-1.3** Ensure access from mineral resource lands to adequate public and/or private roads to potentially lower the traffic related impacts to both the surrounding neighbors and the environment.
- ML-1.4** Maintain a sufficient amount of designated mineral resource sites close to existing and planned market areas to ensure low cost and available supplies of construction aggregate.

8 Recreation Element

8.1 Introduction

An outdoor recreation plan is an integral part of and usually included as a portion of the Parks and Recreation Element of a community's comprehensive planning program. In this case, the community is Okanogan County and this document reflects an update of the 2014 Okanogan County Parks and Recreation Element of the County Comprehensive Plan. The complete Recreation Plan is attached in the Appendix of this document. The Recreation Plan contains an inventory and description of existing public recreation facilities and opportunities. A few of these are summarized below:

- The North Okanogan has something for all outdoor enthusiasts. It includes the Many Lakes Region on the west side of the Okanogan River and the Okanogan Highlands on the east side. This area offers easily accessible lakes and trails, providing excellent fishing, hiking and camping (Okanogan County tourism Guide).
- The Methow Valley, located in the western portion of the County, is quickly becoming a destination for outdoor lovers and enthusiasts and includes hundreds of square miles of cross-country ski trails, snowmobile parks, mountain biking, fishing, camping, hiking, and offers many tourist accommodations and weekend get-a-ways, and a possible four seasons destination resort.
- The City of Coulee Dam is the location of Grand Coulee Dam, one of the largest concrete structures in the world, and largest electricity producer in the United States. The Dam also has a visitor's center with guided tours, background movies, and extensive information of the region including a historical laser light show on the face of Grand Coulee Dam.
- The Colville Indian Reservation, located in the southeast corner of the County, occupies approximately 700,000 acres of Okanogan County and is an integral part of the heritage of the County (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation 2012-2016 Community Economic Development Strategies). Lands are diverse with natural resources including timber, streams, rivers, minerals, native plants, and wildlife. There are many cultural events including the 4th of July Pow Wow, Sun Flower Festival, and an Indian Encampment is held the 2nd weekend in August during the Omak Stampede & World-Famous Suicide Race in Omak (Okanogan County tourism guide).

The Recreation Plan also includes goals and objectives to guide plan implementation, determination and analysis of recreation needs, and plans for meeting those outdoor recreation needs. The Recreation Plan strives to strike a balance between public demands for outdoor recreation activities and facilities and available resources. Population growth, demographic characteristics, safety, historical considerations and

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proximity to other population centers and major recreation areas were assembled as background information. The most important considerations of the Recreation Plan were public desires and funding sources available to the County.

In addition to the facilities and opportunities provided by a wide range of public entities in the County, the private sector provides a large array of recreation opportunities. The Recreation Plan recognizes the important role private individuals and businesses play in promoting, developing and capitalizing on recreation in the County. However, the focus of the document is on facilities and activities that will be developed and maintained by the County and a variety of partners (e.g. trails – year-round, motorized and non-motorized).

8.2 Recreation Plan Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives from the most current Okanogan County Recreation Plan will be incorporated into the Recreation Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

9 Circulation Element

9.1 Introduction

Okanogan County has experienced modest growth activity in the past, which is expected to continue in coming years. To effectively and efficiently accommodate this growth in an orderly fashion, Okanogan County, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the cities and towns in the County have recognized the need for a circulation plan that describes the transportation and infrastructure system as it exists today and addresses the transportation and infrastructure needs for the next 20 years. This Circulation Element is an important factor in achieving a coordinated transportation system that integrates the needs of each of the County's jurisdictions and the unincorporated rural areas, within the context of the larger North Central Washington Region.

The Circulation Element is a critical component of the County's overall Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to guide an ongoing planning and decision-making process that shapes the transportation and infrastructure system and ensures that needs are addressed within the available resources between the public and private sectors.

The Circulation Element establishes a vital link between land use and the infrastructure facilities and services needed to meet current system deficiencies and to support current growth. The anticipated types, intensity, and timing of land development in the County will largely determine the mode of transportation, provided its effectiveness in moving people, and the travel behavior of people using the land. In addition, land use decisions outside of the County impact the transportation and circulation system and as a result, attention must be given to the anticipated trends in these peripheral areas.

Map 2, the Circulation Map, depicts the location, alignment, and extent of major thoroughfares, major transportation routes, rail and power corridors, and airports in the County. The following sections address planning goals and objectives for regional transportation, local roads, airports, military training routes, and capital facilities.

9.2 Regional Transportation

9.2.1 Background

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature enacted the GMA, which set a new course for the development of transportation plans. Traditionally, Washington communities have planned for land use and transportation independent of one another. Most transportation system improvements were planned for in reaction to congestion or safety concerns. The GMA requires that land use and transportation system planning be coordinated to better provide for safe use. Furthermore, the GMA requires that land

use planning and development approvals be linked with the provision of available transportation facilities through the concurrency requirement.

Okanogan County is not required to plan according to the GMA; however, the GMA's transportation planning approach provided insights to the County's preparation of the Transportation Element.

As part of the Growth Management Program, the State Legislature authorized the formation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) whose purpose is to plan for the development and use of regional transportation facilities and services. In 2017, the Okanogan Council of Governments (OCOG) was designated as a single-county RTPO. In June 2017, the OCOG adopted its 2040 Regional Transportation Plan for the Okanogan Region. The Plan establishes a regional transportation strategy for the Okanogan Region, presents a policy framework to promote consistency between local and state transportation planning, identifies priority long-range regional transportation needs to support local, tribal, and state initiatives, and provides an inventory of the regional transportation system.¹³ The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan is included as an Appendix of this Comprehensive Plan.

9.2.2 Regional Transportation Goals and Objectives

The goals and policies of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, as implemented by Okanogan County as one of the member governments in the OCOG, are incorporated into the Circulation Element of this Comprehensive Plan by reference.

9.3 Local Roads

The Okanogan County Public Works Department maintains and improves all County roads. In Okanogan County, these routes provide essential connectivity to every community in the region as well as route redundancy via remote and highly rural facilities.¹⁴

9.3.1 Functional Classification System

Classification of streets and highways in the State of Washington is based upon guidelines prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Streets are classified based upon the degree to which they provide travel movement and land access functions. Specific criteria defining streets includes the following:

- Character and relative length of trips.
- Anticipated or projected traffic volume.

¹³ 2040 Regional Transportation Plan for the Okanogan Region, Okanogan Council of Governments.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

- The relationship of a street to the land use it serves.

Each local jurisdiction is responsible for defining its transportation system into the following functional classifications:

Principal Arterial: (01 Rural/Interstate) - Streets and highways which contain the greatest portion of movement or long-distance travel. Such facilities serve high-volume travel corridors that connect major generators of traffic. The selected routes provide an integrated system for complete circulation of traffic, including ties to the major rural highways entering urban areas. Generally, principal arterials include high traffic volume streets.

Minor Arterial: (06 Rural/ Minor) - Streets and highways which connect with remaining arterial and collector roads that extend into the urban area. Minor arterial streets and highways serve less concentrated traffic-generating areas such as neighborhood shopping centers and schools. Minor arterial streets serve as boundaries to neighborhoods and collect traffic from collector streets. Although the predominant function of minor arterial streets is the movement of traffic, they also provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the corridor.

Major Collector: (07 Rural Major Collector) - These routes should provide service to the county seat if not on an arterial route, to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent inter-county importance, such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, important agricultural areas, etc. In addition, these routes should link larger towns and/or cities with routes of higher classification and should serve the more important inter-county travel corridors.

Minor Collector: (08 Rural Minor Collector) - These routes should be spaced at intervals consistent with population density, collect traffic from local roads, and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. In addition, these routes should provide service to the remaining smaller communities and link the locally important traffic generators with their rural counterparts.

Local Access: (09 Rural Unclassified) - Streets not selected for inclusion in the arterial or collector classes. They allow access to individual homes, shops, and similar destinations. Direct access to abutting land is essential for all traffic originating from, or is destined to, abutting land. Through traffic should be discouraged by appropriate geometric design and/or traffic control devices.

Functional classification of major roads and State Routes in Okanogan County are shown on Map 2 and summarized by mileage in Table 4. Further detail is provided in Appendix A-1 and A-2.

Table 4. Mileage of Rural Roads in Okanogan County

Functional Classification	Mileage
07 Rural Major Collector	298.1
08 Rural Minor Collector	192.5
09 Rural Unclassified	834.9
Total	1,325.5

9.3.2 Local Roads Goals and Objectives

Goal TC-1: Provide Okanogan County travelers a safe, sustainable, and integrated multi-modal transportation system.

Objectives:

- TC-1.1 Encourage creativity, continuous improvement and the advancement of technology.
- TC-1.2 Encourage public involvement when planning transportation systems.
- TC-1.3 Support the implementation of the six-year transportation improvement plan.
- TC-1.4 Prioritize maintenance and preservation of the existing transportation infrastructure.

Goal TC-2: To be resource stewards by supporting economic, environmental, and community transportation needs.

Objectives:

- TC-2.1 Continue to conduct bridge inspections to identify needs and safety issues.
- TC-2.2 Work with developers to ensure transportation requirements are met to address safe traveling through land divisions and areas of Okanogan County.
- TC-2.3 Encourage practical solutions to prioritize innovative, timely, and cost-effective decisions, with our partners, to operate, maintain, plan, and build our multi-modal transportation system.

9.4 Airports

There are eight public airports, four private airports, and one private helipad in Okanogan County. Though there is not yet a commercial air service in the region, these facilities provide a vital transportation link and are tangible assets to the economic base of the County. Air transportation provides important support to emergency services by enabling the rapid importation of vital supplies and the transportation of injured or ill people to larger or specialized medical facilities. The airports provide the opportunity to

capitalize infrastructure for the siting of compatible industrial and commercial businesses.

The Comprehensive Plan creates policy designed to guide zoning and other development regulation to protect airports from incompatible land uses both on-site and on adjacent lands as required by the Revised Code of Washington and Federal Regulation.

Aviation facilities are mapped as terminals on the Transportation and Essential Public Facilities Map, Map 3, and may be adjusted as the size, shape, or number of facilities is modified.

9.4.1 Airport Goals and Objectives

Goal TC-3: Protect long term viability of general aviation airports as essential public facilities, including the protection of the health, welfare, and safety of the aviation community neighboring property owners and general public.

Objectives:

TC-3.1 Encourage compatible land uses and densities around airport facilities.

TC-3.2 Reduce hazards around the affected environment of the airport safety zones.

9.5 Military Training Routes

When planning for new development within the County, it is important to consider the critical role of military training areas in support of national defense. There are several military training routes (MTRs) present in the County that function as “highways in the sky.” These MTRs are used by military aircraft to practice high- and low-altitude training exercises and to traverse between military installations. Any development or new construction that seriously impacts or hinders the MTRs’ function and viability is considered incompatible land use. Planning to ensure that future land uses are compatible must be an overarching goal of the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan.

Under RCW 36.01.320, the County must provide notice to the military “upon receipt of an application for a permit to site an energy plant or alternative energy resource that is connected to electrical transmission facilities of a nominal voltage of at least one hundred fifteen thousand volts.” In addition, as stated, “the purpose of the written notification is to provide an opportunity for the United States Department of Defense to comment upon the application, and to identify potential issues relating to the placement and operations of the energy plant or alternative energy resource, before a permit application is approved.” Under the GMA, the County must amend its “comprehensive plan or development regulations to address lands adjacent to military installations to ensure those lands are protected from incompatible development” (RCW 36.70A.530).

From the same section of the statute: "The United States military is a vital component of the Washington State economy. The protection of military installations from incompatible development of land is essential to the health of Washington's economy and quality of life. Incompatible development of land close to a military installation reduces the ability of the military to complete its mission or to undertake new missions and increases its cost of operating..." [2004 c 28 § 1].

9.5.1 Military Training Route Goals and Objectives

Goal TC-4: Coordinate planning efforts with the Department of Defense.

Objectives:

- TC-4.1** Ensure that future land uses are compatible with MTRs.
- TC-4.2** Provide notice to the Military upon receipt of an application for a permit to site an energy plant or alternative energy resource.
- TC-4.3** Implement measures to protect military installations from incompatible development.
- TC-4.4** Create and foster long term relationships with the Department of Defense (Military) to provide cooperation and coordination in our planning and regulatory efforts.
- TC-4.5** Encourage participation of the Military in assisting the County with planning and zoning the airport safety areas.
- TC-4.6** Implement a process that will ensure early notification to the Military on development projects.

9.6 Capital Facilities

The Okanogan County Capital Facilities Plan identifies the need for new capital facilities and major enhancements to existing facilities through a twenty-year planning window. Proposed or anticipated funding and the critical timeline for implementation is identified for the first six years of the plan. The Capital Facilities Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. The 2021 Capital Facilities Plan is incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan and included as an Appendix.

9.6.1 Capital Facilities Goals and Objectives

Goal TC-5: Achieve and maintain the desired quality of life and vision for Okanogan County through the planned provision of public facilities by the County or other public and private entities.

Objectives:

- TC-5.1** Maintain an inventory of existing public facilities owned or operated by the County and owned or operated by non-County public entities. Include in the inventory the locations and capacities of such facilities and systems.

- TC-5.2** Prepare an annual update of the Capital Facilities Plan, including inventory of facilities, list of capital projects, and financing plan. The annual update should be coordinated with the annual budget process, and the annual amendment of the Comprehensive Plan.
- TC-5.3** Encourage the location of public facilities so they are accessible to all County residents.
- TC-5.4** Maintain the integrity and appearance of Okanogan County's historic court house as much as possible.

Goal TC-6: Coordinate land use planning and public facilities planning and management in order to plan for growth and the availability of public facilities.

Objectives:

- TC-6.1** Encourage development where adequate public facilities planning and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- TC-6.2** New development should be allowed only when required facilities and services are available prior to or concurrent with development.
- TC-6.3** Encourage the development and maintenance of waste treatment and disposal systems where appropriate that will support the future development of the County.
- TC-6.4** Encourage the continued development of parks, trails, and recreational facilities to meet the needs of County residents and visitors.

Goal TC-7: Protect public health and environmental quality through the appropriate design and installation of public facilities.

Objectives:

- TC-7.1** Promote conservation of energy, water and other natural resources in the location and design of public facilities.
- TC-7.2** Practice efficient and environmentally responsive maintenance and operating procedures.
- TC-7.3** Provide for the safe disposal of hazardous waste materials.

Goal TC-8: Ensure funding for prioritized public facilities and services is identified and that the mechanisms for collecting fees or revenues is established.

Objectives:

- TC-8.1** Base the financing plan for public facilities on realistic estimates of current local revenues and external revenues that are reasonably anticipated to be received by the County.

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- TC-8.2** Encourage ongoing operations and maintenance costs of public facilities to be financially feasible prior to constructing the facility.
- TC-8.3** Encourage development to carry a proportionate share of the cost for extending and increasing the capacity of needed public facilities and services.

Goals TC-9: Ensure the Capital Facilities Element is consistent with other county, local, regional, and state adopted plans.

Objectives:

- TC-9.1** Coordinate with non-county providers of public facilities on a joint program for funding and construction of capital improvements.
- TC-9.2** Encourage the development of a cooperative process to determine needs and locations for facilities such as: airports, landfills, state educational facilities, and state or regional transportation facilities.

10 Implementation and Amendment

10.1 Implementation of the Goals and Objectives

This plan is a long-range document to guide future development of Okanogan County. The goals and objectives in this plan will help guide future policy decisions as new development or changes occur to help maintain the rural character and lifestyle that make Okanogan County a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

The goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented in part through the County's development regulations. These include regulations for zoning, critical areas, shorelines, and land division, among others. Zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each land use designation, and at what density. Zoning regulations also provide procedures for planned developments and rezones. These regulations directly inform land use decisions and must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will inform amendments to zoning and other development regulations to ensure this consistency.

10.2 Review and Amendment

The Board of County Commissioners shall order the review of the Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Designation Map when changed conditions or local information indicate a need to do so. The Board of County Commissioners will adopt by resolution a Scope of Work describing the process for such review and amendment.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any future Board of County Commissioners to review and revise every section of the Comprehensive Plan. The level and areas of review will be identified in the Scope of Work adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

10.3 Coordination with State and Federal Agencies

10.3.1 Federal Agencies

Local government has the responsibility to protect the local tax base, value of private property, economic stability, and in general, the well-being of the local community. These critical functions are closely entangled with federal and state management decisions.

Congress has long recognized the importance of local governance to the effective management of the nation's resources. It has provided for the involvement of local authority in every federal land use statute passed in the past 35 years. In many of these statutes, Congress has mandated that the federal land use agencies "coordinate" their policies and management activities with local government.

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Coordination means the federal agencies shall give prior notice to the local government of agency plans and management activities and also, among other criteria, requires agencies to make their policies and management activities consistent with local plans. Congress has directed federal agencies to coordinate with local government because they recognize local authority must be consulted and involved in the decision-making process before the public input process.

The federal agencies, primarily the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management manage a total of 1,571,208 acres in Okanogan County. This land is critical to the customs, culture, and economy of Okanogan County. The federal agencies claim a pre-emption of land use permitting authority on federal land. As such, the Comprehensive Plan designates federal land by the agency that manages it and the resources located on the property. Forest land of long-term commercial significance, agricultural land, and mineral lands are identified in an overlay on the comprehensive plan map. The federal agencies must try to make their land management decisions consistent with local plans and policies.

The land management decisions made by the federal agencies controls the economic activity on federal land. Their decisions have a direct impact on local revenue collected from timber harvest taxes and indirectly impacts other revenue sources generated through other natural resource jobs.

Because of the large amount of land in Okanogan County that is managed by the federal agencies, their payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) and the secure rural schools and communities' (SRSC) payments are important revenue sources for the County. Okanogan County believes the annual PILT and SRSC payments must be guaranteed by law at a fixed amount with an identified Consumer Price Index for annual increases.

Okanogan County will require the federal agencies to comply with federal law by notifying the Board of County Commissioners as early as possible in the formative stages of a proposed change in any land management policy or regulation or immediately upon receipt of an application or proposal from any non-governmental organization or other agency. Notification shall take place prior to the issuance of any notice to the public.

Okanogan County expects the federal agencies to maximize the use of federal land for agricultural and tourist/recreation activities in the absence of a compelling need to curtail such activities for protection of the sustainability of the resource.

10.3.2 State Agencies

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), RCW 43.21C, sets forth a process for review of probable, significant, and adverse impacts brought about by land use decisions, both project specific and on a program level basis. The actions of state

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agencies, with few specifically enumerated exemptions, are subject to review under SEPA. It is clear the intent of the Legislature was for state agencies to coordinate closely with local government to ensure agency decisions are consistent with local plans. As local government is charged with the responsibility for delivery of a wide array of critical services it is critical that state agencies interact with counties in an effective and open manner. Okanogan County adopted OCC Section 18 Coordination to identify clear protocols to inform federal and state agencies.

State agencies are required to comply with local zoning and other land use permits on the lands they manage. Land managed by the state agencies is not identified by ownership and bears the same land use designations, consistent with the applicable criteria, as privately-owned land in Okanogan County.

Several state agencies own land in Okanogan County including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Department of Transportation, and Washington Department of Natural Resources. It is the policy position of Okanogan County that state agencies should consolidate their land holdings by divesting land that contributes to a checkerboard ownership and the commensurate increase in land management difficulties. Conversely state agencies should obtain additional land only when doing so creates an ownership pattern conducive to more efficient management.