

## LVAG-endorsed Mid-Valley Goals/Policies

22 May, 2008

Commentors to date: Beverly and Jeff Zwar, Keith and Kevin Stennes, Isabelle Spohn, Alex Kerr, Betty Hagenbuch, Al Hymer, Gloria Royse

**Middle Methow Valley Goals: Unanimous YES to all, with 2 exceptions (see #4 and #5)**

1. Preserve and protect the natural environment, fisheries, wildlife, agricultural lands, and open space.
2. Prevent sprawl and require that new growth and development be directed to areas that are consistent with the policies of this Plan.
3. Agricultural lands shall be preserved.
4. New development activities must be consistent with the historical and rural character of the Methow Valley as defined in the Vision Statement, the policies of this plan, and the Methow Conservancy *Good Neighbor Handbook*.

**Comment: Not all familiar with Good Neighbor Handbook, not a policy document**

5. Require that Project Sponsors pay for the full costs associated with serving their new developments and to fully mitigate potential adverse impacts.

**Comment: #5 supported by all but more a Policy than a Goal**

**Land Use Policies: Mostly YES to all, with exceptions/amendments/comments below in yellow**

1. New developments shall not be permitted unless Project Sponsors can demonstrate an adequate and legal, non-interruptible supply of water.
2. The scale and intensity of new development activities should be consistent with existing neighboring development.
3. New development should not adversely affect existing wells, senior water rights, or water and air quality
  - a. This analysis shall include consideration of the State Climatologist's forecasts of declining rain and snow.  
**One commentor did not understand the above statement; the rest were in support**
4. **Town of Pateros**, in consultation with the County, should establish urban growth area boundaries that are consistent with the projected need for urban types of development and that reflect the logical outer boundary of urban services.

5. Identify, prioritize, and designate open space for preservation with an emphasis on larger parcels.

Suggested addition (covered in another comment under Ag Policies also):  
“Encourage preservation of agricultural lands through programs that supply equitable compensation to affected landowners”

6. The County should establish and implement “Dark Sky” regulations to limit and control the location, direction, and intensity of outdoor lighting. All public lighting and private lighting shall be shaded so that light is cast only directly downward. All lighting on private properties shall be shaded so that no light from any outdoor lighting shall be cast beyond the boundaries of the private property upon which the light is placed.

7. The County shall adopt standards to limit ridgeline development to keep structures below the topographic profile in order to avoid adverse visual impacts.

8. New Planned Destination Resorts shall not be permitted in the Methow Review District.

One commentor voted NO on the above clause

9. Property owners should be required to manage their lands to minimize the risk of wildfires.

One commentor did not understand the application of the above clause

10. All new development must be designed to preclude adverse topographical effects such as erosion, visual impacts, scaring, unstable slopes, and interruption of wildlife corridors, etc.

11. Project Sponsors must document that proposed developments do not exceed the carrying capacity of natural systems.

Three commentors did not understand the application of the above clause, or how carrying capacity is to be measured

12. The use of off road vehicles shall be restricted to designated areas.

#### **Natural Environment Policies:**

Mostly YES to all, with exceptions/amendments/comments below in yellow

1. Identify and prioritize high value fish and wildlife habitat and migration corridors for their protection.
2. Identify and adopt measures to protect locally endangered/significant plant and animal species and critical areas.

3. Do not permit new development that adversely affects designated critical areas, critical fish and wildlife habitat areas, and/or designated wildlife corridors.

One commentor did not understand the application of the above clause

4. Critical area ordinances will be enforced by the County to protect species of special concern, as well as threatened and endangered species.

5. Revise County Development Regulations to include provisions for wildlife friendly fencing standards.

One commentor opposed to above clause;

One commentor did not understand application

6. Adopt dog control measures to protect deer and livestock. The County shall adopt and actively enforce ordinances that require dogs to be leashed or under the direct control of owners at all times.

One commentor suggested adding "Except working dogs (sheep dogs, etc.)"

One commentor suggested these rules already exist

7. Protect fisheries habitat by maintaining adequate stream flows, while protecting historic uses of existing water rights.

One commentor suggested change of phrase: "Protect historic uses of existing water rights, including provisions for maintenance of adequate stream flows"

8. The County should adopt and implement a flood hazard plan.

9. No structures for permanent human habitation or any sewage or industrial waste disposal shall be allowed in 100 year floodplains.

10. Protect and enhance the natural character and geomorphic processes of the Methow, Chewack, and Twisp Rivers, their shorelines, and their tributaries.

One commentor suggested adding a clause concerning prohibition of riprap on streams and rivers

11. Outdoor burning should be prohibited during air inversion periods.

12. The County should support the development and implementation of an ongoing water quality monitoring plan.

13. In order to protect air quality, the County shall adopt standards to limit the use of wood burning stoves Isabelle: I prefer saying that the County will pursue an offset policy such as is done in other high mountain valleys such as Telluride and Aspen. People may buy the right to install new woodstoves from other people who already have woodstoves – or they may upgrade one, two, or three other woodstoves that do not burn cleanly in return for a permit. The shut-downs during inversions are modeled after larger cities.

when pollution levels are at risk of exceeding state air quality standards and/or during periods of air stagnation.

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**Comment [1]:** In January of 2007 DOE issued a request for the voluntary reduction of the use of wood burning stoves in the Methow Valley during a temperature inversion.

14. Property owners and public agencies should be encouraged to avoid the use of fertilizers and pesticides that could have an adverse impact on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and neighboring properties.
15. It is recognized that genetically modified organisms can have an adverse impact on the environment. As a result, the County shall prohibit the propagation, cultivation, raising, or growing of genetically engineered organisms, including but not limited to plants, animals, and micro-organisms.
16. Buildings in forested areas shall not be permitted without an approved wildfire protection plan that includes fire-resistant construction, adequate road access, and defensible space that are consistent with *Firewise Guidelines* from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Suggested Addition #17: "Lands taken out of Agricultural Production must be planted in a cover crop such as intermediate wheat grass, crested wheat grass, or other drought-tolerant species to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and maintain rural character"

**Agricultural Policies: Mostly YES to all, with exceptions/amendments/comments below in yellow**

1. Designate and prioritize agricultural lands for preservation including lands currently used or suitable for agriculture.  
Suggested addition (covered above also): "Encourage preservation of agricultural lands through programs that supply equitable compensation to affected landowners"  
Also noted that the above clause is covered in the LVAG Ag Policies recommendations in more detail
2. The County shall implement measures to preserve agricultural lands such as transfer of development rights and current use taxation which encourages agriculture, open space, and forest uses.  
Also noted that the above clause is covered in the LVAG Ag Policies recommendations in more detail
3. Protect existing irrigation uses and water rights dedicated to support agriculture.
4. Do not support the conversion of water rights dedicated to support agricultural uses to incompatible non-agricultural uses, provided that this policy should not adversely affect the Town of Pateros' efforts to secure additional water rights to serve their Urban Growth Area.  
One commentor thought it out of our jurisdiction to make this recommendation;

One commentor suggested a change to “Prohibit sale of water rights out of the Methow Valley”

5. Encourage public use of private grazing lands through access or development easements.

Three commentors voted NO on the above clause; one did not understand its application

6. Encourage and support the local agricultural economy so that it may achieve and maintain self sufficiency.

One commentor questioned the applicability of the above clause

**Upland Use Policies: Unanimous YES to both**

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

**Residential Development Policies:**

**Mostly YES to all, with exceptions/amendments/comments below in yellow**

1. Direct subdivisions, planned developments, resorts and related types of developments to areas where such development is compatible with neighboring land uses and where required services exist or can be provided in an environmentally sensitive manner.

2. Require Project Sponsors to provide affordable housing to mitigate adverse community impacts associated with new development such as a lack of available housing, increased traffic, increased commuting distances, etc.

One commentor did not understand application of the above clause

3. New residential developments shall be screened from State highways and County arterials with vegetation.

4. Require that Project Sponsors pay for and fully mitigate the public costs and the adverse impacts associated with new development, such as impacts on public services, roads, sewer and water systems, schools, emergency services, etc.

One commentor did not understand application of the above clause

5. Energy efficient alternative residential building materials and designs should be encouraged and permitted.

6. Existing standards governing home businesses should be retained and consistently and actively enforced.

7. The County should actively research the feasibility of establishing size standards for new houses so that they are comparable in size to neighboring buildings.
8. The County should actively pursue and implement opportunities to promote more affordable housing in the community.
9. Gated communities shall not be permitted.

**Commercial Development Policies:**

**Mostly YES to all, with exceptions/amendments/comments below in yellow**

1. New commercial development should be directed to appropriately zoned sites in the incorporated and unincorporated towns of Twisp, Winthrop, Methow, Carlton and Pateros.
  - a. New commercial development should emphasize local ownership and sized to serve the local community.  
**One commentor suggested this may not be enforceable, questioned definition of 'local' ownership**
  - b. Retail facilities greater than 10,000 sq. ft. shall not be permitted. (I sure wouldn't want to see something 100 ft x 100 feet in Methow!
  - c. Strip development shall not be permitted.
2. Adopt and consistently implement new sign standards with an emphasis on:
  - a. The limitation of off-site signs to designated public areas;
  - b. Limiting the size, height, and illumination of on-site signs; and
  - c. The use of natural materials.  
**One commentor did not understand applicability of #2**
3. New commercial developments shall be screened from State highways and County arterials with vegetation.
4. New commercial developments shall be screened from non-commercial zones with vegetation, including a required maintenance plan and a replacement plan for all dead vegetation.

**Industrial Development Policies:**

**One commentor said "NO to any new industry in the Methow Valley". The rest were mostly YES to all, with exceptions below in yellow**

1. New industrial development should be directed to appropriately zoned sites in the incorporated and unincorporated towns of Twisp, Winthrop, Methow, and Carlton.

**One commentor said “No new industrial growth in Methow LAMIRD”**

2. Permit industrial development only upon the issuance of a conditional use permit that adequately mitigates potential adverse affects, such as impacts on public services, roads, sewer and water systems, schools, emergency services, and minimizes impacts of noise and light.
3. New industrial developments shall be screened from State highways and County arterials and adjoining non-industrial zones with vegetation.

**Transportation Policies: Mostly YES to all, with exceptions noted in yellow**

1. The County shall prepare and implement access control plans for state highways and county roads to promote safety and protect wildlife by limiting the number of individual access points and that promote shared or joint use driveways.
  2. The County shall require that roads be designed and constructed to provide safe crossings, utilizing such features as underpasses and overpasses.
    - a. The County shall identify, prioritize, design, and construct a system of trails or by-ways that can safely be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians. These should utilize public property and such features as right-of ways, easements, and irrigation ditches while connecting communities, schools, parks, and public places.
- One commentor suggested that #2 is “too much to ask” at this time**
4. Project Sponsors shall be required to submit traffic studies and plans with their applications that fully mitigate potential adverse traffic impacts associated with their proposed development.
  5. Traffic speeds shall be slowed to protect the public health and safety in wildlife corridors, recreation areas, cities and towns, and in areas with higher frequency of accidents
  6. The County shall require the use of asphalt or asphalt overlays on arterials to minimize noise.
  7. Standards to limit off-site signage should be established and enforced with a particular emphasis on areas that are not covered by the National Scenic By-Ways

standards for signage, which should be applied and enforced on all State highways and County roads

Two commentors suggested strengthening language with NO BILLBOARDS on HWY 153. This suggestion will be carried into the “Other LVAG recommendations” document

a. Video display signs shall not be permitted.

8. Develop a highway information system that provides adequate information to travelers without degrading the environment.

9. No new airports or runways shall be permitted and existing runways shall not be lengthened or widened.

One commentor voted NO on the above clause

**Parks and Recreation Policies: Unanimous YES to all**

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

a. A comprehensive trail plan for walking, hiking, jogging, bicycling, skiing, and equestrians that connect communities, schools, parks, and public places utilizing public property and such features as right-of -ways, easements, and irrigation ditches;

b. Preservation of existing public access points to the Methow River and provides additional opportunities for public access for swimming, non-motorized boat access, picnicking, and passive enjoyment; and

c. A countywide park that includes facilities for active and passive enjoyment including ball fields, picnicking, and nature walks, etc.

**Sewer and Water Policies: Mostly YES to all, with exceptions noted in yellow**

1. The County should support the development and implementation of an ongoing water quality monitoring plan.

2. Water rights should not be transferred outside of the Methow Valley.

One commentor voted NO on this clause

3. Project Sponsors must demonstrate that they have fully provided sewer and water service to new commercial, industrial, and large-scale residential developments that does not adversely impact the environment.

4. Septic tanks and drain fields shall not be permitted in environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, designated critical areas, and in areas where septic effluent could degrade the quality of surface and ground waters.

5. Project Sponsors shall be required to pay for the costs associated with providing water and sewer service.
6. Sponsors of projects involving five or more residential units shall be required to prove that new wells will not adversely affect existing wells.
  - a. The burden of proof shall be on Project Sponsors.
  - b. Project Sponsors shall be responsible for adverse impacts on existing wells and for reparations.
7. Project Sponsors shall be required to restore areas disturbed during the installation of new utilities to prevent noxious weeds and erosion.
8. New developments shall utilize water conservation measures including, but not limited to: gray water recycling, low flow shower and toilets; and drip irrigation or micro sprinkler systems.
9. Meters shall be installed on new exempt wells. Exempt well withdrawals shall be limited by ordinance to a quantity that closely reflects actual, typical residential usage (200-800 GPD).

One commentor voted NO on this clause

**Utility Policies: Unanimous YES to all**

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

**Administrative Policies: Mostly YES to all, with exceptions noted in yellow**

1. All development activities must comply with adopted codes and regulations.
  - a. New lots must meet minimum lot size and density requirements unless in an approved planned development.

2. The County shall establish and maintain an active code enforcement program.
3. The County shall revise and enforce legally defensible noise standards.
4. Priority consideration shall be given to scheduling public hearings and meetings in the vicinity of proposed projects and to rotating the location of Planning Commission meetings throughout the County.  
**One commentor did not know if moving meetings around the county is equitable to other county residents**
5. The County shall establish and implement procedures to notify and provide neighboring and affected property owners with timely and meaningful opportunities to comment on proposed comprehensive plan amendments, rezones, and development proposals.
6. If the County adopts proposed provisions that would authorize the execution of development agreements, then the County shall notify affected communities of its intent to negotiate a development agreement(s) with a Project Sponsor and should schedule public meetings and required public hearings in the vicinity of the proposed project in order to facilitate local involvement throughout the decision making process. At a minimum, development agreements shall include provisions that :
  - a. Establishes specific performance requirements and timeframes that if not met shall render agreements null and void;
  - b. Clearly enables the County to impose new or subsequent requirements necessary to protect the public health and safety;
  - c. Limits and documents what, if any, rights are vested and the timeframes in which the vested rights need to be exercised or become void;
  - d. Clearly enables the County to require additional environmental reviews and/or impose additional mitigation measures to address changes in conditions or new information; and
  - e. Establishes monitoring protocols to ensure that conditions of approval have been met, are being maintained and enforced, and are functioned as intended producing the desired results.
7. Clearing and grading threshold requirements should be lowered and the governing standards increased within one year of the adoption of these goals and policies in order to avoid fragmentation and degradation of habitat.  
**One commentor did not understand what "lowering the threshold" would mean**
8. The regulations governing Planned Developments must be upgraded to be consistent with the Goals and Policies in this Plan.

Gregg 5/22/2008 3:00 PM

**Comment [2]:** Board of County Commissioner meetings must be in the County Seat, but the Planning Commission meetings can be rotated around the County provided that they are properly advertised.

9. The County shall maintain or increase the minimum lot size requirements in the Methow 5, Methow 20, and Upland Zones.
10. Future Land Use and Zoning designations should be consistent with the Adaptive Water Management plan to be prepared by the Methow Watershed Council.  
**One commentor did not understand the applicability of the above clause**
11. The County regulations governing Accessory Dwelling Units, Chapter 17.14.040 shall be amended to limit accessory dwelling units to lots that are at least twice the minimum size in the Methow 5, Methow 20, and Upland Zones.  
**One commentor voted NO on the above clause;**  
**One commentor did not understand the application of the above clause**
12. The County shall establish fees for new development that fully cover the costs of plan review, permit issuance, inspection, compliance monitoring, and a comprehensive development regulation and code enforcement program.  
**One commentor voted NO on the above clause**
13. The County should review and revise tax policies to limit tax increases on long-standing, lower-, and fixed income property owners.
14. The County should recognize and support three separate local advisory groups to serve Mazama, the Middle Methow Valley, and Lower Methow Valley communities. These advisory groups should be actively consulted by the County and should be provided with adequate information and support to make timely and meaningful comments on proposed policy and regulatory changes, rezones, and specific development proposals.
  - a. The County should also promote and support discussions between the local advisory groups on matters of sub-regional or county-wide concern.
15. The County shall actively advertise vacancies on the Planning Commission and advisory boards utilizing local newspapers, newsletters, emails, websites, and community based organizations.
16. The County shall open a part-time office of the Planning Department in the Methow Valley supported by fees on new developments.