

**Lower Valley Advisory Group
(LVAG)
Planning Meeting**

**March 6, 2008 5:00 – 8:00 pm
Methow Cafe**

Present: Beverly and Jeff Zwar, Gloria Royse, Keith Stennes, Betty Hagenbuch, Al Hymer, Gail Howe (Pateros Mayor), Kurt Danison

Absent: Arlan Ruf, Kathie Windle, Alex Kerr, Ken Orford, Bill Tackman, Karen Luft, Isabelle Spohn

Agenda

I. Housekeeping

A. “Interim” Requests (Clearing/Grading and Fire Regs)

A letter proposing the changes was circulated and reviewed and approved by attendees. Plans were made to circulate the letter via email for the review of members who were unable to attend the meeting, and to develop a plan for some members of the group to present the letter to the BOCC in the near future. If no action is taken before the next LVAG meeting, action will be determined at that meeting (March 20).

B. Last Meeting Notes

Reviewed and approved; amendment requested to note that the group’s position on 20 acre minimums for valley floor “rural residential” density was stronger than implied in notes.

Discussion also provided answers to questions posed at the last meeting, including a question about whether the proposed clustering regulations are taken from Kittitas County: the answer is “yes,” Perry Huston drafted the regulations for both counties. Question about John Sunderland’s feedback comparing the proposed Clustering regs and the existing PD Ordinance was to be answered by Bill Tackman, who did not attend. Question about Perry Huston’s assertion that the current PD regs are not “GMA Compliant” has been forwarded to Mr. Huston for his response by email.

Request for copies of Kurts presentation from the 2/10 Density workshop. Kurt made one copy for Lorah (which she lost) and will make another.

C. Other

Pateros Mayor Gail Howe joined the group at this meeting. She extended interest from the town to discuss with LVAG the implications of the Pateros Urban Growth Boundary and the interface between the town and the rural area. The group discussed Pateros growth options and agreed that summarizing LVAG ideas would be a good first step to share with Pateros planners prior to setting up a discussion. Gail wishes to be included in future communications and discussions of this group – welcome, Gail!

II. Density Designations w/Kurt Danison

A. Valley Floor

1. Kurt Presentation to answer questions from previous meeting, mostly regarding the implications of 20 acre minimums on the valley floor

a. Review of Questions (*answers in red italic*):
Questions

- Affect on owners of 5, 10, 15, 20 acre parcels?

Kurt provided a chart that shows the number of parcels that would be likely (given specific assumptions) under each scenario. The group will receive a copy of this chart in time for the next meeting.

In summary, there are currently 622 parcels in our planning area. 47% of parcels representing 10% total acreage are in 5 acres or less. 17% of parcels representing 22% of total acreage are in 10-20 acres.. 13% of parcels representing 33% of total acreage are in 20-40 acre parcels.

On the 622 existing parcels, approximately 195 homes have been identified, indicating that 1/3 of existing lots have been built on – potential exists to at least triple the number of homes currently seen on the landscape, whether 1, 5, 10 or 20 acre minimums are in place. These calculations may not include subdivisions and projects that are currently applied for and vested but which Kurt is unaware of..

5-acre zoning would likely result in 964 NEW parcels; 10-acre zoning would likely result in 315 new parcels; 20 acre zoning would likely result in 59.5 new parcels.

- How could Clustering or PD regs affect the same parcel sizes under 20 acre mins?

The proposed Clustering regs state a minimum of 40 acres to qualify for clustering density bonus, so clustering would only be an option for owners of 40 contiguous acres unless the group decides to recommend a lower minimum than 40 acres (for clustering).

- Could a second family home be allowed on one lot under this min acreage?

Currently, yes. If zoning similar to MVRD, yes. Assuming setbacks and other regs are met. Related question about whether a family can subdivide below minimum acreage to give to family member – the answer is no UNLESS the request to subdivide is provided in the Will of a deceased landowner. Wills apparently supersede subdivision law.

- How many lots now? How many w/5ac min? 10? 20? *See Above*
- Provide mapping that identifies (by type, eg steep slopes, wetlands) Critical Areas in planning area

Kurt has done this and will provide electronic version for Bill/Lorah to print and present at the next meeting. He also noted that the vast majority of the Methow Valley and our planning area exist in some form of Critical Area or Critical Habitat. While underlying zoning is important for protection of these areas (including wetlands), Kurt suggested that they are also protected by Critical Areas Ordinance and Shorelines regs. He noted particularly wildlife habitat issues are best affected by “performance standards” such as rules associated with dogs and fencing, which this group can recommend.

- Provide mapping that identifies likely soil types and existing uses for Ag Resource Land designation (include parcel layer and ownership)

Kurt will provide for next meeting.

- Provide mapping that identifies potential forest resource lands?

Kurt will provide for next meeting.

2. Discussion – Range of Options

The Valley Floor area delineated as “Rural Residential” in our planning area extends from Gold Creek to the mouth of the Methow river, and along the Columbia river south of Pateros to the county line and north of Pateros to the edge of the Pateros School District.

After considerable discussion, the group continued to advocate for 20 acre minimums along most of the valley floor from Gold Creek to the mouth of the Methow, excluding the “LAMIRD” of Methow town (to be decided later), and the “Urban Residential” areas within the Pateros UGA and the Alta Lake high density recreational area (final density recommendations to be finalized later, the group considered 5 acre minimums near Alta but did not decide where to draw the line). *Kurt agreed to evaluate parcels along the river with poor access or steep slopes that may be recommended for “upland” density; also to look at areas with better access and potential for higher density - and provide results for the first meeting in April, which he will attend. He also agreed to provide parcel breakdowns for Methow town and the Alta lake area.*

Along the Columbia River north and south of Pateros, the group advocated 5 acre minimums, as that area is developing differently than the lower Methow and has less agricultural land currently in production.

B. Uplands “Rural Low Density”

1. What do we need to know?

The group would like the same information breakdown for Uplands that Kurt provided for the Valley Floor, in terms of how many parcels exist or would be affected by 20, 40, or 80 acre minimum densities. Kurt will provide this information in time for the first meeting in April. It is known that the Uplands (“Rural Low Density” designation on our map) currently includes 1024 parcels and approximately 163 homes, and incorporates a large percentage of Mule Deer Winter Range.

2. Discussion – Range of Options

The group discussed density in the uplands and determined a tentative minimum acreage of 40. There was a question about assigning this designation to Antoine Coulee – they are in our planning area but have no representation – and it was determined to apply the designation for now and see if it raises any objections during the review process.

III. Cluster Ordinance Review

The group compared the “old” PD regulations (PD) and the “new” Clustering proposal (CO), and provided the following feedback (table). Note that subjects change across

rows, i.e. what is in “Likes” column may not be reflected in “Recommendations” of the same row:

Like (PD or CO)	Dislike (PD or CO)	Don't Get?	Recommend
PD – Water Availability is required element for eligibility	CO – needs to be more specific	Not clear how bonus points system encourages clustering – example given appears to allow for grid type development with more density..?	Require water availability to be proven prior to considering higher density
PD – encourages energy conservation with incentive points	PD/CO – sewage/septic <i>voluntary</i> innovation not acceptable, esp. along river	CO – affects new roads, what about improvement of existing roads (ninemile example)	Require high quality sewage/septic along river, not bonus incentive.
PD – points for minimizing fiscal impact on county	CO – too many points for some elements that provide questionable benefit to rural qualities	Define “cluster boundary” – don't get multiple clusters in one project. Might just need better explanation.	Review CO points system to ensure that points are justified and will result in desired aesthetics (ie not grid development), conserve rural character – small lots with big open spaces around them
CO – wildfire protection incentives	Wildfire protection/public safety measures should be required, not given points/incentive	How many PD's currently exist in the Methow Valley (or elsewhere) and how are they working?	Require wildfire protection standards for roads and new construction, not offer points
PD – Prohibition on wood burning gets points	PD – points for feeding deer?? Come on!	How is clustering working in Kittitas County? Things they would change in rural areas?	Give some points for air quality incentives such as restrict wood burning..
PD – points for assembling PD from “substandard” lots.		How are the ‘incentives’ enforced once clustering is granted?	Add points for projects/subdivisions that are intended for full-time, residential or affordable use vs. projects/subdivisions designed for vacation or

			second home use
PD – underground utilities (though should be separate from wildfire)		Are points inside and outside UGA’s interchangeable? i.e. trading urban devel for non urban – or is TDR the only way?	Add “Bunker Bonus” for home designs that incorporate smaller footprints, square footage, lower height and visibility
			Add Bonus for incorporation of distributed/renewable energy for electrical and energy efficient design of buildings and facilities

V. Next Steps, Next Meeting

Next Steps: Review the notes and prepare any additional feedback for the next meeting. Subcommittees are forming to present the recommended changes (Clearing-Grading etc) to the BOCC and to meet with large landowners in our planning area for discussion of the group’s recommendations regarding minimum acreage and resource lands designations.

Next Meeting: Resource Lands and Critical Areas – densities, allowed uses and other issues. Kurt will provide maps that we will review in hard copy; he will not attend the meeting.

Homework: None! Don’t get used to it!

Meeting Adjourned at 8:09pm