

Okanogan County Planning Commission
October 28, 2019

Angela Hubbard - Interim Director of Planning and Development

Planning Commission Members

Salley Bull - Dist 3 (Oroville)

Phil Dart - Dist. 3

Dave Schulz - Dist 2 (Twisp)

Gina McCoy - Dist 2 (Winthrop)

Verlene Hughes - Dist 1

Absent:- Albert Roberts, Dist 1

George Thornton - Representative at large

Secretary: Courtney Ingles

NOTE: These notes were taken by a voluntary citizen notetaker with Okanogan County Watch. This procedure required rapid typing of items projected on the wall by the notetaker and continually revised. Complete accuracy of every item cannot be guaranteed. None of these items should be considered final, since the Commission continues deliberations. Officially approved minutes may be found, usually at a later date, at the Okanogan County website (okanogancounty.org) under "Planning" and then "Boards."

7:00 PM - Approval of minutes

Gina McCoy and others clarify use of "Critical Areas" and use of "Multiple Use" in last meeting's minutes.

Meeting Summary: *The Planning Commission continued discussion and editing of the draft Comprehensive Plan "Vision Statement," approving the final editing of this section by vote of the Commission. Interim Director Hubbard displayed her initial work on reorganization of the Comprehensive Plan for understandability and compliance with legal directives at the request of the Commission. Members of the Commission expressed appreciation for the direction she is taking and continued to discuss and refine sections on Wildfire and on Critical Area Goals and Policies. The next Planning Commission meeting is set for October 18th, 2019, during which session the Commission will return to editing, with a goal of completing the Critical Areas section.*

Vision Statement (Discussed, Edited, and Approved by Planning Commission)

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

Okanogan County is vast and beautiful. The diverse and rugged character of the 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 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.

Our vision for the future involves:

- *Sustaining agriculture, forestry, tourism, and commerce that provides a wide range of family-supporting employment opportunities.
- *Honoring and supporting the many traditional uses and lifestyles while accommodating orderly development.
- *A broad range of housing options, supported by efficient public services, and
- *Wise and efficient use of water, to protect senior water rights and ecosystems and allow for sustainable development.

Wildfire (discussed, edited draft items)

Goal: Protect life and property in rural Okanogan County from fire hazards.

Policies:

- *Reflect best practices in structural fire resistance design for new construction
- *Encourage cluster developments to reduce the wild land urban interface areas.
- *Review county road standards to require defensible ingress and egress (on?) roadways constructed to adequate standards to allow the passage of firefighting equipment and other emergency vehicles. After development of the road is revised and accepted it is up to the landowner to maintain the road to that standard.
- *Encourage where feasible the under grounding of electrical utilities to reduce their exposure to fire.
- *Encourage where feasible new development in high-risk areas including secondary egress.
- *Update and implement the Community Wildfire Protection Plan to reduce the risk of wildfire and mitigate the impacts if a fire occurs.
- *Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland urban interface.

*Develop required plat note on new subdivision proposals stating “This property is in a high wildfire risk area.” If adequate ingress and egress and defensible space do not exist, firefighter safety will be prioritized over property protection. *(Note: this statement underwent several revisions, and this is may not be the final result.)*

*Support programs available for fire safe communities. (Ie Firewise, etc.)

*Support forest resource management for fire resiliency.

*Support responsible shrub-steppe management for fire resiliency.

*Federal/state/tribal and local forest owners shall have a fire reduction plan.

*Promote post fire rehabilitation and flood mitigation.

*Okanogan County or closest qualified contractor resources shall be used for fire suppression activities first.

Critical Areas Goals and Policies (beginning draft discussion)

Critical Areas :

(Include the following)

Wetlands definition

“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 adopted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do too include those artificial wetlands intentionally created for non-wetland sites, grass-lined swales, canals detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities or the 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 includeetc.

Goal: 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.

Policies:

*In designing the protecting critical areas, include the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas.

*Provide technical assistance and education to applicants and interested parties on critical areas and applicable regulations.

*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.

*Provide methods to avoid, minimize, and mitigate when addressing critical areas, including innovative techniques such as wetland banking, regulation management, clustered development, planned unit development, replacement ratios, density limitation , and enhancement option.

*Reference WDFW Priority Habitat and species data and maps and the Natural Heritage program (*and others?*) for information on location of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

Goal: Recognize the importance of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas while working towards a balance between preservation of those lands and the continuation of agriculture, forestry, mining, tourism, recreation, and managed growth.

Policies:

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

*Support continued participation in the Voluntary Stewardship Program for protection and enhancement of critical areas while maintaining and promoting agricultural viability.

*Give special consideration to conservation or to protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

*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. Also provide a method to mitigate the possible reduction of (?) required.

*Reference WDFW priority Habitat and Species data and maps (*and others?*) and the Natural Heritage program for information on location of fish and wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas. (*Is this repeated from the previous goal?*)

Goal: 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 wildfire habitat.

(To be continued.)

9:00 PM: Next meeting: Monday, November 18th, 7PM. Return to discussion and editing, striving to complete the Critical Areas Ordinance section.