Chapter One
Section One

EXECUTIVE STATEMENT
In June of 2007 the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners directed that a process be initiated to successfully complete a review of the then existing Comprehensive Plan. The current plan was adopted in 1965 and has been subject to little review or change since that time. Previous attempts to review and revise the plan on a comprehensive had not been completed. The Board of County Commissioners believed the existing plan, in conjunction with the zone code and subdivision regulation which implements the plan, was not adequate to insure a high level of local control and defensible local decisions. The existing plan did not provide the policy level guidance, specific land use regulation, or the necessary land use permitting tools to properly preserve the property rights of private property owners while at the same time protecting our land and environmental resources for future generations.

The Board of County Commissioners also anticipated the day when Okanogan County would be required to plan under RCW 36.70A, the Growth Management Act (GMA). The existing comprehensive plan, created under the authority of RCW 36.70 the Planning Enabling Act, was not consistent in terms of terminology or structure with GMA. The Board of County Commissioners believed it was desirable to review the outdated comprehensive plan and to convert it to GMA compatible terms and structure. By accomplishing this it was believed Okanogan County would be in the best position to defend the local plans should they come under review by the Growth Management Hearings Board at some future date.

Under the direction of the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners this Comprehensive Plan along with accompanying maps and enabling regulation has been prepared by the Okanogan County Planning and Community Development Department working in conjunction with other county departments, contracted planning professionals, and most importantly many volunteers from the ranks of the citizens of Okanogan County.

This comprehensive plan recognizes the rights of our citizens to own and utilize private property. This comprehensive plan, along with implementing regulation, strives to provide the effective land use tools to enable the property owner to realize the full enjoyment of their property while preserving the ability of future generations to enjoy all that the land provides.

Authority
RCW 36.70 Planning Enabling Act
RCW 36.70A.170 Counties must designate Agricultural lands, Forest lands, Mineral lands, and Critical Areas
RCW 36.70A.050 Guidelines for classifying Agricultural, Forest, and Mineral lands and Critical Areas
RCW 43.21C State Environmental Policy Act
Chapter One

Section Two

VISION STATEMENT

Okanogan County is the largest county in the State of Washington, with borders from Canada to the Methow Valley. There are tremendous extremes in terms of geography and four seasons which have led to great diversity in occupation and lifestyle. What is consistent is the independent spirit of our citizens and the universal belief in our Constitutional Rights. The Citizens of Okanogan County share a love of the rural lifestyle and independence that is established upon the customs and cultures that are the foundation of our values and moral obligations to become the best stewards of our land and communities. We further believe in the multi-use of our natural resources while assuring that the land will provide for future generations.

Okanogan County was one of the last frontiers to be settled. People came here seeking the wealth that could be obtained from the minerals, timber, grazing, agriculture, and other natural resources. With the farmers and cattleman came a greater stewardship of the land and appreciation of the need to look ahead with a vision to ensure that future generations could prosper and enjoy this economic vitality.

The residents of Okanogan County understand the accountability that those who use the land today will accept the commitment to insure that renewable resources are replenished and consumable resources are used wisely. As Okanogan County has grown with discovery, abounding with rivers, lakes and wildlife recreation, hunting and fishing has also become an economic generator to our local businesses. The roadway ahead must be paved with the knowledge we have gained from the past.

Just as the Constitution guarantees our right to own and use the land it requires us to respect the rights and freedoms of others. This Comprehensive Plan was created by people of many backgrounds and viewpoints but is the plan for the County as a whole. This plan is driven by the common belief that to preserve the future we must act wisely today.

Chapter One

Section three

DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

Okanogan County used a neighborhood planning process with a mix of technical committees to create the first draft of the revised Comprehensive Plan. The revised neighborhood groups began work in June of 2007 with an official kick-off at Growth Summit I in August of 2007. The groups, supported by County Staff, contracted planning professionals, and citizen volunteers discussed densities, compatible uses, affordable housing, along with additional elements within a geographic boundary they identified as
their area of interest. The information generated informed the first draft of the Comprehensive Plan. The first draft was officially distributed at Growth Summit II in June of 2008. The first draft was sent back to the neighborhood groups, technical committees, and other interested parties for additional review and drafting. The first draft has been prepared as a tier of options to facilitate a comparative analysis of the pros and cons of each potential policy decision.

A revised draft was presented for review under SEPA in January of 2009. It is anticipated that SEPA review will be completed by June of 2009. It is anticipated the highly refined draft emerging from the SEPA process will be scheduled for hearings in front of the Planning Commission in March of 2009 followed by hearings before the Board of County Commissioners in June of 2009. Adoption is anticipated by June 30, 2009.

Information provided by the neighborhood groups and technical committees is being used in a concurrent process to update the zone code and subdivision regulations. These code sections are scheduled to track with the review and adoption process of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Shorelines Master Program, and Critical Areas Ordinance is under review for update and scheduled for completion by December 31, 2009. A Wildfire-Urban interface area is in draft form and is scheduled for review and adoption concurrent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Flood Management Plans for the Methow and Okanogan Rivers are completed. The work of the watershed councils is ongoing. These plans will be referenced in the Comprehensive Plan to insure review for consistency. They will be adopted by ordinance in concurrent but separate processes.

Neighborhood Groups
The neighborhood groups formed to facilitate this process are:

* Middle Methow
* Lower Methow
* Brewster
* Okanogan-Omak
* Riverside
* Tunk
* Conconully
* Wauconda
* Loomis
* Chesaw
* Tonasket
* Oroville
* Mazama Advisory Committee (already created)

Technical Committees
Resource Lands
Urban Growth Area
Economic Development (EDC)
Affordable Housing (Action Council)
Vision Statements: Goals and Policies (new section added Feb 22, 2009)
Where the neighborhood groups created vision statements or goals and policies they appear as presented in appendix A of this plan. Where the neighborhood groups did not adopt statements the planning staff drafted statements based on the critical issues expressed by the groups. When more than one version was created or when the neighborhood groups divided into smaller regions or groups with different issues every effort was made to capture every perspective.

These statements appear in this plan to provide information regarding the perspective and important issues of the people attending the neighborhood groups meetings. The statements carry no regulatory weight but serve to give input to the body of regulation contained in this comprehensive plan. It is not suggested that these statements capture the perspective and important issues of every person living in a neighborhood group area. These statements represent the vision and important issues of those who participated in the neighborhood planning process.

Chapter One
Section four

ADOPTION PROCESS
The Comprehensive Plan is adopted under the legislative powers of the Board of County Commissioners. The Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Designation Map identify resource areas, compatible land uses, and densities in all unincorporated areas, including public lands. The Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan identifies existing incorporated boundaries of the Cities and Towns but has no authority within those boundaries.

The Comprehensive Plan, as a land use control, must comply with RCW 43.21C (SEPA) and WAC 197-11 (SEPA Rules). An appeal of the SEPA Final Determination is appealable, under current Okanogan County Code, to the Board of County Commissioners.

An open record public hearing is required, under current Okanogan County Code, before the Okanogan County Regional Planning Commission. The Planning Commission, after hearing testimony and examining submitted information, adopts a recommendation of approval, approval with recommended amendments, or denial to the Board of County Commissioners. The Planning Commission is required to adopt Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law to support their recommendation.

As a land use control, the Comprehensive plan is adopted by ordinance by the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners is required to conduct an open record public hearing. After hearing all testimony and examining submitted information, including the complete record of the Planning Commission, the Board of Commissioners may adopt by ordinance, amend and adopt by ordinance, or remand the Comprehensive Plan back to staff for additional review. If
amended or remanded, the Board of County Commissioners will determine if a new
hearing is required before the Planning Commission. In the event of remand or
amendment the Board of County Commissioners, after consulting with the designated
SEPA responsible official, will determine if additional review under SEPA is required.

The Board of County Commissioners will adopt by ordinance the Comprehensive Plan
and the Comprehensive Land Use Designation Map. The Final Decision made by the
Board of County Commissioners will be considered valid on its face. The final decision
made by the Board of County Commissioners is appealable, by those with standing, in
accordance with RCW 36.70C (Land Use Petitions Act).

Chapter one
Section five

AMENDMENT PROCESS

Amendments to the Comprehensive plan will be considered on an annual basis. Proposed
Amendments will be reviewed in accordance to the requirements in this section and all
applicable State Law.

Docking
The period for docking proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or
Comprehensive Land Use Designation map will begin Jan 31 and End on June 1 of each
calendar year. The proposed amendments will be submitted on forms provided by
Okanogan County Planning. The Director of Okanogan County Planning or others as
designated by the Board of County Commissioners shall review each proposal for
completeness and for consistency with the County Wide Planning Policies and all
applicable State Laws and Okanogan County Code. The determination of complete
application will be made by June 30 of each year.

A list of all complete applications, along with a statement of consistency or non-
consistency, will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners by July 7 of each
year. The Board of County Commissioners will determine which proposals to docket for
further review by July 31. The proposals selected for docketing will be returned to the
Director of Planning for further review and SEPA.

Proposed amendments to the Urban Growth Area of any City or Town must be docketed
with the affected City or Town in accordance with the UGA section of the comprehensive
Plan. The Board of County Commissioners will consult with the affected City or Town
before determining if an amendment to the UGA will be forwarded review.

The proposed amendments selected for further review will be scheduled for public
hearing in front of the Okanogan County Regional Planning commission no later than
October 31 of each year. No later than November 20 of each year, the Regional Planning
Commission will forward to the Board of County Commissioners a recommendation of
approval or denial for each proposal including findings of fact and conclusions of law
supporting their decision.
The Board of County Commissioners shall, before December 31 of each year, conduct an open record public hearing to consider the recommendation of the Regional Planning Commission, testimony, and other information submitted. The Board of County Commissioners shall adopt by ordinance any amendment to be approved or denied. The Board of County Commissioners shall adopt findings of fact and conclusions of law to support their decision.

The final decision of the Board of County Commissioners shall be considered valid on its face. The final decision of the Board of county Commissioners is appealable, by those with standing, in accordance with RCW 36.70C (Land Use Petitions Act)

5 year review
The Board of County Commissioners shall order the review of the Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Designation Map 5 years from date of 1st approval and every 5 years thereafter. The Board of County Commissioners will adopt by Resolution a Scope of Work describing the process for the 5 year review, including a public participation plan.

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. The public participation plan shall be consistent with the adopted scope of work.

Chapter One
Section Six A
COUNTY WIDE PLANNING POLICIES
The process of updating the Comprehensive Plan will be guided by a series of Countywide Planning Policies. The Countywide Planning Policies identify key planning principles and provide a framework for actively involving local residents, business and property owners, the cities and towns, local service providers, and the Colville Confederated Tribes. These policies have been developed and refined through a series of intergovernmental coordination meetings, as well as several opportunities for public review. There will be additional opportunities to review and comment on the following Countywide Planning Policies throughout the comprehensive planning process.

County Wide Planning Policy 1
The revised Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan will be based on a Vision Statement approved by the Board of County Commissioners

County Wide Planning Policy 2
It is the intent of Okanogan County to promote the coordination of all local planning initiatives and to integrate as appropriate other plans and priorities into the County

**County Wide Planning Policy 3**

Although Okanogan County is not required to fully comply with the provisions of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), it is the intent of the County to be proactive in the use and interpretation of GMA planning principles and practices to guide the process of updating the County Comprehensive Plan.

**County Wide Planning Policy 4**

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.

**County Wide Planning Policy 5**

The updated Comprehensive Plan will include County-wide Goals and Policies that address land use, natural resource lands, environmentally sensitive areas, natural hazards, community safety, economic development, transportation, housing, parks and recreation, utilities, essential public facilities, and capital facilities needs and priorities.

**County Wide Planning Policy 6**

It is the intent of the County to ensure that the updated County Comprehensive Plan be sensitive to the diversity of unique landscapes and demography within the County. To allow for resident and geographic specific planning, the County will be divided into the following planning areas:

- Upper Okanogan Valley
- Mid-Okanogan Valley
- Tunk
- Riverside
- Loomis
- Methow Valley (Mazama, Middle, Lower)
- Brewster Area
The planning area boundaries were created to reflect different local conditions and to recognize historical service areas and transportation corridors.

County Wide Planning Policy 7
Each of the identified planning areas will develop Comprehensive Plan Designations that will address unique local circumstances and priorities and be consistent with the County-wide and the Comprehensive plan element Policies.

County Wide Planning Policy 8
The County will consult with adjacent Counties, the Colville Confederated Tribes, and State and Federal organizations with interests within the County throughout the County Comprehensive Planning Process as appropriate and applicable.

County Wide Planning Policy 9
It is the expectation of Okanogan County that State, Federal, and Regional Agencies will prepare, implement, and update plans and regulations consistent with the County’s Vision Statement and Comprehensive Plan.

County Wide Planning Policy 10
It is the intent of Okanogan County to actively involve and coordinate with the incorporated cities and towns throughout the County Comprehensive Planning process.

County Wide Planning Policy 11
In partnership with the incorporated cities and towns, the County will establish criteria for the allocation of projected population growth in order to identify and map parcel specific Urban Growth Areas (UGA) that will provide adequate land to meet projected population allocations at urban densities. Additionally, the UGA will reflect a realistic assessment of the logical outer boundaries for the cost-effective provision of urban services. These UGAs shall remain interim until adopted by the cities and towns.

County Wide Planning Policy 12
The County will actively consult with the Colville Confederated Tribes in updating the County Comprehensive Plan and will establish a protocol for integrating the updated plan with the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Tribes for the Colville Reservation and Trust Lands as appropriate and applicable.
County Wide Planning Policy 13
Okanogan County will establish criteria to identify and map environmentally sensitive areas and will prepare regulations to preserve and protect these areas utilizing the provisions of Best Available Science.

County Wide Planning Policy 14
Okanogan County will establish criteria to identify and designate natural resource areas including mining, timber, and agricultural lands and will provide opportunities within County policy to sustain the traditional natural resource industries in the County.

County Wide Planning Policy 15
Okanogan County, in partnership with incorporated cities and towns, will establish housing goals and policies that encourage a range of housing stock to meet housing demand for all economic segments of the County’s population.

County Wide Planning Policy 16
Okanogan County will establish diverse and sustainable economic development goals and policies, which support economic prosperity, enhance the quality of life for County residents, and promote employment and economic opportunity for all citizens.

County Wide Planning Policy 17
Okanogan County will evaluate current and anticipated transportation opportunities to ensure the development of a transportation system that is efficient, safe, environmentally sensitive, serves a diverse population, and improves facilities concurrent with new land development.

County Wide Planning Policy 18
Okanogan County will identify capital facilities necessary to support planned levels of growth and will identify funding sources and strategies that make effective use of limited County resources.

County Wide Planning Policy 19
Okanogan County will inventory Essential Public Facilities in the County, and shall establish criteria for the citing of Essential Public Facilities of regional and statewide significance.
County Wide Planning Policy 20
It is the intent of Okanogan County to establish policies, which address the protection of people and property from wildfires, identifies facilities and services needed for safe and coordinated land management in case of wildfire and guides future development in a direction which is proactive in the attempt to reduce the adverse effects of wildfire.

County Wide Planning Policy 21
It is the intent of the County to provide a streamlined and predictable planning and permitting process. Okanogan County will define the interrelationships between the multiple policies and regulations as well as develop a mechanism to provide for intra-County and intergovernmental coordination.

County Wide Planning Policy 22
To the greatest extent possible, Okanogan County will recognize and integrate existing plans during the development of planning area and sub-area plans.

County Wide Planning Policy 23
It is the intent of Okanogan County to establish protocols to identify and protect cultural resources throughout the county.
Chapter One
Section Six B

PRIVATE PROPERTY AND WATER RIGHTS

Citations:
United States Constitution, Fifth Amendment
Washington State Constitution, Article 1, Section 16
RCW Chapter 8.08 Eminent Domain by Counties
RCW Chapter 8.25 Eminent Domain Proceedings
RCW 36.70A.370 Protection of Property Rights

Okanogan County believes in the protection of a private citizen’s right to the use of the land they own. Land owners' rights must be protected from the conversion of their land to public use without due process and just compensation. In addition, a land owner's rights must be protected from regulation that deprives the land owner of all reasonable use and value or places a burden on them disproportionate to the impacts the activities on their land causes.

The actions of government constitute a “taking” when:
1) the property is physically appropriated, or
2) by regulating or limiting the use of property under the government's police power authority in such a way as to destroy one or more of the fundamental attributes of ownership which are: the right to possess, the right to exclude others, and the right to dispose of property, or
3) deny all reasonable economic use of the property, or
4) requiring property owners to provide a public benefit rather than mitigating an impact caused by the proposed use of the land.

Water Rights
Okanogan County recognizes a water right as private property and affords it the same protection. Okanogan County adheres to the premise of “first in time, first in right” that is a foundation block of western water law. A water right put to a beneficial use, including a temporary dedication to in stream flow, should be protected from relinquishment to the State.
Okanogan County further recognizes that keeping the right to use water within Okanogan County is critical to the economic health of the county. To this end Okanogan County encourages water right holders to consider all other options to protect their water right or to realize profit from its use before offering it for sale outside of the County. Okanogan County will attempt to create incentive based programs to encourage the owner of water rights to keep them in the County. Such programs might include:
1) Water banking
2) Density Bonuses as adopted in a Public Benefit Rating System that promotes the use of water in the County or promotes the transfer of water for use in the County.
3) Seeking funding for the acquisition of water rights for use in the County.
4) Promote the re-issuance of water rights lost through relinquishment within Okanogan County.
5) Promote the mitigation of impacts caused by the use of water transferred outside of the county by the end user of the water. This statement should not be construed in any manner that implies any interference with an owner's right to sell their water right to any buyer.

Chapter Two – EXISTING CONDITIONS

Section One

CURRENT LAND USE

The current comprehensive plan was adopted in 1965 and has existed with little change since adoption. The current comprehensive plan was adopted under the authority of the planning enabling act RCW 36.70.

The following section explains the total acreage in each of the land use designations contained in the current comprehensive plan and existing zone designation map or is identifies the current use of the land.

Minimum Requirement District 2,234,562.916 (includes reservation)
(zone designation often within unclassified designation on the comprehensive plan map)

Colville Reservation 1,556,134

Neighborhood Use 14.224

Agricultural-Residential Designation 491.050

Airport Development District 176.645

Barnholt Loop 642.670

Carlton Agriculture 66.753

Carlton Commercial 16.796

Commercial 223.291

Industrial 7.479

Low Density Residential 4605.097

Molson Overlay 68,725.526

MRD1 601.612

MRD 12,500 27.531
Chapter Three – RESOURCE LANDS

History
Okanogan County was one of the last areas in the Washington Territory that was settled. These settlers were Miners, Ranchers and Farmers, Trappers, Hunters and Fisherman, and Loggers. The fierce independence and courage that allowed the first residents to succeed is an integral part of the heritage of Okanogan County today. As of 2006 the following facts support the importance of resource based activities in Okanogan County.

Minerals
76 jobs are directly tied to mining activities

Agriculture
4,531 jobs are generated by farming and farm related activities (2006)
1,205,229 acres in agriculture (2007)
$208,758,000 value of agricultural products produced (2007)

Forestry
1,721 jobs in forestry and related

Purpose
The residents of Okanogan County recognize the land as a valuable and irreplaceable resource. The purpose of the Resource Land Designation is to recognize the value of these lands to the economic and cultural well being of the residents of Okanogan County. Through the use of innovative planning tools the critical mass of land necessary to achieve sustainability for the future can be preserved without dismissing the immediate needs of both the individual landowner and the residents as a whole.

Through the use of a wide variety of incentive based and regulatory approaches it is the purpose of this plan to achieve the preservation of the amount of land necessary to allow...
sustainable levels of resource based activities. The land is the basis for most human activities. It is understood that a balance amongst all the necessary land use objectives must be realized. In addition to resource based activities the land must provide housing, wildlife habitat, water storage and purification, transportation corridors, recreation, and many other critical necessities. Recognizing these needs, this plan attempts to designate the lands best suited for resource based activities as Resource Lands.

Authority
Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70 Planning Enabling Act
RCW 36.70A.170 Resource Lands
RCW 36.70A.050 Guidelines for classifying Agricultural, Forest, and Mineral Lands
RCW 36.70A.177 Innovative Zoning Tools and Accessory Uses
RCW 36.70A.370 Protection of Private Property
Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-190 Minimum Guidelines to Classify Agricultural, Forest, and Mineral Lands

Classifications
Agricultural Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance
Mineral Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance
Forest Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance
Urban Resource

Criteria
In considering whether to designate lands as Resource Lands the following criteria shall be used. Okanogan County, as the largest county in the State of Washington, offers challenges in the review of these lands created by the unique characteristics of each area. The criteria shall be afforded different weight as they are considered in light of the unique conditions each area presents.

Agricultural Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance
a) Availability of public facilities
b) Tax status
c) Availability of public services
d) Relationship or proximity to Urban Growth Areas
e) Parcel size
f) Land use settlement patterns and their compatibility with agricultural practices
g) Intensity of nearby land uses
h) History of land development permits issued nearby
i) Land values under alternative uses
j) Proximity of markets
k) Soil types
l) Climate of area
m) Topography and altitude
n) Changing markets influence on possible crop types
Mineral Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance

a) Presence of known and potential deposits of sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances and other minerals as appropriate.
b) Geologic Factors
c) Environmental Factors
d) Economic Factors
e) Depth of the resource
f) Depth of the overburden
g) Physical properties of the resource including quality and type
h) Life of the resource
i) Resource availability in the region
j) Accessibility and proximity to the point of use or market
k) In classifying mineral lands the County shall consider the effects of proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the land as indicated by:
   * General land use patterns in the area
   * Availability of utilities
   * Availability and adequacy of water supply
   * Surrounding parcel size and surrounding uses
   * Subdivision or zoning for urban or small lots
   * Availability of public roads and other public services

Forest Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance

a) Availability of public facilities
b) Tax status
c) Availability of public services
d) Relationship or proximity to Urban Growth Areas
e) Parcel size
f) Land use settlement patterns and their compatibility with forest practices
g) Intensity of nearby land uses
h) History of land development permits issued nearby
i) Land values under alternative uses
j) Proximity of markets
k) Soil types
l) Climate of area
m) Topography and altitude

Urban Resource

The Urban Resource Designation is used to designate lands currently in active agricultural production within Urban Growth Areas or in Proximity to Urban Centers.

(Following is new language added to urban resource 11-20-08)

As stated previously Okanogan County protects and promotes agriculture as not only an important foundation block of our local economy but as an integral part of our heritage. Okanogan County further recognizes that many of our agricultural operations fall in or near urban centers. As more pressure mounts on the transportation grid and the cost of transporting food and materials grows it is important that local policies recognize a need
to preserve the capacity to provide a local independent food supply. For future
generations to thrive it is imperative a local dependable food supply is possible.

The urban resource designation recognizes the existence of viable agricultural lands
within or adjacent to urban growth centers. Because these lands are proximate to urban
densities the potential for conflict from incompatible uses is increased. Development
adjacent or within urban resource areas must be reviewed for suitable buffers and plat
notes must disclose to the potential buyer of land within these developments the potential
for inconvenience brought about by the proximity of agricultural operations.

Lands bearing the urban resource designation are so designated to recognize the critical
contribution they make to the food supply and agricultural economy. As population
centers grow eventually this land might be utilized in a different manner to provide the
greatest public benefit. Lands designated as urban resource are located in such a manner
that they are automatically planned as transition areas as well. The de-designation of
these lands will be part of an annual review process of the comprehensive plan and such
proposals must be reviewed in coordination with the adjacent city where appropriate.
The de-designation of Urban Resource Lands located in or adjacent to LAMIRD’s must
be reviewed in conjunction with the sub-area plan, if any, for the LAMIRD.

Density in urban resource lands

Lands currently in use for agriculture that are in or adjacent to designated urban growth
areas are eligible for designation as urban resource lands. The proposed density for urban
resource lands is 2 acres. Lands adjacent to urban resource lands may develop to higher
densities but only through the long plat or cluster platting processes. Lands developed to
higher densities bear the burden of providing buffers from adjacent agricultural
operations and the plat will bear a note disclosing the potential for inconvenience as a
result of residing adjacent to these lands.

Mapping

The Okanogan County Comprehensive Land Use Map will identify those areas
designated as Resource Lands. The map designations will be directed by the chosen
criteria but will be reconciled to parcel boundary lines.

Agriculture lands map

Rename current intensive agriculture designation to resource lands. Review all areas
currently in resource tax classification for resource lands designation. Use existing USDA
agricultural activities map to consider designation of areas not in current use tax
classification.

Mineral Lands map

Rename existing mineral extraction sites as resource lands. Map geologic features that
identify the potential presence of minerals and designate them as resource lands. Mineral
extraction with a commercial nexus will be regulated through zoning.
Forest Lands map
Lands currently in resource tax classification designated as resource lands. Use of USDA forest maps to identify lands with timber stands in excess of 20 acres for designation as resource lands.

**RESOURCE LANDS - Agricultural Land of Long Term Commercial Significance**

**History:**
Okanogan County has a rich history of agriculture ranging from family truck farms, orchards, and cattle raising operations to large enterprises situated on thousands of acres. This mix of agricultural activities has contributed much to not only the economics of Okanogan County but forms an important part of our identity as well. Agriculture, whether as a first time venture or family operation that has spanned generations, has been an integral part of life for thousands of Okanogan residents. The stewardship of the land that has been a cornerstone for this lifestyle is a cornerstone of this comprehensive plan.

**Purpose**
Okanogan County currently has (acres?) in agriculture according to (?). The total value of all farm products is estimated at (?) according to (?) figures. Agriculture creates in excess of (?) jobs. The purpose of the Resource Lands Designation is to recognize the importance of these lands to the future well-being of Okanogan County residents. Those charged with preparing this plan are mindful of the tremendous investment many have placed in their land with an eye towards creating the financial security necessary as one approaches retirement or, through ever changing circumstances, find they can no longer live the life they have known. Through a variety of innovative planning tools Okanogan County strives to realize the balance necessary to avoid stripping a generation of their wealth yet at the same time preserving the critical mass of land necessary to have a viable economic base for agricultural. These tools include, but are not limited to, cluster development, transfer of development rights, and conservation easements. By utilizing these tools and others we hope to leave intact the possibility of building future generations of residents who derive their livelihood from agriculture and identify themselves as agriculturalists.

**Compatible Uses**
The history of the economics of agriculture is a series of highs and lows. To avoid the necessity of converting the land to other uses during low points it is important a wide variety of planning tools be available. Many of these tools are listed previously. In addition to these tools a wide variety of activities should be considered compatible or capable of being made compatible with agriculture. These activities are listed as follows:

*All agricultural operations including raising food or fiber, livestock, feedlots, or the processing of same. (Conditional use reviews for slaughterhouse, other higher impact processing or activities)*
*Sale of agricultural products.*
*Tourism Activities with a nexus to agriculture or compatible with off-season periods.*
* Residential Activities including all single family, extended family, and farm worker housing. (Residential Development will be required to buffer and protect itself from legitimate agriculture operations. The Farming Operations Disclosure will be required on plats creating new lots and site evaluations for existing lots.)

* Manufacturing Activities that are resource based or require proximity to agricultural operations or are compatible with agricultural operations.

* Mineral extraction

* Timber management and harvest.

* Home Occupations

* Neighborhood Commercial Centers (encouraged in existing Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development)

Density

This option would increase the underlying density to in most Resource Designated areas to 20 acres. Densities could be increased by using a cluster subdivision process which gives bonuses consistent with a Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS). The PBRS would emphasize the voluntary assignment of future development restrictions in exchange for density bonuses. Conservation easements, both public and privately financed and a program supporting the Transfer of Development Rights would be encouraged in Resource Designated Areas. Minimum lot sizes created through the cluster process would be determined by public health requirements.

General Planning Objectives (new addition 12/02/08) (cited as GPO #)

GPO-

Okanogan County supports agricultural activity as a vital component of our economic base, as the foundation of a local food supply, and an integral part of our heritage. Okanogan County will protect agriculture from the impact of incompatible uses by utilizing appropriate land use designations and effective review processes.

GPO-

Okanogan County recognizes the constitutional protection of private property rights and the role the value of land plays in the retirement security for a generation of residents. Okanogan County will not take land for the public use without compensation to the landowner. Okanogan County will implement an effective array of land use tools, to include but not be limited to, cluster subdivisions, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, and effective buffering to provide value to the landowner from reasonable development opportunities without creating incompatible uses that creates legal or physical challenges to on-going agricultural operations.

GPO-

Okanogan County recognizes the importance of an effective transportation system to agricultural operations in the movement of equipment, materiel, stock, and agricultural products. Okanogan County will always consider the needs of agriculture in all future transportation planning efforts. Traffic Control Regulation allowing for the safe and effective use of the county road system by agriculture in areas bearing a resource
designation will be implemented. Areas designated as Agricultural Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance will also be considered for open range designation where livestock operations are prevalent.

**RESOURCE LANDS-Mineral Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance.**

**History**

Okanogan County has a history of mining activity. The extraction of precious metals, stone, sand, and gravel generate $xxx annually in Okanogan County and employs xx people according to figure generated by Washington State University. There are currently xx permitted mines with many more used on a personal or otherwise limited basis. Mining is an important part of our cultural heritage and economic base.

**Purpose**

Mineral extraction is an important component of many other activities in Okanogan County. Precious metal extraction provides employment. Rock, sand, and gravel extraction provide employment but in addition provide material for road building and other construction activity. Winter time road maintenance is a critical element in enhancing public safety.

**Compatible Uses**

The mineral lands designation appears as an overlay to the underlying zone. The overlay is created based on the criteria listed earlier. Proposals for mining operations are reviewed in these areas as conditional uses in all zones in the overlay to identify and mitigate impacts to surrounding uses. Small scale operations for personal use are permitted in all zones in the designation.

**Density**

The mineral lands designation does not alter the densities in underlying zones. To ensure compatibility between the underlying zones and the mineral lands designation the criteria listed earlier must be applied and an analysis of the best land use made. Consideration should be given to the zoning of lands that lend themselves to mineral extraction to prevent zoning that would allow incompatibility uses in those areas.

**RESOURCE LANDS-Forest Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance**

**History**

Okanogan County has a long history of resource based forest activities. Logging, grazing, hunting, fishing, and a variety of recreational activities employs xx people in Okanogan County and is an important part of our history. Value of forest products produced in Okanogan County exceeds $xxx. The contribution of forest land to the quality of life in Okanogan County is immeasurable.

**Purpose**

The Resource Lands Designation for Forest Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance achieves the same goals as the agricultural land designation. Preserving the
ability of these lands to provide the timber resources necessary to sustain the responsible
harvest and processing of timber products is critical to the economic base and culture of
Okanogan County. Timber products, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, 
watershed protection and storage, and livestock grazing are but a few of the critical 
functions of our forest land. Forest Land also provides opportunities for housing that 
serves a lifestyle embraced by many. All of these critical functions must be balanced to 
ensure a sustained ability of the forests to provide them and to enable them to exist as 
compatible activities.

Compatible Uses
Because of the period of time necessary to bring a forest from seedling to harvest it is 
important that the ebb and flow of market trends are weighed against the decades needed 
for the forest to mature. Land use tools, such as conservation easements, transfer of 
development rights, and clustering should be used to create legitimate levels of 
development opportunity without eroding the critical mass of forest lands necessary to 
maintain the forest based activities previously listed. As well, the permitted and 
conditional uses allowed in the forest designation creates the ability to ensure economic 
sustainability for the landowner by giving them the ability to respond to market trends 
without taking the critical mass of land out of forest production.

The following shall be permitted uses:
* Harvest and processing of forest products
* Agricultural activities including raising and processing of food and fiber as well as 
  livestock grazing.
* Single Family Residential uses (residential development is responsible for buffering 
  from the impacts of surrounding permitted resource based activities)
* Commercial tourism (hunting, fishing, trail systems, lodges, transient accommodations, 
  (retreat centers, etc.)
* Mineral extraction
* Manufacturing that requires proximity to forest products
* Home Occupations

Density
Option 2 (medium density)
This option would increase the underlying density in most Resource Designated areas to 
20 acres. Densities could be increased by using a cluster subdivision process which gives 
bonuses consistent with a Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS). The PBRS would 
emphasize the voluntary assignment of future development restrictions in exchange for 
density bonuses. Conservation easements, both public and privately financed and a 
program supporting the Transfer of Development Rights would be encouraged in 
Resource Designated Areas. Minimum lot sizes created through the cluster process 
would be determined by the requirements of public health.
General Planning Objectives (new addition 12/02/08) (Cite as GPO#)

Okanogan County recognizes the important role forest land plays in our economy, recreational pursuits, and cultural heritage. Okanogan County will promote the responsible harvest of forest products and the protection of these lands from incompatible uses. Okanogan County will coordinate with the public land managers (USFS, BLM, DNR, etc) to create appropriate land use designations and effective management practices to further these goals.

Urban Resource Designation

History
The Urban resource Designation is created to recognize the historical practice in Okanogan County of working orchards and other farming activities near or even in urban areas. The citizens of Okanogan County recognize that these agricultural operations contribute measurable to the production of food and fiber and are a part of the base of the agricultural economy. The designation also takes into account that as populations grow the proximity of food production to the people it feeds becomes more critical. This designation also anticipates the time ahead when the land may be needed for housing, commercial activity, and other uses that are best located in urban centers.

Purpose
The Urban Resource designation acts as a transition designation that preserves the agricultural activity currently in place but recognizes the land might be needed for more intense uses as population grows and is encouraged in the urban centers. The Urban Resource designation serves to generate the need for the farm activities disclosure as well as placing the responsibility for buffering from the impacts of legitimate agricultural activities on the surrounding residential or commercial development.

Compatible Uses
Permitted Uses on Lands in the Urban Resource Designation shall be consistent with those enumerated for the surrounding urban growth areas or lands in the Rural-High Density designation.

Density
Underlying densities on land in the Urban Resource Designation will be 2 acres.

Chapter Four – RURAL LANDS

Purpose
Through the course of comprehensive planning the County actively identifies and designates Urban Growth Areas and Resource Lands. Incorporated City Limits are established by law and are under the jurisdiction of the legislative bodies of those Cities and Towns. All other lands are designated as Rural.
The Rural designation has the potential for the greatest variety of residential densities and permitted and conditional uses. Okanogan County is large in size and varied in topography and climate so that lands in the Rural Designation have the potential to exhibit great differences in terms of capacity for settlement patterns and different uses and activities. It is important that Rural Lands are used effectively to generate home sites, smaller scale agriculture activities, home occupations, neighborhood service areas, recreational activities and a variety of other potential uses necessary to preserve our culture and lifestyle. At the same time lands in the Rural Designation often contain areas of critical habitat and migration routes, aquifer recharge areas, shorelines of state and local importance, wetlands, and other important features of the land and environment. It is critical that the Comprehensive Plan and the Zone Code and the Permitting Processes it generates achieve a successful balance of these important considerations.

**General Planning Objectives**

GPO

Land Use Proposals must be effectively reviewed to insure residential and other uses do not create an incompatible mix of densities and activities.

GPO

Land use designations within the rural lands must provide sufficient land for housing and business activities suited to the rural areas. These designations and the projects they anticipate must be compatible with available water supplies, capacity of the area for on-site septic, and the ability to provide adequate levels of public services.

GPO

Okanogan County shall provide innovative land use tools, such as clustering and focused transfer of development rights and conservation easement programs, to enable property owners the opportunity to preserve open space and other critical environmental features such as habitat, wetlands, and migration corridors concurrent with development proposals.

GPO

Okanogan County shall periodically review this comprehensive plan to insure the designations contained herein are consistent with designations found in the critical areas ordinance, shorelines master program, flood management programs, and hazard mitigation plan.

GPO

Agricultural activities shall be recognized and promoted in the rural designation to insure the opportunity for small scale operations. Development proposals shall be reviewed for impacts to existing agricultural operations.

GPO

Development proposals shall be reviewed for impacts to the transportation system and conditions of approval will be identified to mitigate adverse impacts to current and future
levels of service. Improvements will be required based on a proportionate share nexus to prevent onerous requirements on new development while at the same time avoiding unreasonable impacts to the existing tax base.

**Designations**

To recognize and effectively manage the great diversity of the landscape in Okanogan County the Rural Designation is divided into three sub-designations. These designations are Rural-High Density, Rural-Medium Density, and Rural-Low Density.

**Rural High Density**

Rural-High Density designations will be located adjacent to urban areas and areas that demonstrate an enhanced ability to provide services. Rural-High Density will allow lot sizes of 1 acre or larger. Smaller lots may be obtained through a cluster subdivision or planned development in accordance with an adopted public benefits rating system. An area’s ability to sustain higher levels of density and a greater array of permitted uses will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Review Elements:
  - Proximity to urban areas
  - Proximity to major transportation routes
  - Availability of potable water and/or water service providers
  - Proximity to already existing higher density areas
  - Availability of fire protection, emergency services, and other vital services

**Rural Medium Density**

Areas currently designated for minimum lot sizes in excess of 3 acre but less than 20 will be designated Rural Medium Density. Other areas will be designated Rural Medium Density moving away from urban areas but still having proximity to transportation corridors, potable water supply, and ability to deliver vital services. Smaller lot sizes may be obtained through a cluster subdivision or planned development in accordance with a public benefit rating system. The minimum lot size created through the cluster process will be determined by public health requirements.

**Rural Low Density**

Those areas currently designated for lot size in excess of 20 acres shall be designated as Rural-Low density. Other areas will be designated Rural-Low density moving away from transportation corridors or in areas where ingress/egress or the location of safe building sites is restricted due to topography. Areas with a demonstrated inability to provide adequate water resources or in those areas that are designated as critical habitat for threatened or endangered species shall be designated Rural Low-density. Smaller lot sizes may be obtained through a cluster subdivision or planned development in accordance with a public benefit rating system.

**Compatible Uses**
History

Lands in the Rural Designation will contain the greatest mix of existing and proposed uses because of the tremendous diversity of these lands. A wide range of compatible uses should be identified with reliance on the permitting processes to ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses and the historical characteristics of the neighboring area. Comprehensive review of land use proposals for generated impacts and to insure compatibility will be necessary to prevent conflicts. It is the objective of zoning in the Rural Designation to provide an effective mix of residential, commercial, tourist, and recreational opportunities.

Purpose

The objective of the Rural Designation and its sub-designations is to provide an effective inventory of land for residential and other uses without creating unnecessary conflicts. Neighborhood Commercial/Service centers will become more necessary and must be appropriately sited. The existing mix of agriculture, resource based activities, recreation, and tourist should be maintained to provide diversity to our economic base. These activities must be sited only when the review processes have identified adequate water supplies and the proximity of essential services. A mix of densities should be maintained to provide an adequate inventory of housing stock and to create an efficient settlement pattern while recognizing the demand for a variety of lifestyles.

Permitted Uses

* Residential Uses
* Agricultural Activities
* Home Occupations
* Recreational Activities and Infrastructure

Conditional Uses

Processing of agricultural products
Sale of agricultural products
Neighborhood commercial/service centers
Light manufacturing
Resource based heavy manufacturing
Commercial Tourism

Chapter Five

Section Two

URBAN GROWTH AREAS

History

The GMA requires an Urban Growth Area element for all Counties planning under RCW 36.70A. While not a required element, 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 Urban Growth Area Designation is used to identify those lands into which the City or town intends to grow.
through a 20 year planning window. The policies 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 Urban Growth Areas. 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.

**Purpose**

As stated above, a clear and cooperative approach to land use planning and decision making between the County and its Cities and Towns, is necessary to successfully conduct the business of the people. The adoption of agreed upon Urban Growth Areas into the County Comprehensive Plan accomplishes 2 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 Sub-UGA designations to promote a predictable growth pattern and efficient extension of infrastructure and to insure sufficient inventory of land for residential, commercial, and other development. The County in turn can incorporate into their plan the City or Towns proposed use of the UGA. This allows the County to accurately analyze the inventory of land available for uses best suited to urban areas and to coordinate uses in the rural areas accordingly.

**Designation**

The process for designation of Urban Growth Areas begins with a proposal from the municipality. Only the Municipalities shall propose UGA boundaries. In reviewing proposals for UGA designation the municipality should consider the following factors:

* Current inventory of developable land in the incorporated boundaries
* Inventory of land necessary to provide for projected growth including affordable housing
* Inventory of land necessary to implement an economic development strategy
* Inventory of land necessary to implement a capital facilities plan
* Inventory of land necessary to implement a parks and recreation plan
* Analysis of ability to provide services to designated UGA

The County shall review and adopt Urban Growth Areas. In the event of dispute over a proposed UGA boundary the County shall remand the proposal to the affected Municipality with specific suggestions for change. The Municipality shall consider the suggested changes and return the proposal for further consideration. In the event the dispute is not resolved the County shall stipulate to standing for the Municipality to bring an appeal of the final decision in accordance with RCW 36.70A.

**Amendment**

The designated Urban Growth Areas are eligible for review on an annual basis in keeping with the amendment process for the County Comprehensive Plan. Only the affected Municipality may propose amendments to the designated Urban Growth Area. Land owners in or adjoining the Urban Growth Area must petition the affected Municipality to present their request for amendment. Review of proposed amendments shall consider the criteria used in designating Urban Growth Areas.
Urban Growth Areas shall be reviewed, along with all other elements of the County Comprehensive Plan, after 5 years from the date of adoption but within 6 years and every 5 years thereafter. The review shall consist of any docketed amendments and an internal review for consistency of the Comprehensive Plan, Zone Code, Subdivision Regulation and in the case of UGA’s any adopted intergovernmental agreements. Any proposed amendments or identified inconsistencies must be reviewed by the affected Municipality and endorsed for consideration by the County.

Zoning and Project Review

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

* Compatibility with any sub-designations by the Municipality within the UGA
* Impact of the project or proposal on Municipal Services
* Compatibility with surrounding uses
* Impact of the project or proposal on the Municipal transportation structure

The County and affected Municipality shall consider a co-lead status on projects or proposals requiring SEPA review. To insure that County Zones provide sufficient control over projects or proposals to insure compatibility with sub-designations within a UGA; to create continuity in terms of implementing conditions of approval; and to create certainty in terms of conditions of approval and vesting for the project or proposal a development agreement will be required between the County, the proponent, and the affected Municipality for all projects or proposals within the UGA.

Chapter 6- LAMIRDS (Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development)

RCW 36.70A.070 5(d) of the Growth Management Act recognizes the existence of areas outside of incorporated towns and cities and their urban growth areas that exhibit the characteristics of urban areas. The RCW authorizes the designations of these limited areas of more intense rural development in the rural element of a comprehensive plan and provides planning and future development within those areas.

The comprehensive plan for Okanogan County designates the following Lamird’s and establishes these policies for planning and development within these designated areas.

Methow
Carlton
Malott
Loomis
Wauconda
Chesaw
Molson
Ellesforde
Designation Criteria

Lamird’s will be designated based on the following criteria.
a. Existence of services such as neighborhood retail, tourist retail and services, government services.
b. Existence of urban density.
c. Historical value as past settlement with existing tourist activities.
d. Ability to support more intense development.

GPO

Existing Lamird’s act as neighborhood service centers that contribute positively to the social and economic well being of the citizens of the County. Effective planning within the existing boundaries of the Lamird’s and logical expansion areas provides benefit to the public by increasing the proximity of our citizens to necessary supplies and services.

GPO

Existing Lamird’s should not develop in such a manner that regional retail opportunities are drawn away from the incorporated towns and cities and their UGA’S.

GPO

Existing Lamird’s should develop in such a manner that adequate water supplies are available and on-site septic systems sufficient to provide for the users of the array of services provided within them.

GPO

Existing Lamird’s should develop in such a manner that the impacts to the transportation system brought about by the increased users of the services provided are avoided or mitigated to avoid an erosion of the level of service provided.

GPO

Underlying zoning within Lamird’s or their logical expansion areas must provide an effective mix of permitted and conditional uses that provide the services appropriate to a neighborhood service center without impacting the ability of the towns and cities to develop regional services within their existing boundaries or urban growth areas.

GPO

Designated Lamird’s shall retain their existing zoning. Rezoning to compatible zones will be on an elective basis by the landowners.
Chapter Seven: OVERLAYS

Purpose
Overlays are used to create land use designations on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map for areas that require special considerations that do not change the underlying zone. A common example of the use of overlays is an airport protection area. The overlay identifies special review processes or regulations that work in concert with the underlying zone. In the event there is conflict between the regulations in an underlying zone and an overlay designation the requirements of the overlay will over-ride the zone.

Dark Sky Overlay

Purpose:
The purpose of the Dark Sky designation is to identify areas where light pollution from over-bright or improperly screened lighting degrades the view of the night sky. By regulating outdoor lighting the amount of light directed skyward or onto neighboring properties can be reduced or eliminated.

Education and incentive programs will be created to reduce the use of unnecessary or unscreened outdoor or visible residential lighting.

Ridgeline Protection Overlay

Purpose
The purpose of the ridgeline protection overlay is to identify areas where the construction of residential and other structures negatively impacts the view of the ridges by creating obtrusive colors and shapes or reflective surfaces.

Education and incentive programs will be created to encourage the use of color neutral materials and non-reflective surfaces above identified contour lines.

Wildfire Protection Overlay

Purpose
The purpose of the wildfire protection overlay is to identify those areas prone to a higher risk of wildfire. The wildfire protection overlay can impose restrictions on types of building materials, creation and maintenance of open space, installation of sprinkler systems, and increase water storage/delivery requirements at time of new construction or remodel. The wildfire protection overlay can impose greater requirements for road surface for ingress/egress to buildable lots as well as design requirements for turning radius, grade, and turn-a-rounds. The intent of the overlay is to reduce the risk of fire and, in the event of fire, minimize the threat to people, property, and the natural environment.

The Wildfire committee has created criteria for the designation of high risk areas. The wildfire protection is adopted into the comprehensive plan by reference.
Education and incentive programs will be created to encourage the use of construction techniques and fire prevention measures and to increase the capacity for fire suppression on an individual landowner and developer basis. The education and incentive programs will be county wide in their approach.

**Airport protection overlay**

**Purpose**

The airport protection overlay imposes safety regulations required by the FAA without replacing underlying zones. The additional regulations include but are not limited to height of structures, flammable liquid and material storage, meeting halls, multi-family or transient accommodations, density, lighting, and open water areas. The overlay areas will be specific to each airport and will be configured in accordance with FAA requirements.

While the airport protection overlay does not rezone lands within it’s boundaries it does impose additional restrictions. Lands within airport overlays should be zoned to take into account the impacts of airport operations on the permitted uses within the zones. Disclosure of the possibility of noise and other impacts caused by airport operations to permitted uses in these zones should be recorded against the titles of parcels in the airport protection overlays.

**Chapter Eight - TRANSPORTATION**

**Section one: Adoption by reference**

The Comprehensive Transportation plan for Okanogan County adopted on May 7, 1996 is adopted by reference, with all attachments, into this comprehensive plan.

**Section two: Future study and review**

Okanogan County intends to review and update the transportation plan in 2009-2010 if resources can be obtained to do so.

**GPO:**

Okanogan County finds that a reliable road system contributes to the economic well being of the county. Future development should be reviewed for impacts to the transportation grid and reasonable mitigations should be required to maintain an acceptable level of service.
Chapter Nine: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Introduction

The Housing Chapter describes existing housing conditions and needs in Okanogan County, and projected housing needs for the period 2008-______. To the extent possible, information is included for plans, goals, and specified housing needs of the incorporated cities, towns and sub area plans within the county. The purpose of this is to identify County goals, policies, and strategies for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing and the systems that will lead to affordable housing choices for all economic segments of the population.

This chapter is divided into 4 main sections Housing Conditions and Needs, Local Assessments, Goals Policies and Objectives, and Housing Strategies.

Housing Conditions and Needs includes data derived from a recent county-wide Housing Needs Assessment conducted on behalf of the Okanogan Housing Coalition as well as data from the Washington Center for Real Estate Research at WSU. Local Assessments serves as a place holder for local comment and further development of goals and policies in the incorporated communities of Okanogan County. Goals Policies and Objectives presents a general set of comprehensive goals and policies to guide the implementation of the comprehensive plan. The final section Housing Strategies consists of a set of strategies related to implementation of the Housing Element, and to address any future issue that may arise.

Housing Conditions and Needs

Basic background on the current conditions in Okanogan county as well as educated projections of need are necessary in order to effectively plan for the housing infrastructure that will be needed as well as factors such as location, density, and affordability.

Much of the information in this section has been gleaned from the Housing Needs Assessment developed in 2005 by the Okanogan Housing Coalition under a grant from Washington State Community Trade and Economic Development Community Development Block Grant program. Additionally, Washington Center for Real Estate Research (WCRER) at WSU, Census data and Washington State Housing Finance commission data is cited.

The 2000 Census indicates there are 19,085 units of housing. Of this number, 12,973 were detached single family homes. Mobile homes constituted 3,949 units. Of the total, 883 did not have telephone service, 322 did not have kitchen facilities, and 415 did not have complete plumbing facilities. In 2000 only 22.5% of homes ranged between $100,000 and $150,000 in value. The WCRER indicates median resale values in 2007 at $159,900 and in 2008 at $170,000 – a 21.4% increase in median sales price since 2007.

The housing unit breakdown per sub planning area found in the Housing Needs Assessment follows:
This chart shows 2005 households and projected households by 2010. It should be noted that the term households may include families who are doubled up as indicated by the Homelessness Point in Time count conducted annually. These projections indicate a down turn in most communities. New building permits and construction however, would indicate that housing units will most likely grow rather than decrease. Based upon the experience of low income housing rehabilitation needs, it is reasonable to project that housing units will be lost in low income units – particularly mobile homes and units which have degraded beyond the point of cost effective repair. New units which would balance the count would come from new construction. Although units of permanent supportive housing and assisted living are currently in the planning stage, it is reasonable to project that single family unit growth will not be in affordable housing if current trends continue.

Tenure and Occupancy

Of the 19,085 units found county-wide in the census, only 15,027 were occupied. This is most likely a reflection of second home owner/vacation home impact as well a vacant farm worker housing during winter months.

Tenure in units was expressed in a range of move in dates. The highest percentage of households (28.6 - 4299) had moved in between 1995 and 1998. Most recent move in dates 1999-2000 accounted for 18.8% or 2,820 households. Only 7.6% or 1,143, had moved in during 1969 or before.

Of the 15,027 occupied units, 5,745 were owner occupied and 4,292 were “specified” renter occupied. The differential would be accounted for in those individuals who did not indicate either owner or renter status. Of the 4292 self identified renters, 27% (1,158) were spending 35% of more of their income on the gross rent. The data above indicates a homeownership rate of close to 30% as of 2000. HUD Fair market rents have increased 10% for a two bedroom unit between 2007 and 2008 to $525 per month.

In addition to classification of owner and renter, persons living in assisted living, group homes (for developmental and other disability), or rest home/ care facilities constitute segments of the population which are not currently represented in census housing figures. More data needs to be gathered to assess the county wide need in these populations. Although groups such as the Housing Authority of Okanogan County are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR/PLANNING SUBAREA</th>
<th>COUNTY TOTAL</th>
<th>METHOW VALLEY</th>
<th>OROVILLE</th>
<th>TONASKET</th>
<th>OMAK OKANOGAN</th>
<th>BREWSTER PATEROS</th>
<th>COLVILLE NESPELEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total households, all ages, 2005/2010</td>
<td>14978/14902</td>
<td>2218/2327</td>
<td>1702/1697</td>
<td>2391/2360</td>
<td>4953/4911</td>
<td>1405/1350</td>
<td>1,991/1,944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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currently developing assisted living facilities, growth of this segment of the population points to more need over the next 20 years.

Permanent Housing Infrastructure for the Homeless does not currently exist with the exception of the domestic violence emergency shelter.

**Cost of Housing**

Housing costs in most urban markets are impacted by three basic factors, replacement cost, comparable sales, and demand vs. supply.

In Okanogan County several other factors have impacted the market values. For many years, land costs were a small fraction of the prices paid outside the county even in neighboring Chelan County. Additionally, the economy was depressed and subsequently, the housing market was depressed by lack of qualified buyers and a large inventory of homes for sale.

In the early 90’s second home owners began discovering, buying in, and building in the Methow Valley. Land and home prices escalated out of reach of people earning the median wage. In early 2003 the development of Lake Osoyoos began and interest in investment in the North county put pressure on real estate availability and prices again escalated in the north end of the county. At the same time, real estate speculation was at an all time high and Okanogan county was seen as one of the remaining areas where “bargains” could still be had. This fueled sales to investors as well as second home owners and retirees.

Investors knew that home prices were comparative bargains, but did not recognize the demographic of most renters within the county. Rents escalated and many more individuals either became homeless or were forced to double up in order to maintain housing even though doubling up created danger of eviction for the lessee if the landlord discovered how many people were actually residing in the home. Gentrification began to occur throughout the county and more and more low income individuals were either without housing or forced to live further from work in order to find affordable housing.

From 2003 to 2007 the increase in median home sales price was over 200% according to WCRER. The county assessor’s record of sales, from January 2007 to May 2008 shows that there were 1396 residential sale transactions. Over 24 of these transactions involved new homes ranging in value from a low of $116,000(1) to a high of $495,000. With median sale prices of $170,000 affordable housing for median income earners is generally out of reach.

Increased cost of housing is a larger pressure on affordability than population growth. Over the last ten years, population has varied within a 10% increase /decrease, generally hovering close to 40,000. The largest pressure comes from the decrease in housing available to families earning a living from service industries.
Even with 2 minimum wage earners in a household, the possibility of having disposable income to save toward eventual homeownership is extremely unlikely. A few homeownership programs offered through USDA and the Housing Finance Commission can provide subsidy in interest payments and closing costs. Maintenance and repairs that are deferred due to lack of funds however, can lead to loss of equity for low income homeowners who may have purchased a home that was affordable in payment terms but not in terms of condition (needed repairs or deferred maintenance). For at least the last five years Community Action has been repairing and rehabilitating low income housing stock with no reduction in demand and a waiting list of 200 units at any one time. Pilot programs offering replacement of mobile homes rather than repair offer promise to solve construction issues common in older mobile homes and thus extend the life expectancy of mobile home housing units.

Truly affordable housing includes conservation features such as sufficient insulation in ceilings and walls, sources of heat which are adequate and within Energy Star guidelines, and construction materials with life expectancy and maintenance requirements that meet current efficiency standards.

**Alternative Housing**

Since the 1970’s Alternative construction methodology including the Buckminster Fuller Geodesic Dome, Straw Bale, Super Adobe, Rammed Earth, and underground homes have appeared on the county landscape. While purporting to “cost less” than traditional stick built homes, most of the savings appears to come from donated and owner/builder labor during the construction phase and in energy savings over the life of the home. Many architecturally reviewed plans and buildings have been constructed in the county, while others have been do-it yourself/permit and utility deficient projects begun by individuals simply needing basic shelter who believed they could achieve affordability without possessing the construction skills necessary. This has led to homes that in some cases pose health and safety concerns for the occupants.

Alternative construction which addresses energy conservation and utilizes recycling as well as other “green” methodology offers great promise for dwellings that are appropriate to the countryside as well as the neighborhoods found in towns. The primary promise is livability from less toxic building materials, affordability over the long term in reduced maintenance costs, and reduction of energy consumption during extreme temperatures typical in winter and summer.

**Worker Housing**

Projections for worker housing break into two primary groups in Okanogan County – farm worker and service workers. Farm worker housing further breaks into the needs of year round workers employed in agriculture who are members of the community and Migrant workers who typically reside in county between May and mid October. Service workers include those provided with employment during the height of tourism activity such as those employed by Methow valley resorts, and other workers who typically earn
the minimum wage. While some employers provide overnight lodging for remote resort
employees, the typical employee does not receive housing for a family nor can they
support family housing with minimum wages.

Assistance is available to orchardists and farmers for construction and improvement of
agricultural housing through state CTED programs and for workers who qualify through
the Housing Authority of Okanogan County Section 8 program which typically has a year
long wait list. In the last 12 months homes that pass Housing Quality Standards required
by HUD and meet Fair Market Rents criteria have become very difficult to find for
persons who have a Section 8 voucher. This affordable housing shortage has increased
the number of homeless families.

Potential solutions have been proposed in the form of community supported permanently
affordable rental projects, Land Trust developments and self help housing. These
solutions also require community wide support and investment.

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS
This section will be completed separately through local municipality meetings
between officials, planners, and stakeholders

GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES
Okanogan County has historically supported many of the goals and policies found below. Utilizing best practices and goals from other rural communities and housing
professionals, the following goals policies and objectives have been developed.

1. Provide sufficient number of housing units for future populations in developing
   municipalities as well as rural areas of Okanogan County.
2. Encourage higher density residential land use in municipal areas.
3. Encourage homeownership county wide.
4. Encourage housing development that preserves the local character and
   environment
5. Encourage development of housing that utilizes technology as well as Green,
   Evergreen, and utilizing energy efficient technology.
6. Encourage residential development close to employment opportunities and needed
   services to reduce impacts of traffic and costs of transportation.
7. Respect individual property rights while planning and providing for future
   populations
8. Encourage mixed use development in retail areas to encourage dynamic
   downtown economies.
9. Encourage mixed income developments to prevent segregation and promote
   inclusive community participation
10. Encourage adequate development of temporary housing for migrant farm workers
11. Provide housing which complements and supports economic development
   opportunities
12. Provide basic infrastructure to end homelessness such as permanent supportive
housing and transitional housing.
13. Provide special needs housing for persons living with disabilities.
14. Provide for a wide range of building styles.
15. Encourage development of affordable housing through Land Trust organizations to insure affordability of housing for low income individuals over time.
16. Encourage housing development for all income levels in all areas of the county.
17. Allow for development of additional housing units on existing properties (such as mother in law apartments) in order to provide immediate relief to affordable housing needs.
18. Okanogan County will continue to support policies that increase and maintain the availability of affordable housing throughout the county. Affordable housing definitions shall be consistent with the definition in state law.
19. Okanogan County shall employ a variety of strategies to increase and maintain the availability of affordable housing.

Housing Strategies

The following strategies are numbered in response to the Goals, Policies and Objectives of this chapter.

Strategy 1.1 Work with county wide municipalities and public advocacy groups to identify lands with existing infrastructure such as sewer, power, and water which are suitable for multi family and/or single family development and designate these areas for higher density residential use including planned unit developments and clustered housing.

Strategy 1.2 Work with county wide municipalities and public advocacy groups to identify lands without existing infrastructure (water, sewer, fire protection, parks, and streets) which would otherwise be suitable for higher density development and provide official encouragement for and investment in development of infrastructure through collaboration with developers as well as affordable housing entities.

Strategy 1.3 Mitigate the impacts of expensive developments (homes priced 20% above the median sales price in the county) by requiring developer contribution to the Affordable Housing for All Fund at the time of permitting or identification of units with permanently affordable character dedicated or deeded to a member of the Housing Coalition.

Strategy 2.1 Review the siting of all proposed development (economic, community, public, and housing) to insure compatibility with future higher density land use designations.

Strategy 3.1 Provide access to information on homeownership education opportunities through county website and planning office information.

Strategy 4.1 Engage developers in crafting home designs that are in keeping with historical traditions and are environmentally appropriate. Just as Western Washington has “Northwest Contemporary” the Okanogan may have Highlands Traditional, or Omak Classic or Tonasket Alternative. The goal of these styles would be emphasis on quality, affordability, and sustainability.

Strategy 4.2 Use development regulations to assure quality in housing development and maintenance.
Strategy 5.1  Allow credits for development of water conservation, rain & storm water recycling as well as retention systems

Strategy 5.2  Eliminate requirements which discourage use of innovative technology in residential development.

Strategy 6.1  Work with employers to assure adequate housing stock investment when capital investment is made in centers of employment.

Strategy 6.2  Provide access to walking and bike trails that provide alternative transportation to centers of employment. Provide park and ride lots to encourage affordable transportation between employers and housing developments

Strategy 6.3  Include Multi Family units in Commercial Zones

Strategy 7.1  Provide adequate publication, outreach, and input regarding changes in zoning and development

Strategy 7.2  Provide access to Owner /Builder construction education opportunities

Strategy 7.3  Enforce Building and Zoning codes in residential neighborhoods

Strategy 8.1  Research and formulate guidelines based on best practices in Community Development as it relates to Mixed Use in redevelopment.

Strategy 9.1  Support small development siting of low income units in established neighborhoods as well as new development of mixed values of units. Eliminate zoning barriers to this type of infill which might be pre-existing.

Strategy 10.1  Support development efforts by the agricultural community to provide temporary housing for migrant farm workers.

Strategy 11.1  Support increased development of a wide range of home values in order to support economic development strategies. In addition to low income worker housing, the availability of acceptable higher end housing for managers and owners is minimal and can restrict a company’s ability to rapidly transition upper management for a smooth relocation of business. This problem also applies when recruiting professionals such as doctors and attorneys into the community.

Strategy 12.1  Utilize county funding to end homelessness to leverage investment in basic infrastructure to end homelessness such as permanent supportive housing for families and transitional housing for people who are homeless and suffering from co occurring disorders. Utilize count funding to continue data collection, point in time count, and fund development in support of these efforts.

Strategy 13.1  Support the efforts and applications of agencies working to develop special needs housing.

Strategy 14.1  As a part of achieving best practices in community development and revitalization recognize the value of unique architecture as long as it meets health and safety standards.

Strategy 14.2  Permit historic structure applications for federal and state funds to preserve them

Strategy 15.1  Assure classification of taxation for Land Trusts under non profit status whether single or scattered sites.

Strategy 17-19.1  Encourage the development of new and maintenance of existing affordable housing stock dispersed through the county by a variety of strategies including but not limited to:

1a  Approval of accessory dwelling units, cooperative housing, Boarding houses, and mixed use developments
.1b Support the use of density bonuses for housing development and redevelopment that includes at least 20% affordable housing units.

.1c Support the use of subsidies and grants such as Block Grants from HUD’s Community Development Block Grant Program, HOPEVI (promoting development of run down structures as mixed income developments, Home buyer and renter assistance and Home buyer counseling, Housing Trust fund, HGAP, and low income housing tax credits.

.1d Support the use of non profit community housing land trusts that will own and lease land and or structures to homeowners and guarantee permanent affordability of the homes in the event of resale.

.1e Support the use of non profit community development efforts to rehabilitate existing affordable housing stock through the use of grants, block grants, and community supported housing funds.

Chapter Ten: CAPITAL FACILITIES

Section one: Adoption by reference

The Capital Facilities plan adopted by Okanogan County on May 10, 2004, including all attachments, is adopted by reference in this comprehensive plan.

The Okanogan County capital Facilities Plan serves to identify new capital facilities projects and major enhancements to existing facilities through a twenty year planning window. Focus on funding proposals and critical timelines are focused on the first 6 years of the plan. The Capital Facilities Plan is reviewed on an annual basis and is adopted by reference into the Comprehensive Plan. The Capital Facilities Plan will be adopted by Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners following a comment period of not less than 30 days and a public hearing, notice of which is published in the official county newspaper.

Amendments

Amendments to the Capital Facilities Plan will be docketed, concurrent with proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan from Jan 31 to June 1 of each year. Proposed amendments to the Capital Facilities Plan will be reviewed following the docketing period but not later than November 1 of each year.

5 year review

The Capital facilities Plan will be reviewed and adopted not less than 5 years from date of adoption and every five years thereafter concurrent with the required 5 year review of the comprehensive Plan. Review of the Capital facilities Plan will be consistent with the amendment process in this section.

Chapter Eleven: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Section two: Annual analysis and review

Working in cooperation with the Economic Alliance, Okanogan County Department of Community Development will prepare an annual report for submittal to the Board of
Comp Plan Draft 5/13/09

County Commissioners. The report will contain an analysis of economic activity in Okanogan County and any proposed revisions to the economic development element of the comprehensive plan.

Section three: Recreation

The recreation plan adopted by Okanogan County on April 20, 2004, along with all attachments, is adopted by reference into this comprehensive plan.

The Okanogan County Department of Community Development will prepare an annual report for submittal to the Board of County Commissioners. The report will contain an analysis of recreational activity and infrastructure in Okanogan County and any proposed revisions to the recreation plan. Okanogan County intends to do a complete review of the recreation plan in 2009-2010 if resources are available to do so.

Chapter Twelve: HAZARDS VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

Section one: Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Hazard Mitigation Plan adopted by Okanogan County on January 13, 2009, including all attachments, is adopted by reference in this comprehensive plan.

The Fire Protection plan will be applied county wide using an educational and incentive based approach to minimize the danger of wild land fire.

GPO: Road requirements for development will assure escape routes for residents and safe access for emergency equipment in the event of wild land fire.

The flood management program for Okanogan County will be merged into the critical areas ordinance.

Chapter Thirteen: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Section one: Shoreline Master Program

Okanogan County adopted a Shorelines Master Program as required in RCW 90. on xxxx. The Shorelines Master Program is currently under review. The public review of the Shorelines Master Program began with the review of this comprehensive plan. The review of the Shorelines Master Program will continue on an independent schedule with the exception of a final consistency review and review for impact to the buildable lands analysis.

The Shorelines Master Program will be adopted by ordinance by the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners. The Shorelines Master Program will be adopted by reference into this comprehensive plan.
GPO: To facilitate the creation of local processes the Shorelines Master Program will be implemented under the minimum jurisdiction required by statute. The Critical Areas ordinance will provide necessary regulation in those areas outside of the jurisdiction of the SMP.

Section two: Critical Areas

Okanogan County adopted a Critical Areas Ordinance as required in RCW on xxxx. The public review of the Critical Areas Ordinance began with the review of this comprehensive plan. The review of the critical areas ordinance will continue on an independent schedule with the exception of a final consistency review and review for impact to the buildable lands analysis.

The Critical Areas Ordinance provides regulation relating to sensitive areas such as wetlands, critical habitat, and geologic hazards and will contain the flood management program for Okanogan County.

The Critical Areas Ordinance will be adopted by ordinance by the Okanogan County Board of County commissioners. The Critical Areas Ordinance will be adopted by reference into this comprehensive plan.

Chapter 14: COORDINATION

Section one: 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 authorities to the management of the nation’s resources and to the actions of resource management agencies. It has provided for the involvement of local authority in every federal land use statute passed over 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.

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

1703 United States Code (USC)

1705 43 U.S.C. 1712 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (BLM)

1706 43 C.F.R. 1601 Planning

1707 16 U.S.C. 1604 National Forest Management Act (NFMA)

1708 16 U.S.C. 1533 Endangered Species Act (ESA)

1709 16 U.S.C. 1271 Wild and Scenic River Act

1710 42 U.S.C. 7401 Clean Air Act

1711 33 U.S.C. 1251 Clean Water Act


1713 42 U.S.C. 4331 National Environmental Policy Act

Section two: State Agencies

Upon adoption of the Growth Management Act (RCW36.70A) the legislature recognized the need for State Agencies to make sure their management programs and other activities are consistent with the County Wide Planning Policies and Local Comprehensive Plans required by the GMA.

The State Environmental Policy Act RCW 43.21C sets forth a consistent process for review of probable, significant, and adverse impacts brought about by land use decisions, both project specific and on a program level. The actions of State Agencies, with few specifically enumerated exemptions, are subject to review under SEPA. The actions of the Legislature are categorically exempt from SEPA review.

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 has adopted OCC Section 18, Coordination, to identify clear protocols to inform Federal and State Agencies in their efforts to meet coordination and consistency requirements.

Citations

RCW 36.70A.103

RCW 36.70A.210

RCW 36.70A.370

WAC 365-195-765