

**Middle Methow Neighborhood Group Meeting Minutes from February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**

**Middle Methow Valley  
Draft Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies  
February 28, 2008**

Okanogan County is currently in the process of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan. This update process is featuring a "bottoms up" approach in which different regions, sub-regions and neighborhoods of the County are reviewing and proposing revision to existing local plans which will then become the basis for establishing area specific and general county-wide planning policies. For purposes of updating the County Comprehensive Plan the Methow Valley has been designated as one of six planning areas and the Methow Valley has been roughly divided into three overlapping sub-areas; the North Valley which includes the North Cascades Highway corridor to [Winthrop](#); the Middle Valley which includes focuses on the area from the Weeman Bridge to [North Gold Creek Road](#), and the South Valley which focuses on the area between the [North Gold Creek Road](#) and the City of Pateros. Based on input received from attendees at recent Middle Valley neighborhood meetings, the Goals and Policies contained in the 1976 Methow Valley Comprehensive Plan were selected as the framework to draft updated Goals and Policies applicable to the Middle Methow Valley. **The following is a draft of potential revisions to update the existing goals and policies that will be presented for further public discussion at the March 12, 2008 Middle Methow Valley Comprehensive Planning meeting at 5:30 pm at the Local 98856 Café, 1017 Methow Valley Highway**

Deleted: Twisp

Deleted: the community of Methow

Deleted: community of Methow

**Please note that changes made as a result of the discussions at the February 27, 2008 meeting have been highlighted in underline and strikeout format. Please review the wording of these revisions to make sure that the intent and point of emphasis has been accurately reflected.**

**Middle Methow Valley Vision Statement**

The Methow Valley has long been valued and revered for its intense natural beauty, strong sense of community, and for the self-reliance and motivation of its residents. Presently, as we face an acceleration of growth and development, it is our intention to institute and embrace a vision for the Methow Valley that fosters and preserves the rural characters that define this valley. It is evident that protecting our high quality of life is of vital importance to us today as well as into the foreseeable future and beyond.

Upon entering the Methow Valley, one is instantly greeted with a sense of awe and inspiration. Within the sheer natural splendor of this place, one notices the large tracts of agriculturally productive land on the valley floor that support family-owned farms,

orchards, dairies, and livestock ranches. The hillsides surrounding these lands are comprised of functioning shrub-steppe and forest habitats that support healthy populations of native plants and animals. Ridgelines of the valley allow for unobstructed views of the surrounding mountains. The wildlife migration corridors that exist between and among these areas are protected as conservation lands for the benefit of the ecosystems and its inhabitants. Through this vibrant landscape flows the Methow River and its tributaries, which are teeming with self-sustaining populations of native aquatic life and surrounded by functioning floodplains and riparian forests. We vision our Methow Valley as a place characterized by a self-reliant and sustainable ecological systems including, wildlife, wild and working lands. Integral to this vision are the human inhabitants who, through considerate stewardship of land, water and community, have created a place where all inhabitants have the opportunity to thrive in harmonious unity. One has the sense that the people who call this place home honor and revere the land and who understand that the careful stewardship and preservation of the environment is vital to sustainable pathways to the future.

The Methow Valley is also remarkable for its rich and flourishing local economy. Small, locally owned and operated businesses provide residents and visitors alike with a multitude of goods and services. The towns of the Methow Valley are the focal points of this economy. They are gathering places that promote the economic and social health of the community, serving as a model for innovative and inspiring economic and community development. Housing and commercial development within the growth management zones of the towns has been planned to maximize open spaces and greenways that link the facilities and amenities each town has to offer. Buildings have been constructed and located so as to maximize their energy efficiency whilst minimizing their impact on the land and community. The people who live here have taken the time and energy to invest in their community, their quality of life, and the stewardship of the land. It is evident that there is a deep connection to place that flows through the people who call this special place home and they have been willing to protect and enhance our natural heritage, the thriving local economy and the diverse ecological communities for today and the future.

In accordance with this vision for our community, we have prepared following Goals and Policies for inclusion in the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan.

**Middle Methow Valley Goals:**

1. Preserve and protect the natural environment, fisheries, wildlife, agricultural lands, and open space.
2. Guide new growth and development to areas that are most compatible and consistent with the provisions of this Plan.

Deleted: ¶

Deleted: farmlands

3. New development activities must be consistent with the historical and rural character of the Methow Valley as defined in the Vision Statement, the provisions of this plan, and the Methow Valley Conservancy Good Neighbor Handbook.
4. Require that Project Sponsors pay for the costs associated with serving their new development and to fully mitigate potential adverse impacts.

**Land Use Policies:**

1. New development should not be permitted unless Project Sponsors can demonstrate an adequate supply of water.
2. Proposed development activities must be compatible with permitted neighboring uses.
3. The scale and intensity of new development should be consistent with existing development.
4. New development should not adversely affect existing wells, senior water rights, or water and air quality. Deleted: or
5. Twisp and Winthrop, in consultation with the County, should establish urban growth area boundaries that are consistent with the projected need for urban types of development and that reflect the logical outer boundary of urban services. Deleted: The cities of  
Deleted: , should
6. Identify, prioritize, and designate open space for preservation with an emphasis on larger parcels. Deleted: D  
Deleted: and prioritize
7. The County should establish and implement “Dark Sky” regulations to limit and control the location, direction, and intensity of outdoor lighting.
8. The County should research and adopt standards to limit ridgeline development to keep structures below the topographic profile in order to avoid adverse visual impacts. Deleted: guide
9. The County should review and update the standards for Planned Destination Resorts and clustering, including but not limited to adding a provision that requires that all 640 acres that is needed for a Planned Destination Resort be contiguous.
10. Property owners should be required to manage their lands to minimize the risk of wildfires.

**Natural Environment Policies:**

1. Identify and prioritize high value fish and wildlife habitat and migration corridors for their protection. Deleted: and function
2. Identify and adopt measures to protect locally endangered/significant plant and animal species and critical areas.
3. Do not permit new development that adversely affects designated critical areas, critical fish and wildlife habitat areas, and/or designated wildlife corridors.
4. Revise County Development Regulations to include provisions for wildlife friendly fencing standards.
5. Adopt dog control measures to protect deer and livestock. Deleted: in wintering areas
6. Protect fisheries habitat by maintaining adequate stream flows, subject to existing water rights.
7. No structures for permanent human habitation or any sewage disposal facilities shall be allowed in 100 year floodplains. Deleted: the areas inundated by the 100 year flood
8. Protect and enhance the natural character and geomorphic processes of the Methow, Chewack, and Twisp Rivers, their shorelines, and their tributaries. Deleted:
9. Outdoor burning should be prohibited during air inversion periods.
10. Property owners and public agencies should be encouraged to avoid the use of fertilizers and pesticides that could have an adverse impact on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and neighboring properties.

**Agricultural Policies:**

1. Designate and prioritize agricultural lands for preservation including lands currently used or suitable for agriculture. Deleted: farmlands
2. Implement measures to preserve agricultural lands such as transfer of development rights and current use taxation which encourages agriculture, open space, and forest uses. Deleted: farmlands
3. Protect existing irrigation systems and water rights dedicated to support agricultural uses.
4. Do not support the conversion of water rights dedicated to support agricultural uses to incompatible non-agricultural uses, provided that this policy should not

adversely affect the Town of Twisp's efforts to secure additional water rights to serve their Urban Growth Area.

5. Encourage public use of private grazing lands through access or development easements.
6. Encourage and support the local agricultural economy so that it may achieve and maintain self sufficiency.

**Upland Use Policies:**

Deleted: Forest

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

Deleted: <#>Adopt zoning designations which protect private wood lots.¶

*[The February 27, 2008 review and discussion ended here. The March 12<sup>th</sup> review and discussion will resume at this point.]*

Deleted: <#>Support multiple uses of forested areas that do not adversely affect timber operations, wildlife habitat, and/or environmentally sensitive areas.¶

**Residential Development Policies:**

1. Direct subdivisions, planned developments, planned development resorts, and related types of developments to areas that is compatible with neighboring land uses and where required services exist or can reasonably be provided.
2. Require the provision of housing for employees at new industrial or recreational uses, and at larger scale developments.
3. Subdivisions must be designed to be compatible with the topography and the capacity of natural systems.
4. Permitted densities of development must be consistent with the capacity of natural systems.
5. New residential developments shall be reasonably screened from the highway by natural vegetation.
6. Require that developers pay for and/or fully mitigate the costs associated with new development.

Deleted: the construction of new residences and second homes

Deleted: are

Deleted: community facilities and

Comment [G1]: Which highway(s)?  
Any other roads?

Energy efficient alternative building materials and designs should be permitted.

11. Standards should be established and implemented to permit highly compatible home businesses as a conditional use.
12. Standards should be established to limit the size of new houses so that they are comparable in size to neighboring buildings.
13. The County should actively explore opportunities to promote more affordable housing in the community.

**Commercial Development Policies:**

1. Strip development characterized by x, y, and z.
2. New commercial development should be directed to appropriately zoned sites in the incorporated and unincorporated towns of Twisp, Winthrop, Methow, and Carlton.
3. Adopt and consistently implement new sign standards with an emphasis on:
  - a. The limitation of off-site signs to designated public areas;
  - b. Limiting the size, height, and illumination of on-site signs; and
  - c. The use of natural materials.
4. New commercial development should emphasize local ownership and sized to serve the local community. “Big box” retail facilities should not be permitted.

**Comment [G2]:** What are the undesirable characteristics?

**Industrial Development Policies:**

1. Confine new industrial development and uses to a limited number of areas with a particular emphasis on appropriately zoned sites within incorporated cities and their designated urban growth areas.
2. Permit industrial development with potentially obnoxious features only upon the issuance of a conditional use permit that adequately mitigates potential adverse affects.

**Transportation Policies:**

1. The County should prepare and implement access control plans for state highways and county roads that limit the number of individual access points and that promotes shared or joint use driveways.

2. Encourage road design that provides safe crossing by cattle and wildlife, i.e. underpasses.
3. Where appropriate, provide areas along road right-of-way for bicycle, pedestrian, and horse traffic.
4. Require developers to submit traffic studies with their applications that fully mitigates potential adverse traffic impacts associated with their proposed development.
5. Develop a highway information system that provides adequate information to travelers without degrading the environment.
6. Limit airport related uses to existing airports.
7. Implement land use regulations for airports and adjacent lands consistent with FAA standards.
8. Traffic speeds should be reduced to protect the public health and safety in wildlife corridors, recreation areas, cities and towns, and in areas with higher frequency of accidents
9. Standards to limit offsite signage should be established and enforced with a particular emphasis on areas that are not covered by the National Scenic By-ways standards.

**Comment [G3]:** Is this still an issue? To what extent have the highways been designated as Scenic By-ways with signage standards?

**Comment [G4]:** Is there more than one airport in the sub-region?

**Parks and Recreation Policies:**

1. Prepare and implement a comprehensive trail plan for walking, hiking, jogging, bicycling, and skiing.
2. The development of paths, trails, and bridges should be encouraged.
3. Support recreational uses that do not adversely affect timber operations, agricultural uses, fish and wildlife habitat, and/or environmentally sensitive areas.
- 4.

**Sewer and Water Policies:**

1. Maintain an ongoing water quality monitoring system.
2. Project sponsors must demonstrate that adequate provisions have been mad sewer and water systems to serve new commercial, industrial, and large-scale residential developments.

**Comment [G5]:** Who's responsibility is this?

**Deleted:** new commercial

3. Prohibit septic tanks and drain fields in environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Require developers to pay for the costs associated with providing appropriate levels of water and sewer service.
5. Require Project Sponsors to provide documentation that new wells will not adversely affect existing wells.

**Utility Policies:**

1. Minimize visual impacts of new utility construction and installation.
2. Require underground utilities in developments where **feasible**.
3. Support the undergrounding of existing utilities.
4. **Alternative sources of energy should be supported.**
5. Water rights should not be transferred outside of the Methow Valley.

**Comment [G6]:** How/who determines this?

**Comment [G7]:** Let's discuss the intent and point of emphasis.

**Administrative Policies:**

1. New growth and development must comply with adopted codes and regulations.
2. The County shall establish and maintain an active code enforcement program.
3. Priority consideration shall be given to scheduling public hearings and meetings in the vicinity of proposed projects and to rotating the location of Planning Commission meetings throughout the County.
4. The County shall establish and implement procedures to notify and provide neighboring and affected property owners with timely and meaningful opportunities to comment on proposed comprehensive plan amendments, rezones, and development proposals.