

Resource Lands Advisory Committee suggested text changes to the GPOs within the context of the existing Comprehensive Plan

(Portions of pages 23-36 of the Comp Plan)

2.3 LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan shown on the maps in this chapter provides an official guide for the orderly growth of residential, business and industrial areas in the County. The Plan shows the relationship of these and other land uses to each other, to major parks and to existing and proposed arterials. The Comprehensive Plan Map is generalized and not intended do be precise or permanent. It should not, above all, be interpreted as a zoning map.

The following land use designations are used to establish general locations for different types of activities throughout the County.

2.3(A) Urban Land Use

Urban Residential Land Use

This designation contains those lands within urban growth areas and urban growth nodes which appear to be most suitable and likely for future development and city utilities. The areas are, for the most part, highly suited to orderly street systems and land subdivision. Residential densities and housing types are the subject of this Plan and should be based on the expansion of the Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan or other cities' comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.

GPO 2.92a The future urban residential areas may be both residential and agricultural. Ongoing agriculture should be supported in development regulations.

GPO 2.92b The current use of future urban residential areas may be both residential and agricultural. Meanwhile, ongoing agriculture should be supported as the lands are in transition.

GPO 2.92c Encourage and accommodate future expansion of utilities and roadways for urban densities.

GPO 2.93 Innovations in housing development such as cluster developments, master planned developments, shadow platting and planned unit developments will be encouraged.

Urban Growth Areas and Urban Growth Nodes

Though the areas included within the urban growth area boundaries are intended to urbanize and become annexed in the proceeding 20 years, these lands will continue to be

under County jurisdiction. To ensure both consistency and coordination, the planning for these areas will be done in concert with the respective cities. In addition, interlocal agreements with the individual cities may be necessary to provide the necessary administrative guidance and services to these unincorporated areas.

Two major issues arise in the discussion of urban growth area boundaries. These include phased growth and transitional land uses. Most communities preparing plans for the urban growth area have elected to plan under a phased growth scenario. The overall concept of phased growth indicates that growth will occur in “phases.” The first phase usually includes those areas that are already served by public water and/or sewer, and where the second phase of growth will occur in areas where services do not presently exist but are eventually. The inclusion of land within an urban growth area indicates that the land will be developed at an urban density within the next 20 years. Therefore, the existing Agricultural Land Use or Rural Residential Land Use within the urban growth areas will eventually transition from Agricultural Land Use to Urban Residential Land Use which serves the 20-year forecasted population. This transition from Agriculture Land Use to Urban Residential Land Use within the urban growth area will require land uses and densities which allow this change to occur in as efficient a manner as possible.

As portions of the urban growth areas develop, it is assumed that these areas will be annexed to the adjacent city. Intergovernmental agreements will need to be created in order to deal with the allocation of financial burdens that result from the transition of land from county to city jurisdiction. Similarly, agreements will need to be drafted to coordinate planning efforts for the unincorporated areas of the urban growth areas and with facility providers in the urban growth nodes. Kittitas County has offered the opportunity to prepare an interlocal agreement with the cities for the preparation of a draft urban growth area plans. This agreement and the work resulting from it are expected to be completed in the end of 2008. The following are additional issues that must be resolved by the cities and Kittitas County for the preparation and implementation of goals, objectives and policies contained in this comprehensive plan:

*Joint interlocal agreements:

- 1) Unified or consistent subdivision code;
- 2) Municipal utility extension agreement for water, sewer and gas;
- 3) Intergovernmental service agreements for libraries, fire, EMS, parks and recreation;
- 4) Unified or consistent zoning code with provisions for urban zoning, transitional zoning, and other transitional uses;
- 5) Density and land use mapping;
- 6) Airport Facility-flight safety zones, density, land uses, expansion of the airport and services provided for the City of Ellensburg;
- 7) Extension and acquisition of Rights-of Way;
- 8) Unified or consistent road standards, stormwater standards and level of service; and,
- 9) Annexation agreements.
- 10) Shorelines development plan

*This list is not intended to be all inclusive of issues to be addressed through interlocal agreements with the cities but specific issues which may affect the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan.

The individual cities within Kittitas County are responsible for developing a final urban growth area boundary, future land use plans for the unincorporated portion of their respective urban growth areas, and facility or service needs to accommodate the 20-year population growth. These plans are to be submitted to Kittitas County for consideration and ultimately adoption as a portion of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. RCW 36.70A.110(5) states, "Final urban growth areas shall be adopted at the time of comprehensive plan adoption under this chapter..." and RCW 36.70A.110(6) states, "Each county shall include designations of urban growth areas in its comprehensive plan."

GPO 2.94a A consideration for all future development should be the adaptability of a proposal to urban water, sewer, and road systems.

GPO 2.94b Expansion of the UGA should be encouraged in areas least suited for agriculture and areas not impacted by Critical Areas

GPO 2.94c Development of a subarea plan to investigate expansion north of the City of Ellensburg

GPO 2.94d Allow for the flexibility of minimum density standards in urban growth areas where Critical Areas are present in order to provide the highest level of protection

GPO 2.95 Within the UGAs and UGNs, in the absence of urban utilities, a system of subdivision and development should be encouraged which would produce a pattern capable of re-division to a higher density at such time when utilities are available.

GPO 2.96 Adopt urban growth node (UGN) and urban growth area (UGA) boundaries to accommodate residential and employment increases projected within the boundaries over the next 20 years.

GPO 2.97 The UGNs and/or UGAs shall be consistent with the following criteria:

- a. Each UGN and/or UGA shall provide sufficient urban land to accommodate future population/employment projections through the designated planning period.
- b. Lands included within UGNs and/or UGAs shall either be already characterized by urban growth or adjacent to such lands.
- c. Existing urban land uses and densities should be included within UGNs and/or UGAs.
- d. UGNs and/or UGAs shall provide a balance of industrial, commercial, and residential lands.

- e. Each UGA shall have the anticipated financial capability to provide infrastructure/services needed in the areas over the planning period under adopted concurrency standards.
- f. Protect natural resource and critical areas
- g. Encourage the conversion of undeveloped lands into urban densities.
- h. Provide for the efficient provision of public services;
- i. Promote a variety of residential densities; and,
- j. Include sufficient vacant and buildable land for future urban densities.

GPO 2.98 Per RCW 36.70A.06094) forest land and agricultural land located within urban growth areas shall not be designated by a county or a city as forest land or agricultural land of long-term commercial significance under RCW 36.70A.170, unless the city or county has enacted a program authorizing transfer or purchase of development rights

GPO 2.99 Reserved

2.3(C) Resource Lands

Commercial Agriculture Land Use

The purpose and intent of this designation is to comply with the requirements of the Growth Management Act [RCW 36.70A.060]. The county has considered the Minimum Guidelines [WAC 365-190] in the classification, designation and conservation of commercial agricultural lands in Kittitas County. It is the county's intent to meet these requirements by establishing a Commercial Agricultural designation. Based on the review criteria established by Kittitas County, land located in the Commercial Agricultural Zone [CAZ] has been formally designated as Agricultural Lands of Long-term Commercial Significance.

Agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance have been identified by considering the following criteria:

- The current zoning and parcel sizes of the area.
- The availability of an adequate and dependable water supply.
- The soil types (prime, unique, local, and statewide) of the area.
- The criteria contained under WAC 365-190-050.

Upon review of these considerations, Kittitas County determined that there were two different categories of land appropriate for designation: irrigated crop lands and non-irrigated grazing lands. Irrigated croplands identified for designation were lands located within the Agricultural 20 zone, within an irrigation district, consisting primarily of prime or unique soils, and complied with the other criteria under the GMA. Non-irrigated grazing lands were lands that lacked adequate water for crop growing purposes, but have a capacity for and historic use for grazing, and are lands that are predominately a section of land in size with contiguous blocks of ownership of those lots.

Kittitas County was able to identify large, contiguous areas containing parcels which met the review criteria. Kittitas County then reviewed the areas, which were consistent with the review criteria, taking into consideration topography and natural designation boundaries. The lands designated as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance depict the final review of all the factors considered for designation.

GPO 2.110 Support laws and regulations which enhance agriculture

GPO 2.111 Continue and expand support for right-to-farm ordinances

GPO 2.112 Distribute and utilize the “Code of the West” handout and require signature of having read it for any permits issued to non-farmers in agricultural areas.

GPO 2.113 Support efforts to see that productive lands receive an adequate water supply.

GPO 2.114a Identify and implement a feasible look at solutions to the problems of needing to sell house lots without selling farm ground.

GPO 2.114b Economically productive farming should be promoted and protected. Commercial agricultural lands includes those lands that have the high probability of an adequate and dependable water supply, are economically productive, and meet the definition of “Prime Farmland” as defined under 7 CFR Chapter VI Part 657.5.

For the purpose of this chapter, “Adequate and dependable water supply” means enough water as outlined in those engineering reports available on most commercial farmlands in the Kittitas Valley, from Adjudication records (i.e. Aquavella et al) that detail the water duty necessary for each parcel to remain viable as commercial agricultural lands.

For the purpose of this chapter, “Economically productive” means the ability to provide and continue to provide sufficient return on investment to allow present and future farmers to continue using the designated commercial agricultural land. This would include but not be limited to being economically realistic as Ag lands with respect to land value, property taxes, market conditions, water costs and other economic factors.

GPO 2.115 Reserved

GPO 2.116 Support an information campaign to educate our non-farm populace on agricultural activities.

GPO 2.117 Encourage non-farmers in agricultural areas to meet farm performance standards.

GPO 2.118 Encourage development projects whose outcome will be the significant conservation of farmlands.

GPO 2.119 Identify and designate agriculture transportation corridors that facilitate farm use.

GPO 2.120 Set road standards in agricultural areas which discourage non-farm use and do not present problems to agricultural users.

GPO 2.121 Cooperate in sound voluntary farm conservation or preservation plans (i.e., be recipients and overseers for conservation easements and/or assist with transferable development rights programs).

GPO 2.122 Look into additional tax incentives to retain productive agricultural lands.

GPO 2.123 Value agricultural lands for tax purposes at their current agricultural land use.

GPO 2.124 The Resource Land Advisory Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on at least an annual basis over the coming 20 years on:

- a. the status of agriculture and forestry in Kittitas County,
- b. county agriculture and forestry policies and regulations,
- c. local agriculture marketing and economic planning, and
- d. review and make recommendations regarding zoning and development regulations.

GPO 2.125 If any lands are reclassified out of the Commercial Agricultural designation, then the land reverts to the Agricultural designation.

Incentives for Commercial Agriculture Land Use

It is the policy of Kittitas County to encourage and support agricultural uses of lands within the Commercial Agricultural designation. The county will continue to explore additional incentives for conserving both rural and resource lands. These incentives may be developed through the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan and subsequent implementation mechanisms.

GPO 2.126 Where appropriate, Kittitas County will exert its influence to help provide the delivery of water to all lands within the county whether the deliveries are through Bureau of Reclamation, Districts, or private facilities.

GPO 2.127a Irrigation delivery facilities shall be managed and maintained by adjacent landowners to facilitate the unimpeded delivery of waters to agricultural lands in Kittitas County. No existing contractual agreement pursuant to any water system shall be impaired by this ordinance. Kittitas County shall ensure the unimpeded delivery of irrigation waters to agriculture lands.

GPO 2.127b Encourage all new development to incorporate drought tolerant or native vegetation as a major component of their landscaping plan (i.e. xeriscaping)

GPO 2.128 To the extent possible the Board of County Commissioners shall promote processing facilities for the products produced upon those lands designated as Commercial Agricultural under this Chapter

GPO 2.129 In determining the current use value of open space land, the County Assessor shall consider only the use to which such property and improvements is currently applied and shall not consider potential uses of such property. In determining the current use value of farm and agricultural land the County Assessor shall consider the earning or productive capacity of comparable lands from crops grown most typically in the area averaged over not less than five years

Commercial Forest Land Use

Commercial forestland claims approximately half of the Kittitas county land area. A checkerboard pattern of land ownerships characterizes the County forests separating private and public sectors. Public ownership accounts for approximately sixty percent of forestland in Kittitas County.

Forestlands represent an important portion of the County economic base providing employment and income in resource management, harvesting, fishing, hunting and recreation. The purpose of this section and classification is to focus on the importance of sustaining forest productivity and associated forest values including watershed, wildlife, mining and recreation.

This designation is applied to those lands which have long-term significance for the commercial production of timber. The designation recognizes that some other land uses and activities which do not conflict with long-term forest management are necessary and/or appropriate on commercial forest lands. Commercial forest lands should be identified by: parcel size; current lands use; tax status as classified forest land, designated forest lands, or forest open space; the availability of public services and facilities; land uses and long-term commercial significance; history of land use permits issued nearby; feasibility of alternative uses; long-term economic and technological conditions which affect the ability to manage forest lands for long-term commercial production; and soil productivity, geology, topography and other physical characteristics conducive to growing merchantable crops.

The intent of this plan, therefore, is to declare top priority for sustained natural resource productivity and related activities. Land use activities which are not compatible with resource management should be discouraged within this land category.

The following policies will guide the county in land use decisions affecting the private sector:

GPO 2.130 Kittitas County will promote and encourage forest lands where the principal and preferred land use is commercial resource management.

GPO 2.131 Commercial forestland should be identified and designated based on operational factors; growing capacity; site productivity and soil composition; surrounding land use; parcel size; economic viability; and the absence of urban public services.

GPO 2.132 The primary land use activities in commercial forest areas are commercial forest management, forest recreation, agriculture, mineral extraction, sand and gravel operations and those uses that maintain and/or enhance the long-term management of designated commercial forest lands.

GPO 2.134 To encourage multiple use concepts of forest management of the greatest lasting benefit to present and future generations

GPO 2.135 Resource activities performed in accordance with county, state and federal laws should not be subject to legal actions as public nuisances.

GPO 2.136 To support and encourage the maintenance of commercial forest lands in timber and current use property tax classifications consistent with RCW 84.28, 84.33 and 84.34.

GPO 2.137 Kittitas County shall recognize Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2091 also known as the Forest and Fish Law.

GPO 2.138 Land use activities within or adjacent to commercial forest land should be sited and designed to minimize conflicts with forest management and other activities on commercial forest lands.

GPO 2.139 Use clustering residential developments on adjacent non-commercial forest lands. The open space in clustered development should buffer adjacent forest land from development.

GPO 2.140 Special development standards for access, lot size and configuration, fire protection, forest protection, water supply, and dwelling unit location should be adopted for development within or adjacent to commercial forest lands.

GPO 2.141 It is the policy of the county to encourage the continuation of commercial forest management by:

- a. supporting land trades that result in consolidated forest ownerships provided that the best interests of the public are served; and,
- b. working with forest managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued forestry (Ord. 93-42).

GPO 2.142 Reserved

Commercial Mineral Resource Lands

The State Growth Management Act (Section 17) states that "...each county...shall designate where appropriate... mineral resource lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for extraction of minerals." The Act defines minerals as sand, gravel and valuable metallic substances. Section 6 of the Act states that each county shall adopt development regulations to assure the conservation of mineral resource lands.

Kittitas County approved Resolution No.95-37 in April 1995, a declaration regarding GMA interim classification and designation for natural resource mineral lands of long-term commercial significance. The resolution meets the requirements of the Growth Management Act. The resolution declares that Kittitas County recognizes mineral resources as a property right and the utilization of new and finished mineral products as an important factor in the social and economic stability of the County. In addition, the County recognizes that mineral resource lands provide economic and social foundations, historical, present and future for the growth and development of the County.

The resolution defines minerals to include "metallic and non-metallic minerals of commercial value such as sand, gravel, coal, oil, natural gas, gold, silver gem stones, clay, building stone, etc." Based on a public hearing process, the County has outlined nine designation criteria for the classification of Mineral Resource Lands of long-term commercial significance. These include the following:

1. Physical properties of the resource, including a quality and type;
2. Depth of resource;
3. Depth of overburden;
4. Accessibility and proximity to the point of use or market;
5. Physical and topographical characteristics of the mineral resource site;
6. Life of resource;
7. Availability of public roads;
8. General land use patterns in the area; and
9. Surrounding parcel sizes and surrounding uses.

Areas meeting the criteria for Mineral Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance and classified as such, including future discoveries, are designated on the final Comprehensive Plan map and included in the final Comprehensive Plan. The map shows the location of Mineral Lands of Long-Term Significance and will be updated and amended as new mining sites, meeting the designation criteria, are approved.

GPO 2.143 When the County reviews proposed new land uses that have the potential to conflict with commercial mining activities, such as residential subdivisions, consideration of both surface and mineral rights ownership should be included in the review.

GPO 2.144 New conflicting uses, such as residential and commercial uses, may be required by the County to locate, site, and/or be screened away from designated commercial mining activities.

Maps

The Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Maps are included in the Kittitas County GIS data and are maintained by the Kittitas County Planning Department.