

05-12-2008 Letter from CTED.txt

From: Darryl Piercy  
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2008 11:53 AM  
To: Allison Kimball; Julie Kjorsvik; Alan Crankovich; 'Mark McClain'  
Subject: FW: Comments for BOCC on the Comprehensive Plan Compliance  
Draft

Importance: High

Comment letter from CTED

From: Phillips, Joyce (CTED) [mailto:JoyceP@CTED.WA.GOV]  
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2008 11:48 AM  
To: Darryl Piercy; David Bowen  
Cc: Andersen, David (CTED); Phillips, Joyce (CTED)  
Subject: Comments for BOCC on the Comprehensive Plan Compliance Draft  
Importance: High

Dear Darryl;

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the compliance draft documents submitted on April 21, 2008. Although the comment period officially closes in

June, I did want to provide some preliminary comments for the Board of County Commissioner's (BOCC) consideration. I request these comments be shared with the BOCC, per the notice that written comments would be accepted through noon today.

First, I would like to commend you and your staff for working so diligently to address the

issues raised in CTED's petition for review and the Growth Hearing Board's order.

Also, I

would like to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the interim draft

dated January 18, 2008. While I do anticipate following up with formal comments, please

consider these preliminary comments on the land use and rural elements of the compliance draft under consideration:

The county's responses to the Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board Decision and Order (case # 07-01-0004c) address several issues, many not specifically

related to the four issues raised by the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) in the appeal. CTED's four issues addressed preservation of rural character, addressing Urban Growth Nodes, de-designation of agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance, and the expansion of the

urban growth area (UGA) boundaries for the Cities of Ellensburg and Kittitas. It is our

understanding that:

? The de-designation of agricultural resource lands will be reversed;

? The expansion of the City of Ellensburg UGA boundary will be reversed;

? The expansion of the City of Kittitas UGA boundary will remain, based on the comprehensive planning work and analysis since completed by the City of Kittitas;

? The urban growth nodes will be designated as rural in the comprehensive plan. Future subarea planning may result in the designation of unincorporated urban growth areas or limited areas of more intense rural development (LAMIRD).

? Issues surrounding rural densities and rural character are tentatively being addressed through proposed comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments, which will be addressed in my comments below.

As a point of clarification, CTED does not argue retention of the urban growth area boundary for the City of Kittitas. Since filing the Petition for Review, the City of Kittitas has

completed their comprehensive plan update and provided a land capacity analysis and capital facilities plan covering the expanded UGA. I have reviewed most of the materials submitted recently and offer the following comments:

Comprehensive Plan:

The comprehensive plan modifications add great clarity to many of the issues raised by CTED as part of the appeal of the 2006 comprehensive plan update. I especially like the following:

- o The Rural Element of the plan identifies new subcategories of rural lands. Each of these subcategories has specific zoning districts that will implement them, which are clearly identified, and will provide for a variety of rural densities and rural character.

- o The provisions for designation and de-designation of resource lands have been addressed in Chapter 2. The new text includes criteria for de-designation of resource lands and clarifies how and when de-designations will only be considered by the county.

However, I do have some concerns that I request be addressed prior to adoption of the plan:

- o De-designation of forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance criteria: The criteria outlined include provisions such as ownership goals and objectives and change in circumstance. CTED is concerned that having such criteria may result in conversion of forest lands of long-term commercial significance. Items such as "availability of public services" should rank higher in importance because they are indicative in a public investment in development of the area. Ownership goals and objectives may be considered, but should not be used as a primary determinant of long-term commercial significance. We appreciate the modifications made between the interim and final drafts, however we do still have concerns about conversion of resource lands of long term commercial significance based on the criteria language.

- o Amount of county potentially designated as Rural Residential: A significant

portion of the county is proposed to be designated as Rural Residential. This designation provides the greatest amount of rural density. We are concerned that designating this much rural land for future development will not allow the county to direct growth to urban areas. CTED suggests that this designation be reserved for areas where the 3-acre lots currently exist.

- o Allocation of growth in any future UGAs or LAMIRDS: The urban growth nodes are proposed to be re-designated as rural; at least until such a time as subarea planning is conducted. Future subarea planning may result in a future designation of UGA or LAMIRD. CTED suggests adding a policy or statement in Section 2.3 of the comprehensive plan that any population allocations for UGAs or LAMIRDS resulting from that subarea planning come from population allocation that are projected for the unincorporated county. This will allow the sub-area process to move forward without triggering the need for cities to review and adjust their comprehensive plans and population allocations.

- o We are concerned that Performance Based Cluster Plats could allow up to a 200% bonus density in rural outlying areas, and presumably other rural designations. As we requested in our letter dated March 19, 2008, CTED would like to see, and suggests that the county's record include, background information justifying the bonus density percentages allowed. While we recognize the reduction in the bonus density allowance provisions, and the substantial discussions that must have surrounded this issue, the amount of the bonus density permitted still seems high. We suggest you review these bonus densities to ensure they do not allow urban growth in rural areas.

Please share these comments with the Board of County Commissioners for their

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consideration in their deliberations. I appreciate your willingness to accept email comments. I do intend to follow up with written comments which will also address the zoning ordinance and performance based cluster plat provisions being considered.

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