

Upper Kittitas County Vision Plan

Prepared for the Kittitas County Conference of Governments

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Introduction

I. Purpose

a. Overall...

A community's vision should be the foundation for the development of comprehensive plan goals and policies for the local governments that are charged with implementing that vision. A Vision Plan is one tool that can be used to paint a picture of a community's desired future, expressing the hopes and aspirations of the citizens within that community. With a clear and concise description of the community's vision, better decisions and actions can be made and taken to ensure that the desired future outcome is achieved.

The purpose of the Upper Kittitas County Vision Plan is to describe what the citizens in the Upper County see as important qualities in their area that need to be preserved and maintained over the course of time. The Vision Plan is the first step in the overall continuous planning process for both the County and its cities. This Vision is intended to be the foundation upon which comprehensive plans and development regulations covering the Upper County are structured. This Plan serves as the guide for both long-term and short-term decisions made at the City and County levels. The foundation statements and key recommendations described in this Vision Plan should be referenced for guidance and direction when local officials are establishing policies or considering proposals. This will ensure that the needs and desires of the Upper County communities are taken into account and that the Upper Kittitas County area grows and develops through a better decision making process.

The first three sections of this document are the most substantive as it regards the vision planning process and identifying the tools with which to implement the Vision. The Introduction provides information on the background and conception of the Regional Land Use Committee that performed the work on this Plan. The second section describes the public process, where local residents were given the opportunity to freely express their opinions and views regarding important emerging issues. The information gathered from that process was reviewed and incorporated into the substance of this Vision Plan within the Foundation Statements and Key Recommendations.

The Next Steps section is a critical component of this document and will ultimately determine the success of this visioning exercise. It is in this section where specific instructions are provided that will assure the needs and desires of the Upper Kittitas communities are incorporated into local government planning if followed. As the Vision Plan is the first step, the next step is for each community to develop its own comprehensive land use plan. The visioning process clearly documented the need for Kittitas County to continue its comprehensive land use planning process through sub-area planning.

The Appendices document the material gathered from the public and is the un-synthesized information that provides the basis for the Vision Plan.

b. Coordination of County, City and Community Comprehensive Plans...

“The legislature finds that ... It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning.” RCW 36.70A.010

Within the context of planning under the Growth Management Act, intergovernmental coordination and cooperation is seen as a paramount feature. Section 36.70A.100 RCW states:

“The comprehensive plan of each county or city that is adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 shall be coordinated with, and consistent with, the comprehensive plans adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 of other counties or cities with which the county or city has, in part, common borders or related regional issues.”

Because many components of the growth and development of a community overlap political and jurisdictional boundaries, it is vital that there is a coordinated process among adjoining jurisdictions to address these issues. Transportation facilities, critical areas, utilities and capital facilities are examples of items making up our communities, the planning for which cannot be done in isolation: the decisions made in the City of Cle Elum or the City of South Cle Elum regarding transportation facilities have the potential to affect not only each of the cities, but also Kittitas County. Through coordination and consistency, each jurisdiction gains benefit through economies of scale achieved when pooling resources, lowering unit costs and avoiding duplication of tasks. The primary, underlying purpose to coordination and consistency is to provide a predictable atmosphere for the development community, as well as the respective local governments: knowing what is expected from them upfront provides valuable costs savings to land developers.

To further the practice and implementation of the ideas behind coordination and consistency, the GMA requires Counties and their cities to have developed and adopted county-wide planning policies. These policies are to be the framework for the development of city and county comprehensive plans. The topics required to be covered in the county-wide planning policies include such things as implementing urban growth boundaries, promoting the orderly provision of urban services into developing areas, providing for county-wide transportation and affordable housing, and to encourage county-wide economic development.

Another tool for ensuring coordination and consistency is through a detailed Vision Plan, as is presented in this document. Where the county-wide planning policies are a plan for how local governments will coordinate, a Vision Plan, crafted through an intense public process, is a statement by the citizens about how they would like growth and development to occur in their area. By considering and implementing the key recommendations provided later in this document, as well as adhering to the foundation statements, each of the local governments in the Upper County will be helping to realize the vision voiced by the citizens of this community.

2. Process

a. Regional Land Use Committee...

In the late summer and fall of 2004, in response to a considerable amount of citizen concern related to rapid growth and development in the Upper County area, the Kittitas County Conference of Governments (COG) determined that it was important to form a citizen's advisory committee. This citizen's committee, titled the Regional Land Use Committee, and made up of citizens with diverse interests and from different areas of the Upper County, was created to influence and guide the future amendment of comprehensive plans. To assist and facilitate the process of amending comprehensive plans, the COG received a grant from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), Growth Management Services, to create a draft Vision Plan for the Upper County area.

The Regional Land Use Committee was the driving force behind the Vision Plan. As a group, they interviewed and selected a consultant to implement the grant from CTED, reviewing, revising and approving a scope of work that included public meetings, outreach and questionnaires, in addition to their committee meetings. Based on detailed input and reviews the Committee crafted the format for the public meetings, the flyers announcing those meetings, as well as creating the questionnaire that was extensively distributed to gather input. Committee members generated information and interest in the meetings, as well as in the overall process, and can be credited with the extensive degree of public participation that went into the development of the Vision Plan.

b. Community Meetings...

The key component to the drafting of this Vision Plan is the public participation that occurred to direct the general outcomes and key recommendations. This participation occurred in two main ways: through community outreach meetings and through a questionnaire that was distributed both at these meetings as well as through a number of other sources. Four community outreach meetings were held throughout the Upper County Area during the last two weeks in March, 2005. The meetings were all very well attended, with a total of approximately 152 residents participating, as seen in the table below:

March 21, 2005 Ronald Community Club	33 people
March 24, 2005 Easton School	42 people
March 30, 2005 Cle Elum USFS Meeting Room	64 people
March 31, 2005 Hyak Lodge Snoqualmie Pass	13 people

At these meetings, the participants were asked two main questions: What do you believe are your community's positive qualities? What do you believe are potential threats to those positive qualities in the future? Through both of these avenues (meetings and questionnaire), a significant amount of information was generated about how the Upper County residents feel about growth and development in their communities.

Community Outreach Meetings- The Foundation

I. Overview

The community outreach meetings were very successful from a number of different standpoints. The attendance can be characterized as outstanding: in many jurisdictions, it is difficult to get people interested in talking about issues that don't seem immediate or pressing. Additionally, the amount and quality of input received at each of the meetings was substantial, making the Committee's work crafting detailed key recommendations that much easier.

The success of these meetings is directly attributable to the support and cooperation from a number of different sources, particularly in providing notice of the meetings. Committee members, the County, the Cities as well as the three newspapers covering the Upper County area all assisted in printing, copying and distributing the flyers so a wider audience was reached, at a relatively low cost.

The following sections describe both common themes that were identified at the different meetings, as well as identifying issues that were particular to each area (detailed documentation of input is included in the appendices). This information, in conjunction with the information contained in the questionnaires, is the basis for the foundation statements and key recommendations that constitute the substance of the Vision Plan presented later.

2. Outcomes

a. General...

The high turnout at each of the community meetings was reflective of the Upper County's one hundred fifty plus year tradition of self-sufficiency and independence. Though each community involved in this visioning exercise is distinct and separate, certain similar experiences yielded common themes and concerns from each of the public forums. The following topics were consistently articulated in each community of Upper Kittitas County:

- A great appreciation for the natural environment;
- Enjoyment of the proximity and access to many recreational opportunities;
- A deep concern that the desirable features that make up the region are threatened by rampant and unchecked development;
- A perception that county and city officials are resistant to planning and related activities such as establishing policies and regulations; implementing existing environmental review requirements; and assessing cumulative impacts prior to land use decisions;
- A strong desire to protect the diverse natural resources, wildlife and natural amenities of the area;
- A wish to engage the local governments in cooperative sub-area planning, to meet the diverse and distinct needs of the Upper County;
- There is a recognition that growth will occur. There is a preference that new growth be "Smart Growth". Proposed developments must demonstrate that responsible, well planned

development will balance the needs of existing residents with those of the new developments;

- A tangible connection to local histories and traditions;
- A solid sense of community.

Rather than waiting until the features that make up the quality living in the Upper County disappear, (they do not have to look very far down the road to understand how easily it can be lost) the residents have conjured up the pioneer spirit of cooperation and a “get ‘er done” attitude. They are determined to preserve the clean air and water, the outdoor recreational opportunities, all of which embodies the rural character of the county, and even the dark night skies.

The Upper County residents envision a future that accommodates all of its residents through well thought-out planning. Planning that identifies the amount of growth and the rate of growth that can be sustained by the Upper Kittitas environments. The plans will also project deficiencies in capital facilities before they are made deficient by rapid development. The goal is to achieve a balance between growth and development with the community’s values of rural character and the tradition of independence.

In addition to the above concerns found to be common throughout the region, communities identified issues that were of particular concern within sub-areas.

b. Cle Elum: March 30, 2005 - Sixty four persons in attendance.

Unique Outcomes...

- The Yakima River plays a vital role in Cle Elum. The community is interested in preserving it and the amenities that go along with it.
- Cle Elum wishes to retain the commercial services that meet local needs while discouraging the large national chain retail stores.
- There’s a significant increase in the number of exempt wells and septic systems to support residential development. As there appears to be no limitations to this type of development the aquifer continues to be at risk of exposure to contamination.
- The inevitable growth will continue to strain the road system that is functioning at capacity.
- The Cle Elum residents support exploring public forms of transportation and energy to accommodate future growth.
- Preserve public access to trails, trail heads, and other recreation opportunities in the face of new development.
- The community has a strong sense of its history

c. Easton: March 24, 2005 - Forty two persons in attendance.

Unique Outcomes...

- The Easton area currently enjoys a supply of clean water that meets its drinking and fire suppression needs. There is concern that should growth rates continue, the water supply will be degraded, threatening the community’s health and safety;
- The community values the open space and treed areas between neighbors and would like to retain this large-lot residential development pattern consistent with a rural area;

- Preserve the rural character of the land;
- Protect wildlife.

d. Ronald/Roslyn: March 21, 2005 - Thirty three persons in attendance

Unique Outcomes...

- Residents in the Ronald/Roslyn communities noted that subdivisions were being developed well in advance of the need for additional housing and the availability of jobs;
- The community expressed concerns that new subdivisions are gaining approval without analysis and determination that the existing infrastructure will adequately support the development;
- Protection of private property rights are a high priority.

e. Snoqualmie Pass: March 31, 2005 - Thirteen persons in attendance.

Unique Outcomes...

- Snoqualmie pass enjoys a unique position located in close proximity to metro King County and rural Kittitas County, enjoying both urban and rural amenities.
- While higher densities in other parts of the Upper County have increased discomfort levels, in the Snoqualmie Pass area, the planned neighborhoods have contributed to an increased sense of community.
- A favorite winter playground, Snoqualmie endures a slower economy during the rest of the year. This imbalance contributes to the need for affordable housing, year round employment and more diversity in the economic structure.
- Accommodations need to be made for commercial services and truck traffic, and additional facilities for community needs.
- The community maintains a strong sense of history, and connection to the past.
- This area has examples of appropriate clustered housing and ski resort development.
- Businesses support development of water and sewer systems.

3. Questionnaire Summaries

Another important tool for recording residents' input was a community questionnaire that asked a series of questions related to existing and future growth and development. A copy of the actual Community Questionnaire and complete summary of the results can be found in the Appendices; however the following is a brief review.

Questions one through four were related to location of residence of participants. Ninety four responses indicated they were full time residents of the County, while five were not. Thirty one responded they lived within an incorporated city: Cle Elum (7), Roslyn (20), Ellensburg (4), while 70 participants responded they were not located within an incorporated city.

Survey Question # 5 asked about the overall feeling of the rate of growth and development. Seventy respondents indicated that the rate of growth was too much, while fifteen indicated that the overall growth rate was just right.

Survey Question # 6 asked what type of land uses were important to have in the Upper County. The top five were:

1. Recreational Activities
2. Wildlife habitat areas
3. Parks
4. Forestry /logging*
4. Rangeland*
4. Rural Residential*
5. Tourist facilities

*The responses for these lands uses were the same.

Survey Question # 7 asked participants to list three things they value most about the Upper County. This open ended question yielded an array of comments, some of the most often cited included:

- Wildlife and amenities related to the natural environment
- Rural atmosphere
- Recreation

Survey Question # 8 asked participants to list three things that may threaten the quality of life in the Upper County. Some of the most often cited issues included:

- Uncontrolled/unplanned growth
- Traffic congestion
- Crime

Question # 9 listed 17 statements related to future growth and development. Participants were asked to rank the statements in order of most importance.

The top six were as follows:

1. Safeguard wildlife areas and corridors.
2. Protect the area's "Dark Skies" from sky glow/light pollution.
3. Preserve areas for forest resource activities.*
3. Preserve important view sheds.*
4. Preserve areas for agricultural activities, including small acreage lifestyles and animal keeping.
5. Preserve and expand public trail recreation access to areas with significant natural features.
6. Protect private property rights.

*These issues tied in the count.

Page four of the survey provided an opportunity for participants to share other thoughts in a narrative. In general, the statements supported the priorities listed in the other survey questions. Essentially there is concern about the way growth and development is occurring in the Upper Kittitas County. There is an uncertainty as to whether or not the growth can be accommodated by the available existing services, especially water. Many expressed a desire to find solutions to the issues, and provided suggestions.

Community Direction

I. Foundation Statements

Based on the input received from the many participants in the community outreach meetings and the questionnaires, the following statements are intended to provide a clear, concise record of the fundamental quality of life values found in the Upper County area. These are statements of core values that must be maintained as the County and its cities implement policies and regulations to guide future growth and development.

a. Rural Character...

The people of Upper Kittitas County value the existing qualities of the rural environment. The treasured rural characteristics are first recognized by the dominance of the natural environment over the built environment. The result is areas for human coexistence with wildlife and opportunities for outdoor activities and recreation. The rural environment has naturally clean water and fresh air; the amount of industrial development is light to non-existent. The land is sparsely populated and the traffic, with few exceptions, is light and neighborly. The open spaces, forested areas, and spectacular views (day and night) of the rural environment produce a sense of awe in the observer.

There is strong support for maintaining wildlife habitat and migration routes as well as maintaining access to and opportunities for outdoor recreation such as trails, hunting, gathering and fishing. As development policies are created or amended, consideration must be given to the impacts on wildlife, habitat, and water quality and availability. Policies should preserve, enhance and protect the quality of the existing rural environment and its rural character without infringing on private property rights.

Kittitas County officials are enthusiastically urged to be proactive on this issue. A number of private organizations¹ seek areas to establish land conservation opportunities. Acquiring a partner with expertise in designating the areas that should be preserved in the natural environment would be extremely valuable and advance retention of the desired rural character of the region.

Additionally, the County and cities should correlate the comprehensive plan land use designations map with the implementing zoning map. This will ensure greater predictability with respect to potential impacts of future development, allowing decisions to be based on sound planning principals and in consideration of a particular area's infrastructure and physical features. Re-designation of lands, either uses or density, will then be required to be reviewed through the comprehensive plan amendment process, once a year, allowing for a greater level of analysis of the cumulative impacts of all proposed re-designations/rezones, and a greater degree of public involvement.

¹ Organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer, Ducks Unlimited, Alpine Lakes, and Cascade Agenda are a few that have been successful in identifying and promoting land conservation.

b. Public Involvement...

The people of Upper Kittitas County expect to be involved in development of land use policies and decisions. They see the need for development standards to be implemented in order to accommodate the inevitable growth. By involving the public when developing standards and policies, conflicts will be addressed early on in the development process. Local governments are charged with keeping the Upper Kittitas County residents apprised of proposals and actions that may affect the quality of life. Historically, the people of Upper Kittitas have been engaged stewards of the region. The Upper County was built on the traditions of public service and civic responsibility. Given the proper information and notification, the people of Upper Kittitas County will responsibly participate in decisions that may permanently affect the quality of the developed and natural environment.

c. Forest Resources...

Forested lands are a valuable asset to the County. They protect watersheds as well as providing jobs, wildlife habitat and numerous opportunities for recreation activities, all of which contribute to the quality of living that County residents appreciate. Visitors and residents of Upper Kittitas County have historically enjoyed access to public recreation areas and wish to maintain this feature. The potential still exists for forested lands to be commercially viable in the future. Comprehensive Plan amendments to rezone forests should be discouraged. These lands need to be recognized as the valuable resource that they are, not land available for development.

d. Sub-area Planning...

The vision and desires of the people of Upper Kittitas County are as diverse as its terrain, which transitions from mountains to valleys. Applying a single vision to this diversity will be effective only to a degree and in generalities. There are differences in the values and expectations of future land uses in the various areas of the Upper County. For example, the people in the Snoqualmie Pass area appreciate their proximity to Metro King County and view their rural area as a small town community. Nearby Easton on the other hand, values its rural character as realized through the spaciousness and large lots of the current land development pattern. In order to create a real vision for the Upper County, the County needs to cultivate public involvement and visioning by developing and adopting sub-area plans within distinct areas. The first step in implementing sub-area planning is to establish committees within the sub-areas and have them review the existing sub-area plans that were drafted in the 1990's but not officially adopted.

e. Prepare for Growth...

Development should be analyzed for the overall impact to the carrying capacity of the natural and built environments. Existing non-project actions should be evaluated for impacts to these environments prior to any approval for actual development. The County needs to implement a variety of financial tools, such as SEPA mitigation and/or impact fees, to ensure growth pays for growth's impacts. The County can improve development review and the fiscal impact on capital facilities and services, transportation infrastructure and natural and environmental resources by requiring a higher exemption level for subdivisions of land than the current twenty acres.

2. Key Recommendations

Building on the Foundation Statements, the following are specific recommendations for ways to forward the intent of the Foundation Statements. Many of the important issues identified in the Vision Plan are interconnected between categories. Just because one topic may be identified under a particular subject title, it should not be viewed as applicable to only that subject title.

a. Public Involvement...

Kittitas County officials need to be more progressive in meeting public notice requirements. When opportunities are available for public comment on proposals and decisions, Kittitas County can go beyond the minimum state requirements for public notification. In turn, Upper County residents with an interest in land use planning and development need to be cognizant of the established procedures for public notice and proposing amendments.

The following are essential public involvement tools that Kittitas County can implement immediately:

- Post property that is subject to a land use application:
 - Use a minimum size sign of 16 sq ft;
 - Include public hearing date on posting;
 - Post all sides of property that front a public right of way;
 - Minimum two signs per parcel larger than one acre;
 - Include contact name for specific information;
 - Require sign to be erected upon issuance of Notice of Application;
- Give written notice to property owners within 500' of property subject to proposal.
- For non-project actions, issue press releases (in addition to required legal notices) to all local print and broadcast media. Use the press release as a tool to educate the public on how the non-project action will change allowable uses.
- Publish legal notice in Upper County newspaper as well as newspaper of record.
- Hold public hearings in the Upper County when a proposal is located in the Upper County;
- Keep the website up-to-date, and include pending actions, Notice of Applications issued, SEPA review distribution;
- Provide weekly email notification (per request) of Notice of Applications issued and receipt of request for non-project action;
- Increase developer fees as applicable to cover costs of improved public notification.
- Designate an Upper County location where residents will be able to review project and proposal files.
- Write notices that are clear, concise and easily understood.
- Revise the administration of the current SEPA review process. Improve the analysis regarding the probable impact a proposal may have on the environment.

b. Land Use...

Changes occurring in all categories of land uses and the permanent effects to the built and natural environments are of great concern in Upper Kittitas County. More advanced levels of

analysis need to be implemented to address the increasingly complex issues with proposed development.

- Residential ~

Encourage higher density residential development to locate in Urban Growth Areas.

Base the amount of land designated for residential use on the amount needed to accommodate the County's rural share of population growth;

- Update the County population growth projections and allocations;
- Inventory existing land available for residential use and determine the amount of additional population that can be served;
- Designate residential lands in a way that preserves useful and contiguous open space, wildlife migration routes and habitat;
- Implement development incentives to foster open space preservation through:
 - o Density bonuses leading to open space preservation.
 - o Cluster development preserving usable open space.
 - o Incorporate critical areas into preserved areas.
 - o Use of conservation easements to maintain open space in perpetuity.
 - o Transfer of development rights.
 - o Agriculture and Forest land protection programs.
- Implement impact fees and other mitigation tools to ensure growth and new development pays for itself.

- Commercial/Industrial ~

Unless associated with resource lands, commercial and industrial lands are assumed to be urban in character. Commercial developments are particularly onerous as far as dispersing light pollution.

- Ensure that an adequate supply of commercial and industrial land is designated county-wide.
- Create development standards for commercial areas that:
 - o Minimize artificial lighting in commercial and industrial areas;
 - o Direct artificial lighting downward;
 - o Develop light standards that encourage shared parking and paved areas;
 - o Preserve natural drainages;
 - o Encourages natural landscaping and screening;
- Designate commercial and industrial lands within Urban Growth Areas and Urban Growth Nodes.

- Resource lands ~

The rich natural resources have historically been the lifeblood of Upper Kittitas County.

Beyond timber and wood products production, resource lands support watersheds, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities and more, as discussed earlier.

- Land use practices should secure the sustainability of these resources for future economic benefit.
- Forest lands should be designated at a minimum of 80 acres, and preserved in as much volume as possible.

- Encourage and implement incentives to discourage forest and agricultural lands out of resource designations. Resource lands should be held in perpetuity and available for resource uses.
- Provide incentives to property owners to develop land conservation areas.

- **Rural Areas ~**

In the Upper County, the rural areas are where life happens. In other regions, rural areas are typically referred to as “left over lands”; the lands that are not designated for urban growth, resource lands or critical areas. The Upper County residents are adamantly determined to preserve their rural lifestyle. In order to achieve this, the following is recommended:

- Create development standards that permit clustering of building sites. The purpose of clustering is to retain large areas of open space, in perpetuity, to accommodate wildlife corridors and migration routes.
- Refine the county-wide rural residential designation so that it does not create urban or rural sprawl that is overwhelming the rural character of the Upper Kittitas County.
- Balance the designation of residential lands with the projected population distribution so that concentrations of population move from primarily rural to primarily urban county-wide.
- Recognize and address the impacts of second home development on rural areas during the required 2006 comprehensive plan/development regulation update process.

- **Critical Areas ~**

Critical Areas such as wildlife corridors and habitat, wetlands, flood plains, aquifer recharge and geological hazardous areas are vital components of the functioning ecosystem. Development standards regarding critical areas should be crafted to protect and retain these mechanisms.

- Identify and map all types of critical areas including flood hazards, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, geologically hazardous areas and fish and wildlife habitat.
- Review update, and implement critical area regulations for all types of the critical areas listed above.
- Protection and preservation of wildlife and its habitat tops the priority list for Upper Kittitas residents.

c. Housing...

Rural areas are prime targets for the second home and the high end housing market. While a certain amount of this is desirable, housing policies and residential land designations should promote housing that is affordable to all income levels.

- In particular, consideration needs to be given to employees of recreation and tourism industries. These are growth industries in Upper Kittitas County that produce a number of low to moderate income jobs. Land use, housing, and transportation policies need to consider the income potential of residents employed by these and other service sector industries.
- Policies that encourage affordable housing dispersed throughout the community, rather than clustered in specific neighborhoods. Density bonuses are a common tool used to achieve this goal.

d. Transportation...

The current transportation system is inadequate to accommodate recent developments and approved subdivisions that have yet to be developed. In order to avoid common urban traffic issues; steps must be taken now to require new development to pay for its fair share of impacts to the transportation system.

- Develop standards that require impact fees or other means of requiring new development to pay for its impact on the transportation system.
- Assure that an adequate road system is in place before permitting new development.
- Provide avenues and amenities for non-motorized modes of transportation. This may include:
 - Improvements to street lighting, assuring that lights are down lit.
 - Designating and constructing walking and biking trails.
 - Decrease the number of egress and ingress lanes on the highway.
- Determine current level of service for arterials. Compare to adopted level of service to determine breadth of deficiencies.
- Revive passenger rail service to improve transportation options and tourism.

e. Utilities and Capital Facilities...

Include utility and capital facilities planning that:

- Facilitates the development of all utilities at the appropriate levels of service to accommodate projected growth;
- Identifies service boundaries within which utility services will be provided;
- Encourages infilling of areas already served by utilities;
- Addresses the proliferation of exempt wells and on-site septic systems;
- Inventories existing lots with rights to install exempt wells.
- Coordinates future water system planning with the comprehensive plan of the city, county and other planning efforts pertaining to land use, other utilities and other community facilities.
- Ensures Kittitas County undertakes watershed planning, including an inventory of the aquifer.
- Revises water policy to require more substantial proof of potable water before subdivision approval.
- Ensures that capital facility planning is consistent with the comprehensive plan;
- Ensures that the location and design of capital facilities creates minimal adverse impacts on the surrounding land use;
- Provides that capital facilities are in place, or can be in place at the time of development;
- Ensures that new development does not lower the level of service standard for capital facilities.
- Seeks efficiencies through coordinated planning among local city and county governments and special purpose, junior taxing districts.

f. Recreation...

Opportunities for and access to outdoor recreation are the foundation of life as well as economic drivers in Upper Kittitas County. Non-consumptive recreation is an essential

component of the Upper County's future. Officials must be active players in identifying, promoting, and preserving these opportunities. Creative or standard tools such as mitigation or purchasing as necessary, can be used to offset the increased negative impact development is having on the public's ability to access outdoor recreation areas.

- Local city and county governments must identify corridors and trails where the public will continue to have access to recreation facilities.
- The County should permit commercial recreation facilities through a Conditional Use Permit process. The purpose is to insure site specific evaluation is complete and that impacts of the specific development are addressed.
- Local jurisdictions can ensure the public continues to have access to public lands by identifying, mapping, and signing the access points.

g. Economic Development...

Policies regarding economic development should be geared to developing a sustainable economy². The natural beauty and features of the area are building blocks on which to establish and expand the region's tourism and outdoor recreation industries. Implementation of well-thought-out plans will protect these very qualities at risk of being overused.

- Communities and region-wide organizations must actively work together to promote the area.
- Efforts must be made to seek complementing industries to balance and diversify the local economy.

h. Aesthetics...

Development regulations must be implemented that will preserve the natural outdoor assets that the people of the Upper County so value.

- Maintain rural character by limiting building heights.
- Preserve the dark night skies through the development of standards for neighbour-friendly lighting, reducing up lighting in the Upper County.
- Provide education about lighting options.
- Reduce the visual impact of parking facilities.
- Empower code enforcement efforts; assign authority and resources especially for removing hazards caused by dilapidated buildings and abandoned vehicles, numerous inoperable/unlicensed vehicles (including cars, trucks, boats, RV's, trailers) in open storage in residential areas.

i. State Environmental Policy Act/Growth Management Act

County and City officials must use SEPA to its fullest potential. SEPA is designed to carry the substantive authority to mitigate issues and potential negative impacts to the environment that

² The goal of community sustainability is to establish local economies that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible. Achieving this goal requires participation from all sectors of the community, both to determine community needs and to identify and implement innovative and appropriate solutions. Source: Sustainable Communities Network

may not already be covered by specific local regulations. The Growth Management Act also provides the authority for local governments to establish land use designations and resolve issues at a non-project level. Through implementation of the tenants of GMA - critical areas identification and protection, comprehensive planning based on projected growth, adoption of development regulations that are consistent with the comprehensive plans - much of the animosity and ill will that has developed with recent land use activity will be improved.

- Assure Comprehensive Plan Maps and Zoning Maps are consistent, with a one-to-one correlation between land use designations and zoning districts.
- Review existing land use patterns and systems and designate appropriate land use and zoning categories that are respectful of those existing patterns.
- Implement SEPA throughout the planning process to ensure all impacts to the natural and built environments are adequately addressed at each level.

Next Steps- Where do we go from here?

Each member of the Regional Land Use Advisory Committee (RLUAC) brought their own perspective and motivation to the process, however, each also came with a common concern- the future of land use decisions and the impacts on their homes. Each also wanted to insure that this Vision Plan is not added to the stack of previous planning exercises that have no teeth or the political will to be implemented and put into place. To that end, the RLUAC recommends the Kittitas County Conference of Governments, and the representative local governments implement the following strategies:

- COG must officially adopt and recognize the Vision Plan as the guiding document for future planning in the Upper County area. Additionally, the COG representatives from the Upper County area should present the Vision Plan to their respective jurisdictions with a strong recommendation that each of those local governments officially adopt and ratify the Vision Plan as the guiding document for future planning in the Upper County area.
- Appoint the RLUAC as a standing committee of the COG with at least these initial, specific tasks:
 - Encourage Upper County local governments to appoint RLUAC members to actively participate in the review and update of their comprehensive plans and development regulations, particularly during the 2006 process. This will help the local governments to include the Vision Plan in their process, and the RLUAC members can periodically meet to discuss how implementation of the Vision Plan is progressing.
 - The RLUAC will develop reports on implementation of the Vision Plan. It is their intent to keep the Vision Plan alive and in the forefront of the public, media, and especially the decision makers.
 - The County needs to promote regional public involvement and visioning by reviewing existing draft sub-area plans and update as necessary. The RLUAC is committed to supporting this process.

Certain elements of the Vision Plan can be implemented in advance of the 2006 comprehensive plan review and update cycle. COG should recommend that Kittitas County consider policies and regulations during the 2005 amendment cycle to address issues that were highly supported among all of the communities both during the public meetings and on the survey result

- Adopt development standards that will protect the dark night skies;
- Implement policies and incentives that will protect wildlife habitat and corridors;
- Adopt expanded notification requirements as recommended in this document;
- Perform cumulative impact assessments on non-project actions, especially in consideration of water issues.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure these priority quality of life issues are not further degraded.