

**WHITMAN COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
ZOOM MEETING
January 5, 2022**

MEMBERS:

Chad Whetzel – Chair
Dave Gibney
Weston Kane

Brian Davies – Vice-Chair
Keith Paulson
Matt Webb

Staff: Alan Thomson, WC Planner; Grace Di Biase, WC Assistant Planner; Mark Storey, WC Director/Engineer; Brandon Johnson, PW; Elinor Huber, Clerk.

Others: Ken Duft; Shelly Chambers Fox.

7:01 p.m. - Chad Whetzel called the meeting to order. Introductions.

MOTION by Brian Davies and seconded by Weston Kane. Motion passed.

Alan Thomson – Reports:

- a. We do have some Board of Adjustment forthcoming hearings – Side setback variance on a residential parcel set for January 6, 2022. The structure can't be 20 feet away for reasons that are fair so it is going to the BOA tomorrow night.
- b. Forthcoming Administrative Use Permits – None.
- c. Forthcoming Variances – Side setback variance for Phil Henderson.
- d. Update on previous conditional use permits and variances – None.
- e. Update on previous administrative use permits – None.
- f. Board of County Commissioners' action – None.
- g. Update on previous Board of County Commissioners' action – None.
- h. Forthcoming Shoreline of the State Substantial Development Permits – None.
- i. Update on previous Shoreline of the State Substantial Development permits – None.
- j. Planning Commission forthcoming hearings – None.

Adjourn to unfinished business: discuss progress on the updating of the Comprehensive Plan.

**WHITMAN COUNTY
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ZOOM WORKSHOP
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7:05 p.m.

Chad Whetzel – We will move to unfinished business in updating the Comp Plan.

Alan Thomson – We need to go over the beginning of Chapter 7, because we had the task of looking at these lists and making sure they were up to date. Mark Storey helped us with this one. This is what Mark gave us on page 79. Look it over and make sure that is okay.

County Buildings

Whitman County operates and maintains several facilities located throughout the county. These include:

- *Whitman County Courthouse and Administration – Colfax*
- *Public Services Building – Colfax*
- *Sheriff's Office – Colfax*
- *Jail Facility – Colfax*
- *Information Technology Facility – Colfax*
- *Whitman County road Shops – located throughout the County to support maintenance and winter operations*
- *WHITCOM Regional 911 center – Pullman*
- *Various communication tower sites throughout the County for Sheriff, fire, EMS, and road departments*
- *Public Health Facility – Pullman*
- *Solid Waste Facility – near Pullman*
- *Miscellaneous parks buildings and restroom facilities*

Alan Thomson – Does anybody have any comments on that?

Keith Paulson – Looks like Mark did a good job.

Chad Whetzel – Looks good to me.

Dave Gibney – It looks like there are a few additions here.

Alan Thomson – Mark consulted with the Landfill and came up with some additions there, Sunshine Disposal and the Town of Garfield. Page 80.

Solid Waste

The Whitman County Solid Waste Landfill and Transfer Station, located north of Pullman, manages the County’s solid waste and recyclable materials. This facility serves all residents of the County through local waste haulers, contractors, and self-hauling residents. Commercial haulers currently providing services in Whitman County include Carroll & Nashlund Disposal Service, Pullman Disposal Service, Empire Disposal, Sunshine Disposal, Town of Garfield, and Ada-Lin Waste Systems.

Alan Thomson – Is everyone okay with that one?

Chad Whetzel – Yes.

Alan Thomson – Did we go over this next one last time?

Dave Gibney – There is this note from Todd, and I remember talking about “project funding review process.”

Alan Thomson – This “A-95” thing, we didn’t know what that was.

~~*Policy PF 3.2 – Utilize A-95 project funding review process to ensure that County policies are considered in the funding of state and federal projects and programs.*~~

Alan Thomson – Is everybody okay with striking that one out?

Dave Gibney – Did Mark have something to say about that?

Mark Storey – I don’t really know where it came from so I can’t comment.

Dave Gibney – Do you know what A-95 process is?

Mark Storey – Nope.

Brian Davies – It might be a process that other municipalities might have used around the State. There are quite a few of those kind of documented review processes that you can subscribe to.

Alan Thomson – I have a call into the consultant so maybe they will call me back tomorrow. So, I will ask them what that means. So, leave it there until I figure out what it is. And then the next one, on page 82, what exactly are “essential public facilities.”

Policy F-4.2 – Consider a permitting process for the siting of essential public facilities within Whitman County.

Dave Gibney – If a formal project funding review process is more than just a bunch of extra paperwork for your people then it might be a useful thing. But a lot of these things are just a bunch of extra paperwork.

Alan Thomson – I am trying to figure out what this means. “...the siting of essential public facilities...” The State or the Feds are not exempt from our zoning ordinance. There are some things that are exempt but that wouldn’t concern us.

Dave Gibney – Todd is asking, “is this something you still want to consider,” so he might have questioned it too. Another thing is that if you don’t want to do the permitting through the essential public services and we agree with all the other strike outs, there isn’t much left of that.

Alan Thomson – I still think it is important to have that in there because there are some instances where the State government or the Federal government might decide they want some facility like down at the Port, for instance, natural gas facility and the Governor kind of takes over those things. I think we need to have that in here, but we might only need one policy or maybe two policies.

Dave Gibney – Moving on to this strike out:

~~**Policy PF 3.4** – Discourage the siting of public facilities that do not require public services or utilities in agricultural areas of the County.~~

Alan Thomson – I sort of remember talking about that. I don’t know that that involved the County so maybe the State or the Feds, but,

Dave Gibney – Does it matter whether it is in the ag or some other area in the County? Does it matter if it does or does not require public services?

Alan Thomson – I think I was talking to Todd about this, not the Planning Commission months ago. We decided, or he decided after our conversation to strike it. I will get clarification on that as soon as I talk to LDC. Leave this out right now until I figure out what it means.

~~**GOAL F-5 – SMALLER LOCAL PUBLIC FACILITIES CONSTRUCTED TO SERVE ENERGY NEEDS SHOULD BE LOCATED SO AS TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS ON ADJACENT LAND USES, INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL LAND USE.**~~

Dave Gibney – What is the difference between local and any energy need and,

Alan Thomson – The consultant decided that it should not be smaller but all facilities, basically. Then at **Policy 5.4**, I think we should have that in there because we do have in our zoning regulations that utilities co-locate if they can which is basically what this is saying.

Policy 5.4 – Require consolidation of antenna and other transmission equipment *where feasible* (i.e., utility poles, cables, trenching placement) to minimize adverse aesthetic and environmental impacts.

Dave Gibney – The rest of this is just numbering.

Brian Davies – What kind of a facility are we talking about?

Dave Gibney – Energy needs.

Chad Whetzel – Probably include the solar panels at Palouse wind farm.

Dave Gibney – That wind farm isn’t local energy needs. It is grid wide energy needs.

Brian Davies – There are a lot of solar projects that appear to be the next big thing for a lot of people that own enough land that they could lease something like that out. I’ve heard quite bit of talk in Asotin County about it.

Dave Gibney – My personal opinion is it all good to minimize impacts but I’d strike the word “local” from the goal.

Alan Thomson – I think this is kind of futuristic potentially, here. There are residential wind turbines out there, that is local energy right there.

Dave Gibney – I’m not arguing that we shouldn’t do it for local, but I am saying that this stuff applies whether it is local or not. If somebody wants to dam up Rock Creek or the south fork of the Palouse for energy, put stuff into the grid or set up a battery farm to store that wind energy.

Chad Whetzel – By having “Local” in there you are limiting it.

Brian Davies – It could also mean, what if I were to put up, buy one of those smaller wind turbines and put up one of those. Would that be a local energy need?

Alan Thomson – No, that is where I was going but I am leaning toward what Dave was saying to delete the word “local” because, for instance, if we ever get another one (wind farm), that would be what this would be pointing to, to protect ag use and what not. We do have two ordinances. One for commercial wind farms and one for residential wind. Those two ordinances spell out where those turbines can go so this would fall into it. So, we’ve got the lead-in with this language in the comp plan which now leads us to the development regulations which we have already.

Brian Davies – We have ordinances and codes already about those things.

Dave Gibney – We wouldn’t want to leave anything out of this comp plan that doesn’t justify an existing ordinance and thereby implying that we should avoid the existing ordinance.

Alan Thomson – I agree. So, are we okay with the policies under 5?

Chad Whetzel - Before we move on, **Policy F-5.4**, it says, “*Require consolidation...*” Sometimes that may not be possible, so should it say something more like, “**Encourage consolidation of antenna...**” or is “require” the right word?

Alan Thomson – The ordinance says you have to co-locate if you can and then there is a list of reasons why we would not require co-locating. The ordinance already spells that out.

Dave Gibney – Maybe add, “where feasible,” in there somewhere?

Chad Whetzel – That’s what I am thinking because our Policy says “*require it when possible,*” but there are exceptions and this is saying “require” it.

Alan Thomson – Keep in mind that it is the zoning ordinance that counts here, not what it is the comp plan. Require it, yes, we are requiring it but we make exceptions in the zoning ordinance.

Dave Gibney – Chad’s argument is that you can’t make those exceptions if you don’t have some leeway here. I don’t know if I agree with that but that is what he is saying.

Alan Thomson – I hear you.

Chad Whetzel – I’m okay, either way. I just want to make sure that we are not going against our ordinances already.

Mark Storey – I think that any time you have something in the comp plan it has to be flexible to allow what is in the ordinance. Otherwise, what is in the ordinance is not correct. I think you at least need to have enough language to interpret it for whatever ends up in your ordinance. Right now, we are trying to re-write the plan with some new ideas but still support the current ordinance the day we put this into effect. It is a little bit of a balancing act, I think.

Dave Gibney – Does that putting the two words in there accomplished.

Mark Storey – I’m good with, “...where feasible....”

Brian Davies – I like it.

Keith Paulson – So should it say, “requires,” consolidation?

Dave Gibney – No, it is a single action.

Alan Thomson – I think it reads okay.

Dave Gibney – So we have a comment on F-6 which Todd says this came from Lincoln County.

GOAL F-6 – ENCOURAGE ~~PRIVATE AND PUBLIC~~ WATER SYSTEM PLANNING TO PROMOTE EFFICIENT SERVICE, PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENSURE ORDERLY PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN WHITMAN COUNTY. (Note: “Physical” is misspelled on the final copy.)

Alan Thomson – I don’t know that that is problematic. Mark, do you see anything with that one?

Mark Storey – Not at face value.

Alan Thomson – I don’t know how you would do that anyway. The only place where you would have a private/public water system might be the potential development on the Idaho border, on 270.

Mark Storey – The other question is are we reading it wrong? You can have a private water system that is regulated for public use.

Alan Thomson – That is exactly it. If the Druffels build something there that has to be a public water system by the State even though it is owned privately.

Mark Storey – Yes, that is how I interpret this goal. Maybe it should say, “Private water systems for public use.” I don’t know.

Alan Thomson – Potentially, we could have a public water system too. You can have public water systems through the County.

Mark Storey – Why do we need the word, “private,” at all?

Chad Whetzel – Doesn’t the private water systems include the clusters? Isn’t it three or more and then you become a purveyor?

Alan Thomson – Yes, it becomes public after two hookups. Yes, three or more it is a public water system.

Chad Whetzel – So, most of our clusters fall under that.

Dave Gibney – How about striking “public and private,” and say just encourage water system planning?

Alan Thomson – That is all encompassing.

Dave Gibney - Private and public actually includes everything anyway.

Chad Whetzel – The only question is are we really going to try to plan those private wells in some fashion?

Mark Storey – No, we are just going to “encourage.” I think the word “encourage” is the operator here.

Alan Thomson –Exactly. The County, the Planning Department, doesn’t have any regulations as to how that happens. The Environmental Health Department and the State Health Department do.

Dave Gibney – Some of these places that are putting up dry RV parks might find themselves wanting to do a well or something and I guess we would rather they planned that.

Brian Davies – I was thinking about how does somebody that wants to put in one of these RV parks, we’ve already seen a couple zone changes haven’t we, in our area for those? How do they take care of waste and how do they take care of water?

Alan Thomson – That is the Environmental Health Department’s job. So if anything like that is proposed that would have to be water system, a public water system if it is going to include more than two hook-ups.

Dave Gibney – So, is Whitman County Environmental Health not subject to the comp plan?

Alan Thomson – They are subject to the State Department of Health regulations.

Dave Gibney – I know that but it seems like putting something in the comp plan addressing their function is not out of order.

Mark Storey – I would comment here that although the Health Department is under the direction of the Public Health Officer, which is a doctor, and they are not held to our rules for public health, the land use rules are for people that want to develop the land, not for the agencies or other parts of agencies that might permit something.

Dave Gibney – This reminds me of another question. Whenever we start talking about water and wells, we go with the Department of Ecology regulations and permit those. They are not granting those permits very often or frequently or all the time. The water conservation is happening because permits are not happening. Is that true?

Alan Thomson – It’s true that Ecology is not giving out water rights. They are very difficult to get. Exception for that is the exempt well. That is how we develop things. The exempt well status is basically an exemption from having to have a water right. That is all governed by Ecology.

Dave Gibney – So an exempt well permits are being granted with a relatively high frequency in our water sheds?

Alan Thomson – No, I would not say that. We don't have high development in WC.

Chad Whetzel – Has anybody been turned down for an exempt well?

Mark Storey – No.

Alan Thomson- No.

Dave Gibney – When people talk to me that we are going to run out of water someday, I lean back on we are not letting a lot of new use take effect.

Alan Thomson – We don't have any restrictions on any water basins in WC at this moment. That is an Ecology decision not a local decision. We don't have any restrictions on any of the water basins. It doesn't mean that we wouldn't have. That is what the debate is about right now. Especially in the Pullman-Moscow area. But there are no restrictions on exempt wells in WC at this moment.

Dave Gibney – There was a court case a few years back.

Mark Storey – Technically speaking, Dave, an exempt well is a water right and technically speaking it is considered a permit exempt well. It is exempt from the permit process. You don't have to ask permission to do it. You hire a well driller and the well driller fills out a paper saying what you did and then it goes to the State and it becomes its own water right in time just like an official water right.

But it is limited to a very small amount of water which is why they let it happen. What Alan says is correct. We don't have a large amount of development that Ecology is getting excited about it. If we had three times the number of exempt wells being developed they might get a lot more excited.

Dave Gibney – And yet the Grand Ronde continues to drop.

Mark Storey – Don't forget that the Pullman-Moscow basin is only about 10% of WC. We do not have dropping water level problems in the County except in the Pullman-Moscow area.

Dave Gibney – I didn't know that. I thought it was happening in Palouse and other areas.

Mark Storey – Well, Palouse is the one location that they have demonstrated a connection to the Pullman and Moscow area. For example, Colton and Uniontown aren't connected at all to the Pullman-Moscow basin. Everything west of Union Flat Creek is not connected to it. Don't forget that many of the shallow wells are in the Wanapum ground water regime rather than the Grand Ronde.

So it is a complex problem. The other reason that Ecology is not coming down on our basin is because the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee is working actively towards solving some of the problems. If it weren't for that they may have slapped it shut already.

Dave Gibney – I appreciate that. I've been living with the assumption that the continued depletion of water isn't as big a problem because we don't drill that many new wells.

Mark Storey – Don't forget that Pullman and WSU both have unused water rights that far exceed anything that we can drill out in the County.

Dave Gibney – A right to use doesn't necessarily mean a good idea to use.

Mark Storey - That is absolutely correct.

Brian Davies – We have tons of water rights in Uniontown that we haven't even touched.

Mark Storey – You guys don't have a shortage either. Your water levels are not declining. There are parts of WC where water levels are actually coming up.

Brian Davies – We fixed our system when we put in Well 6 and went in the Grand Ronde. We went that deep a couple hundred feet or more. So that stabilized us and got us away from all that ground water contamination that we were seeing back in the 90's.

Mark Storey – Iron and the nitrates. Don't confuse Grand Ronde in Colton and Uniontown. It is not connected to Grand Rhone under Pullman. That is the name of the rock unit. It is not necessarily the name of the aquifer but everyone uses it as such.

Dave Gibney – The information I was wanting, I have, so thank you very much.

Alan Thomson – When I talk to the consultant I'm going to go over this and see if this is necessary in here. We don't have any control over this. This is controlled by Environmental Health and the State Department of Health. It is not in our zoning ordinances. Let's just leave that in there for now.

GOAL F-7 – ENCOURAGE THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS OF ~~THE~~ EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNICATION ~~TELECOMMUNICATION~~ SYSTEM(S) TO A LEVEL ADEQUATE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTY.

Alan Thomson – On **Goal F-7** is that language okay? We struck out “**the.**”

Chad Whetzel – Yes.

Policy F-7.1 – Promote the widespread availability of communications, broadband internet access and similar technologies in cooperation with other public and private entities, to facilitate communication among members of the public, public institutions, and private businesses.

Alan Thomson – Is this one okay? Okay.

Policy F-7.2 – Opportunities to enhance and promote communications technology within Whitman County that support existing businesses and industrial users, strengthen its competitive edge in recruiting new business, and supporting existing and future residents should be considered a priority.

Dave Gibney – From there on, there is all this strike out which is how you used to say 1 and 2.

Alan Thomson – If that's the case, then that's good. Basically **7.1** and **7.2** covers the rest of this stuff. Are you okay with the strikeouts? There is a lot of detail here that is not necessary. This would be putting a burden on the County to put all this together.

Chad Whetzel – In the goal it says, “...improvements of the telecommunications systems.” Does it need to say “telecommunications” or would communications be sufficient? By saying telecommunications we are limiting that aren't we?

Alan Thomson – If it is not telecommunications, what other communications would there be?

Brian Davies – Radio.

Chad Whetzel – I don't know what is coming down the pike. Right now they pushing the fiber optic stuff, meanwhile other companies are developing fast satellite systems that are even better, that you don't even have to lay cable in the ground for. I don't know if you want to just limit it.

Alan Thomson – I think you are right.

Mark Storey – Why don't we instead of going with telecommunications, say “and other information transfer technologies,” or something like that.

Alan Thomson – Would that be included under communications systems, Mark?

Mark Storey – You are communicating information when they are using a fiber optic line. Most times, it is not verbal, but a series of ones and zeros, so it is information transfer. It is still communications.

Alan Thomson – So Chad, your suggestion is to take “tele” out of there and leave it communications which, hopefully we covered that.

Brian Davies – Doesn't “tele” refer to copper in the ground?

Alan Thomson – Telephone?

Dave Gibney – If there is no information being transferred it isn't communication. I don't know what it is.

Mark Storey – I think with communication you can interpret all the things you need to interpret for the zoning code.

Alan Thomson – Are we all in agreement with the strike out that we leave it struck out?

Chad Whetzel – Seems like it would be fine to eliminate that.

Alan Thomson – I will include that in my conversation with Todd. That is done with that chapter. Now the only chapter left is the Chapter 1, the Intro. Are we good with this chapter? Okay. All the way to the beginning, Dave.

Dave Gibney – Page 4.

Alan Thomson – There are a couple of capitalizing counties in here. So, you need to read this to make sure you agree with all of it.

Weston Kane – The second column at the top where it says, “....sown in many areas with wheat...” Maybe we should change that to read like, “wheat and other dryland crops.”

Alan Thomson – Would the general public know what other crops means?

Weston Kane – I'm not certain but very few people grow lentils anymore. We have more chickpeas than lentils. The prices aren't there.

Alan Thomson – What about pulse?

Keith Paulson – We talked about that once before. We talked about legumes and it got struck down, so pulse crops. That’s the new word.

Weston Kane – Or legumes.

Keith Paulson – It really shouldn’t just say ‘wheat.’ There’s wheat and barley, grains.

Alan Thomson – What do you think it should be Keith?

Keith Paulson – I’m not sure but I guess wheat and barley is the other two grain crops.

Alan Thomson – So, wheat, barley, and pulse?

Weston Kane – Wheat, barley and pulse crops. What about ag crops and then it covers anything that is grown in WC.

Keith Paulson – That would work.

Dave Gibney – That is pretty general.

Alan Thomson – The Palouse is known specifically for certain crops. I think that needs to be spelled out. Wheat is definitely one of them. Pulse then should be. Is there a lot of barley grown?

Keith Paulson – Our spring crop is barley. Very little oats anymore. Grains would cover the grain crops and pulse is the beans.

Dave Gibney – I do remember a promise that the Staff was going to fix the capitals.

Alan Thomson – I started doing that. Below the picture, county seat should be capitalized.

Whitman County is home to two major cities – Pullman, home to almost 32,000 residents including Washington State University and Colfax, the County Seat with nearly 3,000 residents. Large land ownerships and agricultural land uses dominate the County outside Pullman, Colfax, and fourteen other small cities and towns along with several unincorporated rural communities.

Dave Gibney – Is fourteen a correct statement?

Alan Thomson – Yes, I counted them all today.

Keith Paulson – I didn’t know Colfax was over 3,000 residents.

Alan Thomson – The 2010 census was 2805, estimated for 2021 is 2855. So it is just over 2800.

Chad Whetzel – So “just under 3,000?”

Dave Gibney – Or “nearly?”

Chad Whetzel – “Nearly” works.

Alan Thomson – The population of Colfax has not changed much over time.

Dave Gibney – Hey, they outnumber Garfield County.

Alan Thomson – So, are we okay with page 4? Okay. On to page 5.

Dave Gibney – That first paragraph, “...from the 2010 census population for the County.” You probably should update that with 2021 census data.

Population and Demographics

Washington State’s Office of Financial Management (OFM) estimates that Whitman County’s population in 2020 was 50,480, an increase of 5,704 (almost 13 percent) from the 2010 census population for the County. Eighty-nine percent of this population growth occurred in the City of Pullman. The 1978 comprehensive plan notes that population growth in Whitman County is strongly linked to Washington State University specifically and Pullman more broadly. The existing plan noted that consolidation of farms and decline of small town populations meant that growth pressures outside of the Pullman area would be minimal over the planning period (1978-1985). These observations are no less true in 2021. Pullman’s population decreased in the decade between 1980 and 1990 and grew only modestly between 1990 and 2000, coinciding with stagnant enrollment at Washington State University. This contributed to overall flat county population counts between 1990 and 2000.

Alan Thomson – That hasn’t come out yet. Is it supposed to come out soon?

Mark Storey – I think the graph is out.

Dave Gibney – It came out for the purposes of redistricting. We are still a couple of months from a hearing and from the BOCC adopting it so that data should be available by then.

Alan Thomson – The Planning Commission is close to finishing looking over this, so this month we will be finished with looking it over so that means preparing the final draft for the consultant and going to the BOCC.

Mark Storey – I think we could put draft numbers in and just call it what it is. Even if they don’t finalize their numbers before we finalize this document. We need to flag this before we go to print.

Alan Thomson – On the second column there was a comment from Debbie Snell. I looked this over and I think that Matt is right. It is repetitive, because if you look over in the first column it basically saying the same thing as that last paragraph in the second column. What do you think?

~~*The population projections from the 1978 plan projected more than 50,000 county residents by 2000. In hindsight, this projection was overly optimistic by 20 years. The link between Pullman’s growth and the County’s, and the previous plan’s statement that much of the county faces little true growth pressure remain accurate.*~~

Chad Whetzel – Redundant.

Alan Thomson – Exactly. That last paragraph isn’t necessary to have that in there. If you look at that first column it pretty much says the same thing.

Chad Whetzel – I don’t see why we can’t get rid of that whole paragraph.

Dave Gibney – Is everybody happy with this? Okay. Then we have a map of WC and we have 2017 Growth Management Act data projection, uncorrected for COVID and the upswing in

telecommunication. I don't have to live in WC to do my job anymore. I plan on continuing, but I know people who have moved.

Dave Gibney – So, it's been since 2017 for GMA projections. There may be newer ones for that one.

Alan Thomson – I will ask the consultant to check that one out and see if it has been updated.

Dave Gibney – I think that is one of the main purpose of consultants is to have them verify and check the numbers and statistics.

Alan Thomson – So, any qualms about page 6? Other than checking to see if it is up to date?

Chad Whetzel – Yes.

Alan Thomson – Okay, page 7. More data that needs to be checked out. Debbie has another comment here about the WSU transient population. The consultant's comment says it seems unnecessary and common knowledge. What do you think?

Chad Whetzel – I don't know that it is common knowledge but I don't know if people are claiming Pullman as their home, how to differentiate between the two?

Dave Gibney – Moving back up here it seems to be covered.

Alan Thomson – I think Chad is right. You have to put down where you live in order, what are you a resident of. If you are a resident of Pullman and you are a student why do we care? You are a resident of Pullman.

Chad Whetzel – It does change things little bit because a lot of times they leave but statistical speaking, how do you know the difference?

Dave Gibney – We have a higher than usual percentage of people in this age group explicitly due to WSU. That's why we are different from most of the State. But that is what is says.

Alan Thomson – Debbie's comments asks if it should be noted, and it is already noted.

David Gibney – The demographics probably need an update.

Chad Whetzel – Would it be possible on that graph to get colors that don't look so similar?

Alan Thomson – Yes.

Dave Gibney – It is highly blue there like the County.

Alan Thomson – I got a note of that for the consultant.

Mark Storey – It is probably a graph taken out of another document so we don't have the raw graph data to change it very easily.

Dave Gibney – Put the numbers into Excel and re-graph it.

Mark Storey – You could do that.

Dave Gibney – Actually, I can't, I'm pretty crappy at graphing in Excel.

Chad Whetzel – Alan could do that.

Alan Thomson – I’m going to ask the consultant to do that. Are we good with page 7 apart from updating? On to page 8.

INTRODUCTION

About the Comprehensive Plan

Reason for Update

*The Whitman County Comprehensive Plan, originally adopted in 1960, ~~is~~ **was** a document consisting of a few simple statements. The Plan was updated in 1970 to address major changes, including Pullman’s rapid growth at the time, development of industrial and commercial sites along the Snake River, and the creation of new County parks. In 1978, the Plan saw a more thorough update, assessing issues and adopting policies in three broad categories: land use, transportation, and coordination and plan implementation.*

*Since 1978, the Plan has received minor amendments over the years but has not seen a major update to reflect current issues, goals, and vision for the future. The ~~2021~~ **2022** revision of the Comprehensive Plan serves as an opportunity to respond to recognized trends and anticipated changes and to produce a more accurate depiction of current conditions and assessment of service-related needs for residents. This Plan includes updated goals and policies as well as changes to the techniques used to implement the goals and policies.*

Weston Kane – On that first paragraph, “.....adopted in 1960 is a document...” do we want to leave that as “is” or change it to “was?”

Chad Whetzel – Yes, it should be “was.”

Dave Gibney – I agree but it still is. It hasn’t been changed.

Alan Thomson – I think it is a kind style thing, how you state things. Either way sounds fine to me.

Dave Gibney – Down in the middle of the next paragraph, “...This 2021 revision...” should probably be changed to “2022.”

Alan Thomson – Okay. With the original timetable we were thinking of 2021.

Dave Gibney – I think I might have mentioned it.

Plan Purpose and Objectives

*The Whitman County Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that serves as a guide for countywide decision making over the next twenty years. In coordination with other local comprehensive plans, the fundamental purpose of this plan is **to establish goals and policies to guide growth, land use, capital facility and transportation investment, and environmental planning.** Additionally, the Plan **expresses community goals and desires**, informing decision making and guiding coordination between agencies and jurisdictions.*

Alan Thomson – You can take off the bold stuff there, Dave.

Dave Gibney – I thought so, too, but then when I looked at what was actually bolded, if you were wondering what we were doing and why, that little bit of emphasis makes a difference.

Alan Thomson – What do the rest of you think?

Dave Gibney – I think it was intentional.

Chad Whetzel – It is really the crux of this whole thing.

Keith Paulson – Since it took 34 years since the last plan, should it be lengthen from 20 years to 34 years?

Alan Thomson - No, no. Ha, ha. I think 20 years is fine, Keith.

Keith Paulson – I just wondered.

Alan Thomson – I'll talk to the BOCC if they want to fund it in 20 years,

Chad Whetzel – It depends on how good of a job we do.

Alan Thomson – Page 8 looks like pretty standard language for a comp plan, compliance with the State law, blah, blah, blah. Are we okay with page 8?

Chad Whetzel – Looks good so far.

Alan Thomson – Page 9?

Chad Whetzel – Is that RCW hyperlinked, Dave?

Dave Gibney – It's not. I thought we discussed.

Chad Whetzel – We decided not to use hyperlinks because they change those things.

Dave Gibney - It is not a hyperlink. This one down below is.

Chad Whetzel – Yes, that is the one I was looking at.

City and County planning in Washington is also governed by RCW 36.70A, known as the Growth Management Act (GMA). This law outlines planning requirements for all jurisdictions to coordinate development and growth, protect resources and the environment, and lay the groundwork for sustainable economic development and quality of life. Only some counties and the cities within those counties are required to "fully plan" under the GMA.

Whitman County, which is predominately rural and has experienced modest population growth, is identified as a "Partially Planning County" by the State of Washington. This means the County is not required to fully plan under the GMA. However, the GMA does require all counties (including Whitman County) to identify and protect resource lands and critical areas. Additionally, all counties must have development regulations (zoning and subdivision codes) that are consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Dave Gibney – That last paragraph, “... is identified as a “Partially Planning County” by the State of Washington.” That was the choice of the County. The State of Washington didn’t identify us that way. We chose to be that way. I don’t know if it matters.

Alan Thomson – Think about it this way. So, the data that the State puts out shows who is a fully planning and who is a partially planning county. So, one could interpret it that way, that the State data says that WC is partially planning. You are correct. We chose to not be fully planning. But the State now has to recognize us as partially planning.

Chad Whetzel – Just out of curiosity and the paragraph above it, are some cities not fully planned? The last sentence, “Only some counties and the cities within those counties are required to “fully plan” under the GMA.”

Dave Gibney – I believe that any county that is fully planning the cities are also required. I don’t think there is any cities inside partially planned counties that are required to fully planning.

Alan Thomson – That is correct. So, it is the county in general that decides whether they want to be fully planning or partially planning. Then correspondingly all the towns and cities will follow with whatever that decision is.

Chad Whetzel – That makes sense.

Brian Davies – So, that is why when Uniontown redid its critical areas ordinance we only had, we didn’t have to do our land use ordinance.

Dave Gibney – And it is why the County doesn’t have to pay full attention to the City of Pullman’s Urban Growth Boundary.

Alan Thomson – Much to their dissatisfaction.

Dave Gibney – I think we cooperate pretty well, actually.

Alan Thomson – You do. Originally, except for clustering.

Dave Gibney – You know, that voice may well be fully gone from our city government by now.

Alan Thomson – The mayor still harps on about it.

Dave Gibney – Well, Pete is gone, Mark is gone, and Kevin Gardis is gone. I don’t see it really happening anywhere that will mess with utility extension anyway. So, how are we on this page?

Alan Thomson – This is the nitty gritty of what the Comp Plan includes.

Dave Gibney – Down at the bottom it says, “Consistency – The Plan shall be consistent with the County’s development regulations, as adopted in Title 19 of the Whitman County Code.” I guess that is true. It is just as much the development regulations are driven by, as consistency with. It is both ways.

Alan Thomson – It is a two-way street. You could say the development regulations need to be consistent with the Plan and that is the way I always phrase it.

Dave Gibney – That is not what it says here.

Alan Thomson – Right, but it does mean that too. The Plan has to be consistent with the development regulations and vice versa. Are we okay with page 9? Okay.

Dave Gibney – We have a comment from Debbie Snell. She is saying to put a big picture after that first paragraph.

Alan Thomson – A picture after Regional Values and Framework?

Dave Gibney – Before Framework Goals. I don't know. It is like grab their attention with some glossy.

Chad Whetzel – So, is there another Framework goal down below that?

Dave Gibney – There are 10.

Chad Whetzel – If you put a picture below that first paragraph would that put all your Framework Goals on one page?

Dave Gibney – No. Not even close. Some kind of a photo on this page may or may not be a good idea. I'm not going to talk about the font.

Alan Thomson – We do have a number of good photographs that we can use and we will use some of them so that might be a good place to put one. How do you feel about a photo after the **Regional Values and Framework Goals**? Good idea, bad idea?

Matt Webb – I don't think it is going to hurt.

Dave Gibney – You want to make this attractive so some good pictures, some of those maps aren't all that beautiful, either. We got some more discussion. How is the verbiage doing?

Regional Values and Framework Goals

Through the public outreach and participation methods described in the Public Involvement section of this Chapter, the residents of Whitman County expressed what they value as a community. It is this input that has aided the County with the development of framework goals that outline the desired vision for the future of Whitman County. The following framework goals are not listed in any specific order or rank but should be considered co-equal.

Keith Paulson – We talked about this once before about having Framework Goals are not listed in any order, but what if we had Framework Goal, 1, 2, and 3 and it gives you a reference and when you are talking to somebody about it, you can say, #5 is this. Instead of just having Framework Goal.

Alan Thomson – Okay Keith, wouldn't that give the impression that we are ranking them if we put numbers on them?

Keith Paulson – But it says up above that we are not putting this in any certain order or rank.

Alan Thomson – Following that would be if you don't put any numbers in that seems to follow from that last sentence. That is one way of looking at it. Yes, we could put numbers in there.

Weston Kane – We talked about it and we were trying to get away from that.

Dave Gibney – The ease of reference that Keith is talking about, when do you want to do that? Let’s say, we are having a hearing about a zone change and somebody says Comp Plan Framework Goal, Preserve Farms and Agricultural Character. Or they say, Framework #2, Preserve Farms and Agriculture Character.

Alan Thomson – Right, it is easier to reference. Framework Goal #1, whatever.

Mark Storey – Why not just use letters?

Alan Thomson – Oh.

Chad Whetzel – I don’t know that it matters, that is a good idea Mark. Up there on the **Regional Values and Framework Goals**, we could say something to the effect that there is no particular order, but in order to reference, these are the numbers/letters that have been assigned. So, that way you can reference it later in the document.

Alan Thomson – Or we could just put the numbers in and the statement say, the following Framework Goals are not listed in any specific order and still put the numbers in.

Chad Whetzel – This document is going to be online eventually, correct?

Alan Thomson – Yes.

Chad Whetzel – Can we link so if I come to this page and I am online and I click on Framework Goal which will be #1 or A, if I click on that will it take me down to that section of the document?

Alan Thomson – Presumably yes, we could set it up that way.

Keith Paulson – I really don’t care one way or the other. For me, a reference of which one I am talking about. A, B, C, or 1, 2, 3.

Alan Thomson – I think it would be good with numbers. If everybody is okay with it we can put numbers in here.

Chad Whetzel – I’m good with numbers.

Dave Gibney – I like the idea of not having any order at all.

Matt Webb – I would tend to agree with that just because it implies there is a ranking even if there isn’t.

Weston Kane – If we are going to have it linked throughout the document with hyperlink anyway, they will be group-able that way.

Alan Thomson – We have a split.

Dave Gibney – Okay, **Enhance Countywide Services**, the 3rd one down. I don’t know any single section further down that is a one to one correspondence. I don’t like saying they are not in any order and then implying an order with letters or numbers.

Alan Thomson – Okay, a consensus thing. We have two possibilities. It seems like maybe leaning towards not putting any numbers on here. What say the Planning Commission?

Chad Whetzel – The easiest way is to go one at a time.

Dave Gibney – No numbers.

Keith Paulson – I would. But I’m not a stickler about it.

Brian Davies – No.

Matt Web – I would think if you are going to do it to use letters but I don’t think it is necessary.

Weston Kane – No.

Chad Whetzel – I would probably lean towards no. I don’t think we are going to number or letter them.

Keith Paulson –That’s fine. Just a good discussion.

Alan Thomson – Okay, how about the content of the Goals? Just read down and make sure we think they are okay.

Dave Gibney – Actually some shifting happened and it is now page 11.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

All policies and decisions made by the County, and as guided by the Comprehensive Plan, will strive to protect fundamental private property rights of individuals, and ensure that Whitman County land use policies and regulations balance the private property rights of all landowners when practical and feasible.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – PRESERVE FARMS AND AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER

Preserve and protect the County’s rural character, which includes productive agricultural lands, large open spaces, and sweeping views of the Palouse hills. The protection of rural character and farm operations shall include the County’s scenic beauty as well as protection and sustainability of rural ways of life, providing opportunities for employment, income, and a tax base while also encouraging growth in rural unincorporated communities and near urban centers.

Dave Gibney – Debbie had a question, what is a rural activity center, and Matt said do we need more information?

Alan Thomson – So, “near urban centers.” Urban centers would be Pullman, Colfax. Rural activity centers would be rural residential communities. Unincorporated communities. I don’t think activity centers is in any of our codes. I think that is referring to unincorporated towns, such as Steptoe.

Weston Kane – Do we need to say “near” or could it just be “communities and urban centers.”

Alan Thomson – Near urban centers suggests that it is not in the urban center, just outside of it.

Dave Gibney – The County doesn’t have jurisdiction in the urban centers.

Weston Kane – Okay.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – ENHANCE COUNTYWIDE SERVICES

Through innovative planning approaches, interagency coordination, and responsible fiscal policy, provide for effective, supportive, and well-planned services across the County.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND COUNTYWIDE ECONOMIC GROWTH

*Develop ~~an approach that~~ **land use planning approaches** that support local business while also supporting countywide economic growth through partnerships and collaboration with business, civic and other local government leaders, and agencies.*

Alan Thomson - Debbie's comment under Framework Goal #4, Keith, about "Develop an approach..." and she is asking an approach to what? I'm not quite sure I understand that. Is she thinking that this is like a driveway, an approach driveway?

Keith Paulson – When I was reading I thought like where you drive in. Seems like a different word would work better.

Alan Thomson – "Develop a plan that supports local business," or something like that. It makes sense to me, "develop an approach that supports local business..." Does anybody else read it the way that Debbie is reading it?

Matt Webb – It does sound like you are going to make a driveway for any business out there.

Mark Storey – I think this has more to do with the regulatory approach.

Alan Thomson – Yes, exactly. So maybe regulatory approach or land use planning approach.

Keith Paulson – It needs more words to it.

Mark Storey – I don't take that as a physical approach but that is more of a road department or state highway issue.

Dave Gibney – "Develop land use planning policies." Maybe that should be policies instead of approach.

Weston Kane - Or idea. The word that is in front of it now. Mark said there was no way you could think it is an approach like a driveway now.

Alan Thomson – I like the word approach.

Matt Webb – You got to go consistent.

Alan Thomson - Like Mark says, it is a regulatory approach. That is how one should interpret that.

Dave Gibney – That is a good point that it is staying consistent. How is this? "Develop **land use planning approaches....**"

FRAMEWORK GOAL – PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Anticipate and respond to impacts related to climate change by exploring and adopting land use strategies that foster the protection of clean air and water, fish and wildlife habitats, and healthy and productive ecosystems.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – PROMOTE AND IMPROVE MOBILITY OPTIONS

Provide for a safe and reliable multi-modal transportation network that enables residents, workers, commerce, and tourists to efficiently travel within and across rural Whitman County and its communities. Continue to explore and improve upon a variety of mobility options that include but are not limited to automobiles, public and private transit, bicycles and pedestrian.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – EFFECTIVE LAND USE PLANNING

Develop goals and policies that promote effective and consistent land use decisions that are responsive to local growth but also protect the unique rural character of Whitman County.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – ONGOING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Whitman County residents and property owners shall be continually informed and provided ongoing opportunities for public involvement.

FRAMEWORK GOAL – SUPPORT RECREATION AND ACCESS TO NATURAL AREAS

Support County residents in their ability to access outdoor recreation and natural areas throughout Whitman County through collaboration and partnerships, while recognizing the need to protect natural, scenic and environmentally sensitive areas, ~~and protect~~ while protecting property rights.

Chad Whetzel – The last sentence “...recognizing the need to protect natural, scenic and environmentally sensitive areas, and protect property rights.”

Matt Webb – I’m with you on that, Chad. Should it say something like, “**while** protecting property rights.”

Chad Whetzel – I think you are right, Matt.

Matt Webb – What about “...and protecting...”

Dave Gibney – I think it is okay like it is.

Alan Thomson – I think it makes the point. “...recognizing the need to protect natural....and protect private property rights. I mean, maybe not even using the word “protect” and property rights. It sounds okay.

Dave Gibney – I like the way it reads, “...while protecting property rights.”

FRAMEWORK GOAL – PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF WHITMAN COUNTY

Recognize the value and importance of Whitman County’s heritage, protecting important prehistoric and historic sites, local historic districts and areas and buildings, both commercial and residential, of local, state and federal historic significance.

Alan Thomson – Are we good to move on? Okay, The rest of the **Framework Goals** all the way down to **Relationship Between Plan Elements**. That first paragraph reads okay to me.

Each of the Comprehensive Plan Elements are considered individually based on their specific topic (i.e., Land Use, Transportation, Economic Development.) However, each element is intrinsically linked to each other, and the policies identified in each element should be considered in conjunction with policies in the other plan elements. Additionally, goals and policies in each element should be considered equally important and share a balanced relationship with other elements in the Comprehensive Plan.

For example, preserving productive agricultural land and the protection of working farms is highly valued, while recognizing that decisions regarding land use changes will affect housing availability, housing affordability, and property values. Growth affects transportation demand and function, as well as how effectively the County will be able to maintain and accommodate future transportation facility improvements. Future growth also affects economic development choices and direction. Policies may either promote or suppress economic growth, and the policy direction can have a direct effect on local business and industries.

Keith Paulson – In the second paragraph where it says, “...protection of working farms...” Every farm that I know of is a working farm, even if it is CRP. So if the word, “working” was deleted, would it hurt anything? Maybe I am over- thinking it.

Alan Thomson – Is there such a thing as a non-working farm?

Chad Whetzel – Yes, and he is in jail. (Laughing!)

Keith Paulson – Just CRP.

Dave Gibney – No, they let him out because no one would take care of his critters.

Brian Davies – He has to go feed his cows.

Keith Paulson – So, there’s one.

Alan Thomson – I am kind of on the fence with that one. Working farm may be redundant?

Brian Davies – Can we say, “Agriculture?”

David Gibney – No, you are preserving agricultural land. I think the word “working” is redundant but it adds to what we are talking about.

Brian Davies – The color of the document.

Dave Gibney – I guess I have to be consistent and disagree with Keith the rest of the night.

Keith Paulson - That’s okay, I’m out of here.

Dave Gibney – Shall we whack it or not?

Keith Paulson – No, it’s fine. Any farm that I’ve been around has been a working farm. It is just maybe my knowledge of farms.

Dave Gibney –The little chunk of acreage I own in another county I kind of wish was a more working farm than it is. That I am not there to do it.

Brian Davies – I don't think there are old farms sitting around that aren't working. They have been either leased to someone else or unless it is CRP. We don't just have stuff sitting around.

Keith Paulson – Even CRP has to be mowed, and weeds taken care of. It is a working farm.

Brian Davies – You can't bale it.

Chad Whetzel – Sometimes you can.

Alan Thomson – We've got one more page here and it seems pretty easy to go over and we are done with this chapter. It is now 8:55, let's look over this last page. Actually there is another page beyond that. We can leave this until next time, because I need to look into some stuff that we covered tonight. We've only got two pages to finish.

Dave Gibney – There is a lot of Todd and Matt on this page.

Alan Thomson – So, what do you think? Leave it until next time?

Chad Whetzel – The next page is pretty short. It looks like there is only less than a paragraph on it. No, down there, sorry.

Alan Thomson – Like Dave is saying there are a few comments that need to be addressed.

Matt Webb – You are the boss.

Chad Whetzel – Could we look at the comments and see if we need to address? Maybe we can finish up next time?

Alan Thomson – Sure.

Dave Gibney - The first comment from Debbie is this entire section be relocated higher up.

Alan Thomson – How to use the plan.

Dave Gibney – She may have a point. Moving that up to ahead of Framework Goals introduces the six elements.

Alan Thomson – That does appear to make sense.

Chad Whetzel – She has a good point.

Brian Davies – I agree.

Alan Thomson - So, we move this one to page 10. That would be under the introduction in front of **Regional Values and Framework Goals**

Dave Gibney – It would be under that page that I made blank. I guess I saw it coming. It fits better here.

Alan Thomson – Then on the last page is the **Plan Update Process** and that should stay where it is. The Appendices are in the right order and we don't plan on moving any. Matt's comment on links as Appendices are developed. We will leave that one in there.

Dave Gibney – I think the rest of Matt's comments are correct. I think we talked about related documents somewhere else. We've got some hyperlinks here.

Alan Thomson – Do these need to stay hyperlinks?

Dave Gibney – The length of the City of Pullman Comp Plan is outside of your control. But the WC Shoreline Master Program is within your control as well as the County Code, the Port of WC is outside. The stronger argument is to keep links to documents you control.

Alan Thomson – Yes. Right.

Chad Whetzel – I agree to that.

Dave Gibney – I have no real confidence that you will actually catch this when you move to the Shoreline Master Program of 2022.

Alan Thomson – We have pretty much finished this page. **Navigating This Plan** and then **Plan Update Process** is the last page. That diagram there is correct. **Public Engagement**.

Dave Gibney – You probably want to add some stuff at the end that states that the planning commission held whatever X number of meetings we've had so far and describe what we have been doing.

Alan Thomson – Okay, I can do that. That might have completed it, Dave.

Chad Whetzel – I think so. Just bring back those last couple questions and clean that thing up and maybe by 2 weeks from now we can finalize this thing.

Alan Thomson – That sounds like a plan. Let's do that.

Dave Gibney – By finalize we are ready to hold a hearing?

Alan Thomson – No, I will get final approval from you guys if you are okay with all the changes and then I need to send it to the consultant. Then he will tidy it all up.

Dave Gibney – Are we going to hold a public hearing or is that all on the BOCC?

Alan Thomson – No, it is on you too. It needs to go through the PC public hearing first and then to the BOCC.

Dave Gibney – So, you would be asking a lot of the consultants by the first meeting in February.

Alan Thomson – So, yes, I will have to ask them how long it will take them to do with this. Then they will give me a time frame and once I get a final draft from them. They will put the SEPA together, too, which will go with the hearing for the PC.

Dave Gibney – So our March meeting.

Alan Thomson – Let’s meet again in two weeks so you can okay all these changes and then you can tell me if this is the final version and I will send it over to the consultant after that.

Dave Gibney – Have you reviewed the pictures in here?

Alan Thomson – I have looked at them all, so that would be something that we could talk about next time, which photos to put in here. I will try and set them up in a file, and send them out to you so you can decide which new photos we want to use.

Dave Gibney – I appreciate a label that lets me know what the picture is of.

Chad Whetzel – That will also be easier when we are discussing it instead of saying the one with the funky thing in the corner, etc.

Alan Thomson – I think we are done Chad. Next meeting is **January 19, 2022**.

MOTION by Brian Davies and seconded by Weston Kane to adjourn. Motion passed.

Adjourned – 9:01

Dave Gibney -