

Benton County Planning Department

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DATE: JUNE 23, 2017

TO: BENTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: PLANNING STAFF

RE: UPDATE- LONG RANGE PLANNING PROJECTS

The State of Washington requires mandatory "periodic updates" of the entire comprehensive plan and development regulations every eight years for all "fully planning" cities and counties. Each Washington city and county must periodically review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to ensure that they comply with the GMA.

To update the comprehensive plan and development regulations, the County has:

1. Entered into a service contract with Anchor QEA (Ben Floyd) to assist with the update to the Comprehensive Plan and;
2. Assigned County Planning Department staff to propose, develop, and present an update to the County's development regulations.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The County Growth Management Comprehensive Plan was last updated, through a periodic update, in 2006. Since 2006, only "annual" comprehensive plan amendments have taken place.

The County is now required by the State to review and update the Plan by June 2017. With staffing changes occurring this past year in the Planning Department, the County will not be meeting the state required timeline for the comprehensive plan adoption. Earlier this year the County entered into a contact with Anchor QEA to review and update the plan. The public participation plan will be presented to the Planning Commission soon and the associated meetings regarding the updates will begin in late summer or fall of 2017.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

What are the County's Development Regulations? These include:

1. Zoning Code
2. Subdivision Code
3. Shoreline Regulations
4. Critical Area Regulations
5. Mineral Resource Land Regulations

Staff has been working on the following updates:

1. **Zoning Code:** The County's zoning regulations were last updated as part of 'periodic' review in 2011. Staff is proposing to add new typical chapters such as Home Occupation, Conditional Uses, Non-Conforming Uses, and Amendments while shortening other chapters and streamlining the regulations into one (1) ordinance. Additionally, the update will integrate in a new chapter for the Red Mountain Agricultural Zone.

2. **Subdivision Code:** The subdivision regulations are currently divided into four (4) ordinances. To streamline the regulations, Staff will be proposing one (1) ordinance with consistent provisions and definitions and including new chapters such as an Introduction (including Definitions), Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Design and Improvement, Lot Consolidation, and Tax Parcel Separation. This design will give the County a typical local government subdivision ordinance with streamlined, easy to read and administer chapters.

3. **Shoreline Regulations:** Staff will be proposing an ordinance to codify the shoreline regulations (separate from the shoreline policies) and integrate the regulations into the county code. The shoreline jurisdiction critical area regulations will need to be updated to be consistent with the new critical area regulations, as necessary.

4. **Critical Area Regulations.** The County's CAO was originally adopted in 1994. The State required a periodic update of the regulations in 2006 which the County has not completed as of yet. The County has been out of compliance for the past 11 years. Staff is proposing to update the regulations to ensure compliance with state requirements. The current regulations are located in seven (7) ordinances in Title 15 of the County Code. The update will have one (1) Critical Area Ordinance that will integrate current state standards and include the requirements for best available science.

5. **Mineral Resource Lands.** Currently located in Chapter 15.45 of the County Code, Staff will be proposing to keep the regulations in Title 15, but review and update the ordinance as necessary. The Code was last updated in 1995 and a consistency review with state law and other county regulations is necessary.

6. **Future Title 15 Environment.** Staff will be proposing that Title 15 of the County Code be renamed to- Environment. Within this Title, the following regulations would be located.

15.04	Shoreline Master Program Regulations
15.08	Critical Area Regulations
15.12	Mineral Resource Lands
15.15	State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)
15.18	Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance