

Columbia Section News

Volume 2, Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- Background and implementation details on the award-winning Ridges to Rivers Vision Plan
- Benton County reviews a proposal from the City of Kennewick to expand its urban growth area by approximately 1,260 acres

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Award-Winning Ridges to Rivers Vision Plan Hikes into Action

By Scott Woodward, Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network

The Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network's Vision Plan won last year's Citizen Involvement Planning Award, given by the Planning Association of Washington/American Planning Association Washington Chapter.

The Ridges to Rivers planning effort jump started in 2008 with an in-kind grant of planning assistance from the U.S. National Park Service. Citizens, representing groups who normally must react to plans, became proactive. A Steering Committee was formed, including representation from seven jurisdictions, ten local non-profits and the local Metropolitan Planning Organization; the plan was finished in early 2009.

The Vision Plan provides a framework for discussion, and tools for open space and trails planning within and across jurisdictional boundaries. The creation of the Plan is the first step in an ongoing implementation process, empowering citizens to work with

jurisdictions to attain community goals.

The plan's effects are visible in City Councils, County Commissions, and Planning Departments as issues that once were not even discussed are now receiving consideration as part of comprehensive plan reviews, such as adoption of hillside and ridgeline development standards and consideration of conservation funding options. To date, ten of the 26 Open Space and Trails Recommendations are in varying levels of implementation and discussion, and nine of the 24 General Recommendations have been or are being implemented via resolution or adoption.

While full implementation of the Vision Plan will take years, the language and vision of the plan are already a part of public discussion, public policy, and on-the-ground efforts. Over time, as the plan becomes integrated, the effects, particularly on inter-jurisdictional connectivity and preservation of high priority lands, will become increasingly visible.

See the Vision Plan online at <http://www.rrosn.org/pages/theplan.html>.



The 2012 PAW/APA Award atop a Mid-Columbia ridgeline
Scott Woodward

Correction: The November 2012 issue of *Columbia Section News* incorrectly attributed the Ridges to Rivers Vision Plan to the City of Richland (p.1); the RROSN is actually a group of local citizens from the Tri-Cities and surrounding region.

Beyond Zoning: Covenants Provide Useful Data for Long-Range Planning

By Lilith Yanagimachi, AICP

As land use planners we do a lot of data research for current uses. We use Assessor's records, physical inventory, utility data and more to see what is happening on the ground. One item that's been off limits, at least in my training, is the review of existing covenants. These have been excluded due to their nature as private, unenforceable by or through government action and subject to change. Historically, covenants have tried to restrict

people or groups but today they tend to focus on land uses and design standards, such as:

1. Height limits
2. Lot size
3. Home occupations/land uses
4. Setbacks
5. Design standards

If we step back and think of them as a conceptual starting point for vision planning, they have some benefits in addition to framing planning, chiefly a specific level of agreement and buy in. People who choose to live

in a subdivision with covenants do so, in part, because they enjoy the additional limitations which give a sense of protected property values and peace of mind of what type of development will occur.

It is common for covenants to conflict with zoning. To that end, the most restrictive will govern so long as the governing body is willing and able to enforce the regulations. In my few years at Chelan County I have seen several examples of how covenants can greatly impact

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Lake Entiat
Karri Espinoza

"The Chapter is sponsoring a Youth Summit on Climate Change for college- and high-school-age kids."



Yakima River above
Wenas Creek
Byron J. Gumz

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development. One example is a subdivision within a City Urban Growth Area which has a covenant requiring lots to be greater than 2.5 acres. The result greatly impacts the Urban Growth Area's potential to reach critical mass for public services, such as sewer and water infrastructure. The overall development is comprised of seven lots, totaling 35 acres. Each lot may be divided once, possibly resulting in 14 2.5-acre lots.

However, the underlying zoning permits 10,000 square feet lots or the equivalent of 122 single family dwelling lots (excluding approximately 20 percent for right-of-way). The impacts for future extension of public services are notable between the potential 122 lot plat and the 14 lot plat.

In just a few short years, the area will see the contrast between zoning and covenant when the subdivision across the street is completed. It is a 40-acre parcel developing with 12-15,000 square

feet single-family dwelling lots. The final number of lots is estimated at 72.

Covenants are always subject to change. But based on this example, the pattern of development may be determined by the initial restrictive covenants and we, as future land use planners, dealing with community vision may be benefited by taking the time to consider how covenants are impacting plan implementation.

President's Message

By Gary Mabley, AICP

Now that summer has arrived, I'm hoping you are taking advantage of the opportunity to get out and explore your communities and the region. It has been a busy seven months since the last Newsletter was published. The Washington Chapter does an excellent job of covering items of interest at the Chapter level in the Chapter's Newsletter, so I won't rehash those items in my message. I encourage you to visit the Chapter's website at <http://washington-apa.org/>. However, there are several items I would like to bring to your attention.

Youth Summit on Climate Change

As you may have heard, the Chapter is sponsoring a Youth Summit on Climate Change for college- and high-school-age kids. The Summit will be held in Bellevue on October 1, in conjunction with the Fall APA Conference scheduled for October 2-3. In an effort to involve students from across the State who may not be able to attend the Summit in Bellevue, the Summit Committee has been working with the State to enlist the use of Community College telecommunication facilities throughout Washington. This is a bold new adventure for the Chapter, and could serve as a forerunner for

future Chapter outreach efforts. If you are interested in volunteering to assist with the webcast at Walla Walla Community College, Wenatchee Valley College or Yakima Valley Community College, please contact Paula Reeves at blain_paula@comcast.net.

Vacancies & Elections

APA National has offered to coordinate Chapter and Section elections. The catch is that elections would have to be held in June-July, with the new officers taking office in January. The Washington Chapter Board supports moving to the new schedule, and has asked the Sections if they would consider a similar change. It would require an amendment to the Columbia Section Bylaws, as the elections are currently scheduled to occur in the fall. The Section Board will be discussing a possible Bylaw change in the future.

The Columbia Section currently exists as a result of the volunteer efforts and commitment of its members. I realize that like me, most of you are very busy with your professional and personal lives, and are hesitant to assume any additional responsibilities. However, without your support and involvement, the Columbia Section would not exist. The Section currently has vacancies for a number of the County Representative positions, and several of the Board Officer positions will

be up for reelection this fall. I encourage you to consider committing a small amount of your time to serve on the Section Board or as a County Representative. Please contact me at gary@mableyassociates.com, if you are interested in serving in any capacity.

Section Treasurer

We have an immediate need for a new Section Treasurer. Joe Schiessl, AICP, former Treasurer, was promoted last spring to Parks & Recreation Director for the City of Richland, and formally submitted his resignation, so he could focus his attention on his new position. While Joe has graciously agreed to continue serving as Section Treasurer until we can find a replacement, he is anxious to hand off the duties to a new Treasurer. The Section's finances are not that complex if you can manage a checkbook, and generally would require about an hour a month to reconcile the monthly bank statement, forward a copy to the Chapter office, and occasionally receive and issue checks. You would be a member of the Section Board, and would also need to try and be available for quarterly meetings/conference calls. It is a great opportunity to be involved in a professional organization, and would look good on your resume. Please contact me at gary@mableyassociates.com, if you are interested in serving as the new Treasurer.

County Corner

News, planning projects, community service and educational activities in Columbia Section counties

Benton

The Benton County Shoreline Master Program Update project is well underway. We have set up a project website for citizens, agencies, and other stakeholders to obtain information regarding our update, and educate themselves on the Washington Department of Ecology Guidelines and expectations. We encourage everyone to check it out: www.bentoncountysmpupdate.com. E-mail us at smp@co.benton.wa.us with comments and/or questions. During the Visioning Phase of the update program we conducted a Shoreline User/Community Survey via surveymonkey.com. We collected information about how people view, use and enjoy the rivers of Benton County, and areas where they think needs improvement. We received over 130 responses, and a results summary is available on the website.

Benton County is currently reviewing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment submitted by the City of Kennewick to expand its urban growth area by approximately 1,260 acres. This UGA proposal is outside of the allotted County 5-year UGA review cycle because new legislation ([SSB 5995](#)) passed in 2012 allows annual modifications to UGAs in Benton County provided that:

- Lands are zoned for industrial purposes,
- The increase does not exceed seven percent of the city's area,
- The UGA application is preceded by a development proposal and master plan, and
- Any approved expansion is null and void if the development proposal has not been implemented or if the area has not been annexed within five years of the UGA amendment.

This proposal is scheduled to go to the Planning Commission in July. More information is available on our [Comprehensive Plan Amendments](#) Web page.

—Valerie Smith, AICP
Benton County

Chelan

Chelan County has been fortunate to hire new staff. We welcome:

Mike J. Wojtowicz, AICP, who previously served as Director of the Cowlitz County, Washington, Building & Planning Department, joins Chelan County as Senior Planner.

Kirsten Lawton, Planner 1, received her Master's in Urban and Environmental Planning from Arizona State University last Spring. She obtained Master Certificates in Transportation Systems and GIS which are areas of special interest to her within planning. Originally from Wenatchee, Kirsten is glad to have the opportunity to return and put her education to work.

Kenneth George is a planner for Chelan County who is passionate about sustainable development and land use policies. He holds a B.A. in Urban Studies from the University of Washington | Tacoma and is an avid blogger on New Urbanism and environmental design. Follow his blogs at ken-nithgeorge.com or on twitter @newurbankdawg.

Mike Peli began as permit technician for Chelan County.

—Lilith Yanagimachi, AICP
Chelan County

Walla Walla

Upper Story Development -

Like many communities in Eastern Washington, Downtown Walla Walla has a wealth of older multi-story structures. While most of the first floor space is occupied by a variety of retail businesses, restaurants, specialty & personal service shops, and yes, wine tasting rooms, many of the upper story levels remain unoccupied. There are also less than 100 residential units in the core Downtown area.

The Downtown Walla Walla Foundation's Design Committee decided to tackle the challenge of encouraging upper story residential development, in an effort to utilize vacant upper story space, increase "eyes on the street" and expand after-hours activity in Downtown. As the Committee researched the

subject, it became apparent that one of the primary deterrents was the lack of information or misinformation about building codes, the development process, parking alternatives, financial incentives, etc. The Committee decided to produce a Resource Manual for property owners and developers, to assist them in consideration and evaluation of opportunities for development of upper story space with residential units. The Downtown Foundation was fortunate to enlist the assistance of a Whitman College Student in preparing the draft Resource Manual, which is currently under review and refinement. It is anticipated the Resource Manual will be completed by the end of the summer. Further questions regarding this project can be directed to Gary Mabley, AICP at

gary@mableyassociates.com.

—Gary Mabley, AICP
Mabley & Associates

Yakima

Yakima County is pleased to welcome two new employees to its Planning Division.

Rebecca Brown is an environmental and natural resources project planner for Yakima County. She has a B.S. in Environmental Studies and Psychology from St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY, and a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota. Most recently, she was working as a National Park Service ranger at the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area in St. Paul, MN. She is an enthusiastic bicycle commuter and hiker, and volunteers as a copy editor/proofreader for the APA Sustainable Communities Division newsletter.

Julia White, born and raised in Yakima, joins Yakima County as subdivision and zoning planner following two amazing years of service with the Washington Conservation Corps. Prior to that, Julia graduated with a B.S. in Environmental Science at Washington State University.

—Nathan Gwinn, Yakima County



Whiteside Building in Downtown Walla Walla
Gary Mabley

"The Committee decided to produce a Resource Manual ... for development of upper story space with residential units."



Max Baumeister Building in Downtown Walla Walla
Gary Mabley

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar: Functions, workshops and social events to further communication

Date	Subject and Contact	Location
Wednesday, July 24, 2013 9:30 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.	Eastern Washington Planner's Forum <i>Contact Dee Caputo (509) 389-1291</i> dee.caputo@commerce.wa.gov	Big Bend Community College, ATEC Bldg. #1800, 7662 Chanute St NE, Moses Lake, WA
Sept. TBA	Short Course on Local Planning Dee Caputo (509) 389-1291 dee.caputo@commerce.wa.gov	Yakima, WA
Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2013	Youth Summit on Climate Change	Bellevue, WA
October 2-3, 2013	APA Washington Annual Conference	Bellevue, WA
April 18-22, 2015	2015 APA National Conference	Seattle, WA

Please send your event to Nathan Gwinn, Columbia Section Communications Officer: nathan.gwinn@co.yakima.wa.us



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Columbia Section News

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