

ADAMS CO. NONPROJECT REVIEW FORM (Dec/Jan)

1) Background

Adams County and relevant study area is divided into two parts/phases: first, the eastern portion of Adams County with the west boundary being the East Low Canal. Then, the west portion of the county known as the Panhandle, including the city of Othello and all lands west of the East Low Canal. The first phase involves developing a comprehensive plan amplification and confronting the rezone assignment for the east side. The second phase involves repeating the process for the Panhandle, and, subsequently, sewing the two sets of final, adopted products together. (Additional information on Background may be obtained by reading #1.) c.)

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

a) Agency and contact name, address, telephone, fax, email

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b) Designated responsible official:

Dee Caputo, Planning Director/Building Official

c) Name of proposal, if any, and brief description.

Adams County Comprehensive Plan Update & Rezone Project

This project entails updating the county's comprehensive plan and rezoning various areas within Adams County to enhance competition for future economic development opportunities.

The project is designed to address the county in two phases: The first will cover the eastern portion of Adams County by excluding the Panhandle portion in the west. The second phase (not a part of the SEPA pilot project) will involve the Panhandle area of Adams County.

A consultant has been retained to assist county planning staff in the development of the project which is comprised of three separate but interrelated parts; updating the comp plan; rezoning the county, and conducting a public participation program that includes early and continuous involvement. (See comment below.)

Staff and the Adams County Planning Commission, in a further attempt to abide by state law intends to: “engage in early and continuous public involvement, including participation by 4 incorporated communities within the eastern portion of Adams County.

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

The area of jurisdiction for the rezone assignment is Adams County in its entirety. The area of jurisdiction for the Comp Plan Update is also all of Adams County. However, the original assignment bestowed on the planning department had a very narrow window of opportunity for the deadline, i.e., the working period was initially from late summer to the end of the year. (LATER, in December, the Board of County Commissioners expanded the timeframe.) Because of the narrow window, it was NOT possible to approach this assignment in its entirety. THEREFORE, it was divided into two phases with the east side of the county being served prior to the Panhandle. The primary reason for the division of this project into two phases is because it would have been impossible to accomplish everything in the entire time allotted. As it was, it was impossible to accomplish everything for JUST the east side, as the commissioners’ decision to expand the deadline indicated. Why the east side first? Because, staff anticipated that the easier, more doable portion of the county in that timeframe would be the east side of the county. The Panhandle has more development pressure, more people, and more issues to address. Thus, it was determined to represent the greater challenge and likely would not have yielded sufficient results in the timeframe to satisfy the commissioners’ expectations. Put another way, this is a variant of “A bird in the hand...”

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

“The elements/sections of the major changes (policies, transportation, etc) that will be updated in the existing mid-sixties comp plan based on the current proposal:”

will comply with state law (RCW 36.70, the Planning Enabling Act) which requires jurisdictions not fully planning under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A) to include land use and transportation elements in their comp plans. Additionally, the topic of economic development will be considered as a means of responding to commissioner intent.

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-01)

Guidance #1(d): *This response should name the jurisdictional coverage and that portion of the jurisdiction where the nonproject action will apply. Example, the nonproject action will apply statewide to all areas designated as being under the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act. This includes all lakes over 20 acres, all streams with an annual mean flow of 20cfs and all saltwater areas, plus 200 feet from ordinary high water marks any associated wetlands.*

d) Describe the jurisdiction or area where the proposal is applicable.

Adams County with the first phase to include the eastern portion of the county. The second phase will comprise the Panhandle.

Guidance #1(e): *Briefly describe the law, ordinance, chapter, etc. that allows the lead agency to undertake and approve the anticipated action, or cite relevant language. Example, Chapter XXX RCW states: “The Department of Ecology is authorized and directed to promulgate regulations to carry out the provisions of this act.”*

e) What is the legal authority or mandate for the proposal?

RCW 36.70, the Planning Enabling Act, authorizes and defines the roles and responsibilities for this jurisdiction regarding comp plan amendments and rezone activity. In this case, rezoning would occur in the context of a legislative action as opposed to one that is quasi-judicial in nature.

Title 17, ZONING, of Adams County Code, authorizes and describes planning duties of this type at the local government level.

2) Need and Objectives

NEED:

Adams County Board of County Commissioners initiated the decision to rezone the county. The major purpose of rezoning is to promote economic development opportunities by way of updating land use planning. According to the Planning Enabling Act, updating the zoning map for the county requires updating the comprehensive plan. One of the tasks of completing both these components of the assignment will be complying with SEPA requirements. Some of the data needed to complete the rezone project will also be relevant in developing a comp plan and satisfying SEPA. The intent of this project will be to produce, by means of one overlapping process, three different, but interrelated, products:

- Comp Plan Update
- Zoning Map Update
- SEPA Document

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Adams County is, by and large, an agricultural county with a serious dependence on its farm economy. When extended markets (global and otherwise) suffer from various forces which impinge locally on the vitality and marketability of farm commodities, the whole county feels the pinch right down to the smaller shopkeepers and every spin-off industry based on ag production (e.g., food processing to sales of farm implements). In theory, what causes farmers to suffer trickles down to the county tax base, particularly as it relates to sales tax receipts. In order to maintain and encourage a stable tax base, promoting diversity in commercial and industrial ventures may be helpful.

By fostering opportunities through the planning process, the county anticipates being READY if and when development opportunities avail themselves in the future. Emphasis on planning indicates that the commissioners would like to see preparedness, something that hopefully will encourage "good" outcomes rather than a haphazard approach to resolving this dilemma. By conducting a public process to update the current version of the county plan, residents of Adams County and others who get involved will serve to test whether the people of Adams County largely agree with the approach

county commissioners would like to take. Put another way, participants in the planning process should act as a reality check for the decision-makers.

The current county comp plan not only does not meet today's requirements according to state law, but it also is deficient in addressing the issue of economic development. More to the point, specific language must be included that identifies WHAT KIND of economic development opportunities and WHERE, would be suitable for Adams County. A practical way to incorporate everyone's thoughts on how to respond to these questions is through the comprehensive planning process. In addition, in order to enhance competitiveness for state and federal funding cycles where money may be available through grant or loan program to IMPLEMENT various action steps of a plan, the plan first must be in place.

The plan is intended to serve as a catalyst for the county in competing for future grant monies (resources) to enhance implementation.

(This section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

Objectives:

Goals of the project:

To complete a draft comp plan update and a draft rezone map of the eastern portion of Adams County (excluding the Panhandle) by the end of December.

To complete the testing of the revised SEPA review process by the end of December.

To engage in early and continuous public involvement, including participation by 4 incorporated communities within the eastern portion of Adams County.

Goals of the outcome:

The following goals, established by staff under supervision of the Planning Commission, attempt to guide a sound planning process that results in an acceptable, credible, legal, politically-realistic, financially- feasible method of stimulating future economic development opportunities within Adams County. The fundamental objective of the rezone assignment is to promote future commercial and industrial activities that contribute to the tax base and to overall economic and social well-being of the people in Adams County.

- To define a suitable, “**preferred alternative**” for the **rezoning** task that enhances Adams County an attraction to future business opportunities.
- To produce a **policy document in the form of a comprehensive plan** that aptly guides the direction and decisions of our elected and appointed bodies regarding land use and related matters well into the future.

- To promote a **level of community interest and inclusiveness (respecting both the intent and spirit of land use law)** in the planning process so that by final adoption, the plan belongs to the people of Adams County.

(N)ot only does the (current) comp plan not support/foster economic development, but also, updating the plan will provide the means for obtaining grant funds (e.g., CDBG or federal rural development grants) for implementing projected plans.”

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

Guidance #2(a): *This response should address both the immediate problem and, if appropriate, how it relates to a broader need. Example, the problem may be to provide additional low income housing while the need is to provide suitable housing for all income levels within the jurisdictions.*

a) Describe the problem to be addressed and the need for the action.

The county needs to develop a draft comprehensive plan update that supports changes in the county zone map that will help to foster economic development opportunities in the future. The major thrust in trying to attract potential business ventures is aimed at stabilizing the county economy through some level of future commercial and industrial growth. That preferred level is yet to be described by the answers obtained from the people who choose to participate in the public involvement program.

The existing comp plan dates back to the mid-sixties, which is outdated and ill-suited for potential development opportunities under current conditions. By updating the comp plan, the task of revising the county zone map is to prepare for future development will be supported by a meaningful policy document.

Adams County seeks to establish a stable economic base upon which to rely that provides livable wages for Adams County residents and adequately pays for the functions of government in the county.

Guidance #2(b): *Response reflects the specific objectives that the nonproject action will try to achieve. Example, the objection is to provide suitable low-income housing for 200 families.*

b) Describe the primary objective(s) of the proposal.

The primary objective is to produce a simple comp plan update that supports sound decisions involving rezoning the county to foster business growth through economic development strategies.

TO BE INSERTED: Community Values/Goals of the comp plan effort

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

c) Are there any other objectives? If so, describe.

The overall objective is to comply fully with the instructions of the county commissioners.

Developing functional objectives of the proposal is not possible till the data are in, analyzed and reconstructed to describe the wishes, desires and expectations of the responding public.

***Guidance #2(d):** This question is placed early in the form to stimulate thought and assist in identifying key issues that may arise later in the process. It also provides an opportunity for the public and others to identify concerns that they may have.*

d) What are the current known or anticipated key environmental issues or areas of controversy or concern?

Anticipated key issues include:

-Sufficient water resource to allow for future development ; (AG’s Opinion Letter of the early ‘90’s; current court cases involving Ecology on water rights; recent court outcome on the powers of Water Conservancy Boards regarding the transfer of USE in water rights)

“Additional information as to the expansion or limits of water resources in respect to the incorporated and unincorporated areas.”

FOR THE RECORD:

Ritzville: Unknown, but believe the Comp Water Plan is under revisal.

Lind: Unknown at this time

Washtucna: Unknown...

Hatton: Unknown...

Othello: Irrelevant to date (SEE all the previous questions/answers that deal with how this project is structured to recall that Othello is currently not under consideration.)

(This comment will be forwarded to each community in the new year. Adams County does not have information bearing on this topic, either for incorporated areas - not the county’s jurisdiction - nor the unincorporated areas. SEE #6.) a.) for additional information on what Adams County KNOWS.)

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

-Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development; (draft Traffic Study & Plan under construction for City/County, funded by QUADCO RTPO).

-Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture; (background information derived from work conducted by the City/County Joint Planning Task Force in the mid to late 90).

-As more structures, especially clustered, are built to accommodate new industry, they will begin to create impacts to the run off patterns in the area. Stormwater control issues will increase in importance because of the greater density/ intensity of land uses.

Staff perceives that POTENTIALLY it will become vital to address cumulative impacts from stormwater issues IF a HUGE RUN ON BIG COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS OCCURS FROM THIS PLANNING

PROCESS. Thus need for new and improved means of implementing stormwater mgt at the building permit level would arise. As with any of the other key issues, it is only an issue if the attempt to stimulate new growth is abundantly successful.

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

-Solid Waste may also become an issue in the future, depending on what kinds and volumes of waste will ultimately be generated by future businesses and industries.

Areas of controversy might include:

-Potential reluctance of public, appointed board(s) and public officials to accept/adopt plans and rezone upon completion of this project (recent experience/outcome with the Task Force previously mentioned in this section).

-The possibility that land may be taxed at a different valuation may cause grief for some - a change in zoning may also inspire controversy, each having to do with changed land use options and financial implications.

-Adequate housing stock to provide shelter to a potential increase in county population.

-Infrastructure capacity sufficient to service new businesses and people.

-Adequate pool of prospective employees with sufficient levels of education/knowledge base to address of a range of responsibilities/ of type jobs.

Guidance #3: *Lead agencies are encouraged to identify and use previous environmental documents to avoid duplication. Therefore, the response should be specific both as to the documents (SEPA and/or NEPA) covering the topic and those impacts that have been adequately analyzed.*

3) Previous Documentation

a) Identify and briefly describe any similar or related plan, regulation, policy, etc. currently in effect governing this geographic area and that contains the means to further the primary objective.

Existing comp plan	(inadequate as it stands to further primary objective)
ACC Title 17, ZONING	(text eventually will need to be revised)
County Zone Map	(needs official adoption which this process should achieve)
Shoreline Master Program	(up for grabs on when the new update will definitely be required)
Critical Areas/Resource	(relates to ag, mineral and range lands of

Ordinance & Mgt Policies (long-term of commercial significance)
(CAO)

b) Is this proposal likely to result in an amendment to or replacement of such existing regulation, policy or plan? Briefly describe.

YES. See previous text of this SEPA Checklist.

c) List any environmental documents (SEPA or NEPA) that have been prepared for items identified in 3a above. Identify the type of document, lead agency, and issue date.

Existing comp plan	N/A; predates SEPA
ACC Title 17, ZONING	(individual amendments , e.g, Airport Obstruction Zone, do not apply)
County Zone Map	N/A; unadopted formally at this time
Shoreline Master Program	No Evidence as of yet
CAO	Adams County 1993

d) Do the SEPA documents in 3c adequately analyze any or all of the impacts from the alternatives being considered? (Impacts with previous adequate analysis need not be re-analyzed, but should be incorporated by reference into the NPRF.)

Too early to tell; no alt. yet. Documented SEPA environmental analysis of previously adopted local regulations is insufficient to have a bearing on this question.

To date, no environmental analysis in the form of SEPA checklists found for the above mentioned documents. Exceptions to this fact include the CAO and some portions of more recently adopted amendments to the zone code, such as the Airport Obstruction Zone ordinance. (It is uncertain if these “SEPA documents in 3c adequately analyze any or all of the impacts from the alternatives being considered” because no preferred alt has been developed yet. That will come on the heels of a fourth, newly-added public workshop to be held some time during the month of February, as per commissioners’ instructions to hold another workshop.)

Draft alternatives have been tentatively described by staff through comp plan maps that depict WHERE future development opportunities may occur as gleaned from public responses from Community Workbooks, with minimal thought to WHAT kinds of activities or HOW INTENSE they could be. That is the nature of being DRAFT. More discussion is required to establish IF these ideas proposed by staff ARE to be considered the alternatives. The Public is defined as the body to propose the preferred alternative. With three workshops to date, that has NOT fully happened. As a result, a fourth workshop is in the makings to address this situation. The November iteration of this

SEPA came out prior to the holding of those workshops, so no real information was available at that time to add to the SEPA. With the progression of the initial three workshops having been completed during the month of December, the Dec/Jan 00-01 iteration - that would be this version - will cover the topic later in this document.

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

Guidance #4: *Many legal authorizations offer flexibility in how the policy may be achieved. Example, a law may authorize or direct the promulgation of rules, but it may be within an agency's prerogative to accomplish certain objectives through a nonregulatory approach such as guidance or educational/outreach.*

4) Alternative Approaches

a) Briefly describe any legal or other mandate that requires a particular approach.

The Planning Enabling Act governs the approach the county applies to fulfill the rezone and comp plan update assignment. Procedural and substantive requirements are contained within this statute. The comprehensive land use plan for any jurisdiction is considered a policy document.

FOR THE RECORD:

Adams County does not engage in such functional plans as Water Comp Plans or Sewer Plans because, as a county, it is defined and operates as a "Regional" governmental agency without those kinds of responsibilities which are known as "municipal." (As per sanitary sewers, aka, Septic Systems, and domestic wells, those are the purview of the Health District which ALSO has no functional plans of that sort. Their duties involve administration and enforcement, not community planning, for these health services.)

(This section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

If the county were to approach this objective to encourage economic development from a marketing perspective, it would be the Adams County Economic Development Council that would lead the process. However, the assignment was awarded to the planning department which operates under state and local authority to conduct land use activities as narrowly defined. In terms of the assignment, the commissioners mandated the approach the planning department has initiated, i.e., "rezone the county." Every other step in the planning process is prescribed in law.

b) If there is no mandated approach, what type of approaches could reasonably achieve the objectives?

N/A

c) Why was the approach presented in the proposal selected?

In order to rezone the county, the comp plan must be updated to reflect current realities. Otherwise, the rezones would be accomplished in a vacuum with no connection to any future vision. In terms of the proposal that results from the responses of the public, that has yet to be determined.

Guidance #5: *The responses to these questions may be expected to change with various iterations, as new stakeholders are identified, the proposed actions becomes better defined and public awareness is increased.*

5) Public, Agency and Tribal Involvement

a) Who are the known primary stakeholders?

Adams County Board of County Commissioners & Planning Commission
The Public - landowners/private citizens
The 4 incorporated communities located in the eastern portion of Adams County
Ag community & related organizations/associations
Potential developers
Various institutions affiliated with land sales/development, such as
real estate firms/lending institutions
County Assessor and other county, governmental depts.
WSDOT
the business community
library districts
fire districts
school districts
local political candidates
Conservation districts
others with interest
Washington State Parks Commission

b) What other jurisdictions are involved and for what reason?

State agencies that typically receive SEPA documents from Adams County as a matter of course are involved because they serve as partners with Adams County in analyzing potential impacts for project and nonproject proposals.

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-01)

c) What types of processes will be used for soliciting, evaluating, and documenting input from stakeholders, agencies, tribes and the public?

A public participation program is currently being developed by staff with consultants help.

The central piece of the public participation program is a workbook for broad distribution that asks simple but meaningful questions regarding the topics this SEPA is covering. To date, over 350 + workbooks have been delivered or mailed to agencies, departments, people, special districts, city halls, realtors, schools and others. A meeting with one individual representing a membership of over 300 people (the Farm Bureau) and a meeting with several people comprising the Ritzville Chamber of Commerce have occurred. Three workshops are scheduled to be hosted by the Planning Commission in the eastern part of the county by the end of November and first part of December. Following the gathering, tabulating and interpreting of workbook comments, staff, the consultant,

and the planning commission will devise and present multiple alternatives that fulfill the assignment. The workshops will aim to select the preferred alternative by seeking the public's choice. Following final refinement, the planning commission will advance its formal recommendation(s) to the Board of County Commissioners by the end of the year.

Staff is obliged to keep all primary data obtained through the program in its original form. Verbatim transcripts will be saved to diskette. In addition, all maps, text and other hard copy materials will be circulated among the stakeholders, either directly or indirectly (e.g., the library as a repository).

Data Analysis to be performed subsequent to workbook return. Too early to tell exactly how it will be conducted, other than a method for comparing and contrasting workbook answers will be considered, involving felt tip pens, butcher paper and late night work groups.

True to form, the workbook analysis required 2 days and part of one evening to complete. Content and trend analysis was conducted by staff with the consultant assisting. Five draft pages identifying 3 plan alternatives within a planning framework constitute the systematic arrangement of the material gleaned from public comment. Maps depicting plan alternatives in relation to places in the eastern part of Adams County have been designed for display at the 3 upcoming workshops late in November and early December. A verbatim computer file has been developed to capture the essence and the exact language of the workbook participants. Copies of the document will be distributed to all planning commission members and the board of county commissioners.

d) If different from above, briefly describe the processes used in addressing the public's and other interested parties' concerns and comments?

Workbook answers form the literal basis for the goal/value statements within the planning framework. Plan/Zone Alternatives result from the workbook responses categorized during content and trend analysis. Fine tuning this draft work through the guidance of public scrutiny during the 3 upcoming workshops should render a final product that genuinely reflects the thoughts and preferences of the people who choose to participate.

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

Guidance #6: *This response should describe those attributes of the area(s) likely to be affected by ion the ground activities. The specificity will vary depending on both the nature of the anticipated nonproject action as well as the jurisdictional constraints. A nonproject action covering all contaminated sites should broadly describe whether or not most or many sites are in urban areas, near water bodies, in industrially developed areas, etc. A nonproject action for a one hundred-acre rezone will contain considerably greater detail-to the degree that the reader can visualize the area.*

6) Existing Environment

a) Generally describe the existing environmental landscapes (i.e., status or quality of ecosystem) likely to be affected if the proposal is implemented. Include a description of the existing environment where resulting ion the ground activities may occur and adjacent areas and facilities likely to be impacted. The following should be included, as appropriate:

Primary physical features

Development level and infrastructure

Percent impervious surfaces (approximate)

Unique features, including historic and cultural sites, potential or existing critical areas, resource lands

Endangered or Threatened Species in or near the area

The eastern portion of the county is largely occupied by vast tracts of agricultural lands that are predominately devoted to dryland wheat fields and cattle ranches. An interim designation of Agricultural Resource Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance has been assigned these lands until future development proposals would warrant revisiting the topic. Most of the land is in the Open Space Taxation program resulting in a suppressed tax base for the county. The land that is located in the agricultural zone (estimated to be at least 90% of Adams County) is decreed to be interim ag lands of long term significance through the CAO and Management Policies. In order to rezone such land for other purposes, the Planning Commission will be required to eliminate this interim designation. One problem that may confront landowners of ag land is that by changing the zoning, that may trigger financial implications for them through taxing.

With agricultural land use so prevalent in eastern Adams County, thousands upon thousands of acres are devoted to various types of production, the prevailing type being dryland wheat. However, the county sits over several deep-water aquifers that provide wells with water for irrigation in the eastern part of the county. (In the Panhandle, it is surface water from behind the Grand Coulee Dam stored in impoundments that provides for the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project. That water is applied to three irrigation districts located in Grant, {western} Adams and Franklin Counties.) Recharge locations are largely outside county boundaries, and therefore, outside of county influence. Withdrawal amounts from what is known as the Odessa Subarea Aquifer have been legally curtailed by Ecology due to extensive drawdown. That means water rights and quantity issues will prevail throughout the planning process and during eventual implementation.

The topography is mostly rolling hills and there are few, if any, native trees in the area. Three major roadways that dissect eastern Adams County and provide transportation routes for both local and transitory populations: I-90, HWY 395 and SR 26. Cell towers dot these routes at various intervals. Entrances/exits to each of the four communities are sparsely utilized for commercial enterprises with the one exception being the city of Ritville, which is the county seat of local government. At the junction of HWY 395 and SR 26, a gas station/mini-mart has been built to capture the interests/serve the needs of the traveling public.

One of the highly-rated, warm-water fisheries of the state is located at Sprague Lake in the northeastern corner of the county. This lake also is designated a water body of statewide significance under the Shoreline Management Act. Critical areas have been identified and designated within the shoreline area and on Harper Island which is in the western portion of Sprague Lake. Recreational facilities include two private campgrounds with access to water for boating, swimming and fishing, and a day use boat launch and picnic area owned and operated by WDFW. Future plans include hiking trails and nature paths to border the lake. The lake is home to a migratory population of white pelicans on a seasonal basis. Other ESA related species may also

inhabit the area. Sprague Lake spans the Adams / Lincoln County boundary, with 2/3 of the lake to be found in Adams County.

The southeastern quadrant of Adams County is bounded by the Palouse River which is a mere trickle by the time it reaches the border. Cow Creek flows south from Sprague Lake and intersects the Palouse near Washtucna. Centuries ago, this area served as a major transportation route for explorers and cattle men trying to get from regions south of what is now Washington to what is now Montana and Canada. Because of this fact, the area is rich in historical significance.

Over three quarters, approximately, of the total land mass of Adams County (1800+ square miles in the county) are located in the eastern portion of the county. While there are 4 incorporated communities in this area, about three fourths of the population lives in and around the Othello area in the western Panhandle. Population density is scarce, too small to count, with a rough estimate of just under 4,000 people in the eastern part of the county. Percent impervious surfaces (even approximate) is too negligible to compute, as well.

One of the notable features about the towns in eastern Adams County is that each has some part of its area located within a floodplain. This fact results from the topography and natural history of the land promoting certain development patterns in the past prior to today*s understanding of floodplains implications. It has complicated a lot of issues, including issuance of building permits, insurance rates and poorly-sited public facilities (water and sewer).

Amount of acres of Adams County that is farmed using irrigation method (for east Adams County): ??

Amount of acres of Adams County that is farmed using dryland method (for east Adams County): ??

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-001)

7) Broad Impacts

a) In meeting the primary objective (identified in 2b of this form) is it likely that the non-project action will direct an agency to develop or construct projects? Describe.

Not necessarily an agency but others in the private sector may build as a result.

However, a recent discussion on capital facilities with the commissioners indicates that the comp plan may very well steer governmental construction, and sooner than initially thought. Over the life of the plan, all development/construction efforts by the county and others will be guided by the comp plan.

Future construction of roads may occur, but the more likely scenario will be that developers and private landowners will be the builders of them, rather than the county public works. Current regulations and policies favor this outcome.

b) In meeting the primary objective is it likely that the non-project action will encourage physical changes to the natural or built environment? Describe.

Yes. Updating the comp plan and rezoning the county are undertaken in the hopes that this will inspire future development. Both the natural and built environments stand to see impacts if all goes as eventually planned.

-When answers arrive from the workbooks, more detail will be available to analyze for this question.

Answers in the workbook overwhelmingly admonish that future plans should hinge on preservation of farming, and conservation/protection of our natural environment and resources.

c) What is the location (geographic area) where changes will be directed or encouraged ? Include the area directly affected, as well as adjacent or other areas where changes will be indirectly encouraged.

Adams County in its entirety. See qualified answer above.

Workbook answers recommend that future industrial and commercial developments take advantage of locating near or adjacent to the county/state road network, as well as beside the railroad lines located throughout the county. Residential development, especially when density reaches urban levels, is recommended to occur next to the incorporated cities/towns. Separation of residential use from commercial and industrial is also suggested. Public comment indicates that housing options should include a range of choices, but should emphasis minimizing negative impacts to farming.

d) Will this action constrain certain activities or development, but not preclude all activities or developments? Briefly describe.

Yes. Various activities are allowed outright, considered accessory uses, conditionally allowed or prohibited altogether in various zones. By changing zones, this whole pattern of uses will change.

Overall, the vision is not so much to restrict what can happen in Adams County. Rather, the idea is promote additional uses that would be allowed as a result of this planning. While all three plan alternatives would allow current land uses within the zones that currently cover them, new uses also would be encouraged to broaden the tax base by providing a diversified economy.

***Guidance #8:** In the development of a nonproject proposal, preliminary decisions are made as to what direction or alternatives will best meet the objective(s). This section documents those issues, analyze the environmental consequences, and describes alternatives (particular to those with lessor adverse environmental impacts). For the selected preliminary decision, mitigation should be reviewed as to whether or not it is consistent with the objective(s). Documentation of the rationale such as, economics or constrained by existing law, for not considering other alternatives should be provided.*

8) Key issues/questions, alternatives, impacts and mitigation.

a) Identify key issue/question # 1. Include a brief statement of why this is a key issue/question.

Anticipated key issues:

-Sufficient water resource to allow for future development (without proof of potable water, no development may be commenced). (See included newspaper article.)

-Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development (Adams County has upwards of 1700+ linear miles of road, most of which have graveled surfaces. In order to move people and goods, a major investment of money to augment infrastructure could be required). Potential traffic increases to county and state roads could ultimately delay motorists, increase accident rates, and contribute to deterioration of pavement conditions.

As per Ecology comments, November iteration:

No known traffic studies conducted by the planning dept. for the eastern section of Adams County. Traffic counts, NOT study, periodically conducted by Public Works for select roads in the county. WSDOT also counts signed routes periodically. QUADCO RTPO may have data; suspect, mostly, on a macro level. (Data likely dated in its utility...) Discussion with Public Works to follow.

-Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture (farmers use many chemicals to produce the quality and quantity of crops they grow each year. Inappropriately located development has the potential to shut farming down due to lots of reasons, e.g., from complaints addressing spray drift from aerial application of chemicals).

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-01)

Identify alternative solutions.

(1) How would each alternative solution likely direct, encourage or enable:

PLEASE NOTE: Some, though not all, alternate solutions, are not mutually exclusive of one another. Put another way, more. maybe achieved through the synergy of combo alternatives... In addition, Adams County may already employ some of the following alternative solutions.

New Development?

Sufficient water resource to allow for future development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Link/locate development with city infrastructure
- 2.) Promote use of wells exempt under water right law (>5,000 gal./day withdrawal)
- 3.) Recruit low end water users

direct	(#1 will direct development to 3, possibly 4, areas of suitability - the fringe areas of towns on the east side)
encourage	(#2 will encourage development anywhere with little to no water constraints; by default, #3 would likely to be encouraged)
enable	(#3 enables more choice in location than #1)

Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Promote growth where adequate road/access infrastructure exists
- 2.) Require new roads dedicated to the county road network be built by developers in a manner that that insures new and future circulation patterns are sufficient to meet current and future transportation demand
- 3.) Create and maintain a Right of Way policy/plan that secures adequate lands along new and existing routes to preserve future expansion opportunities
- 4.) Collaborate / coordinate with WSDOT on (as well as independent of) development applications to assure access management issues are resolved prior to issuance of land use related permits

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#1 will direct growth to areas already adequately served by the transportation network) |
| encourage | (#2 will encourage developers to consider practical locations for growth that are financially feasible to build based on existing roads) |
| enable | (#3 will enable the county to protect its transportation choices and people in the future, based on sound planning in the present)
(#4 will enable the county and state to cooperatively resolve conflicts and obstacles before they really get started) |

Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Require new development to locate only on lands appropriate to the use through long range comprehensive zoning and other regulatory mechanisms, e.g., CAO (current zoning allows for a diversity of uses which may or may not be truly compatible - updating the zone code would be helpful to insure the development regs are consistent with the comp plan, a concept required of ALL jurisdictions in WA, as per GMA)
- 2.) Cluster commercial and industrial (and residential) development in such a way as to minimize ag land taken out of production, or interruption to ag practices that could threaten productivity
- 3.) Require buffers (e.g., through the application of sufficient land, plantings of vegetation, tiers in zoning, etc.) to separate incompatible uses mechanisms, e.g., CAO (current zoning allows for a diversity of uses which may or may not be truly compatible - updating the zone code would be helpful to insure the development regs are consistent with the comp plan, a concept required of ALL jurisdictions in WA, as per GMA)

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#3 would direct redevelopment to provide screening through various methods to reduce negative impacts to surrounding area) |
| encourage | (#2 would encourage compact redevelopment design) |
| enable | (#1 would enable the county to render better predictability and enforce-ability of future redevelopment options) |

Changes in land use?

Sufficient water resource to allow for future development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Link/locate with city infrastructure
- 2.) Promote use of wells exempt under water right law (>5,000 gal./day withdrawal)
- 3.) Recruit low end water users

direct	(#1 would direct changes in land use to happen within the sphere of influence of the 4 communities in eastern Adams County, allowing ag land to remain largely intact)
encourage	(#2 would encourage changes in land use to occur throughout the county, absent the municipal influence; changes would likely be relatively "small" because of withdrawal constraints)
enable	(#3 would enable those with minimal water requirements to flock to the county with a variety of new and wonderful possible changes in land use, some as a result of OTHER new and wonderful changes in land use - the possibilities are relatively endless..)

Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Promote growth where adequate road/access infrastructure exists
- 2.) Require new roads dedicated to the county road network be built by developers in a manner that that insures new and future circulation patterns are sufficient to meet current and future transportation demand
- 3.) Create and maintain a Right of Way policy/plan that secures adequate lands along new and existing routes to preserve future expansion opportunities
- 4.) Collaborate / coordinate with WSDOT on (as well as independent of) development applications to assure access management issues are resolved prior to issuance of land use related permits

direct	(#1 would direct changes in land use to occur adjacent to existing land uses properly served by road infrastructure)
encourage	(#3 would encourage changes in land use to be allowed, given sufficient land set aside for road network expansion)
enable	(#2 would enable more choices in locating changes in land use, given the maxim, "Build it, and they will come") (#4 would enable changes in land use to occur along signed routes of the state)

Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Require new development to locate only on lands appropriate to the use through long range comprehensive zoning and other regulatory mechanisms, e.g., CAO (current zoning allows for a diversity of uses which may or may not be truly compatible - updating the zone code would be helpful to insure the development regs are consistent with the comp plan, a concept required of ALL jurisdictions in WA, as per GMA)

- 2.) Cluster commercial and industrial (and residential) development in such a way as to minimize ag land taken out of production, or interruption to ag practices that could threaten productivity
- 3.) Require buffers (e.g., through the application of sufficient land, plantings of vegetation, tiers in zoning, etc.) to separate incompatible uses

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#3 would direct people desiring changes in land use to be more cognizant of their neighbors' rights and needs) |
| encourage | (#2 would encourage people desiring changes in land use to respect the rights of people engaging in prior land uses, which, in ag land regulation, is known as the Right to Farm) |
| enable | (#1 would enable people desiring changes in land use to know better WHAT they can and cannot do, WHERE, based on adopted plans regulations) |

Changes in density of use?

Sufficient water resource to allow for future development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Link/locate with city infrastructure
- 2.) Promote use of wells exempt under water right law (>5,000 gal./day withdrawal)
- 3.) Recruit low end water users

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#1 would direct increased density adjacent to eastern Adams County municipalities) |
| encourage | (#2 would promote densities similar to present in the county, with a gradual increase over time as additional development schemes are hatched) |
| enable | (#3 conceivably would enable higher densities to occur in the county, with the caveat that, absent sanitary sewer systems, septic suitability would govern minimum lot size requirements) |

Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Promote growth where adequate road/access infrastructure exists
- 2.) Require new roads dedicated to the county road network be built by developers in a manner that that insures new and future circulation patterns are sufficient to meet current and future transportation demand
- 3.) Create and maintain a Right of Way policy/plan that secures adequate lands along new and existing routes to preserve future expansion opportunities
- 4.) Collaborate / coordinate with WSDOT on (as well as independent of) development applications to assure access management issues are resolved prior to issuance of land use related permits

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#3 would direct density to be explicitly defined, and therefore, quite measurable) |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- encourage (#1 would encourage density increases to a point where full capacity is achieved)
- enable (#2 would enable sensible distribution of land uses to occur, maximizing future density options)
(#4 would enable defining maximum densities along signed routes, based on legal access points and types)

Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture
Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Require new development to locate only on lands appropriate to the use through long range comprehensive zoning and other regulatory mechanisms, e.g., CAO (current zoning allows for a diversity of uses which may or may not be truly compatible - updating the zone code would be helpful to insure the development regs are consistent with the comp plan, a concept required of ALL jurisdictions in WA, as per GMA)
- 2.) Cluster commercial and industrial (and residential) development in such a way as to minimize ag land taken out of production, or interruption to ag practices that could threaten productivity
- 3.) Require buffers (e.g., through the application of sufficient land, plantings of vegetation, tiers in zoning, etc.) to separate incompatible uses

- direct (#1 would direct allowed densities to be defined by law)
- encourage (#3 would likely encourage lesser densities because more land per use would be required to buffer impacts)
- enable (#2 would enable some lands to have greater densities through clustering, and lesser densities to other lands not clustered)

Changes in management practices?

Sufficient water resource to allow for future development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Link/locate with city infrastructure
- 2.) Promote use of wells exempt under water right law (>5,000 gal./day withdrawal)
- 3.) Recruit low end water users

- direct (#1 would direct greater use of interjurisdictional cooperation, as per GMA)
- encourage (#3 would encourage the county to take a greater role in identifying and attracting certain industries)
- enable (#2 would enable Group B public water supply systems to furnish this resource for industry needs under the guidance and regulation of the state; domestic supplies would remain under the auspices of county health)

Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Promote growth where adequate road/access infrastructure exists
- 2.) Require new roads dedicated to the county road network be built by developers in a manner that that insures new and future circulation patterns are sufficient to meet current and future transportation demand
- 3.) Create and maintain a Right of Way policy/plan that secures adequate lands along new and existing routes to preserve future expansion opportunities
- 4.) Collaborate / coordinate with WSDOT on (as well as independent of) development applications to assure access management issues are resolved prior to issuance of land use related permits

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#2 would direct county departments work closely together, sometimes in concert with municipal interests) |
| encourage | (#3 would encourage changes in management between and among county departments and relevant municipalities, conceivably improving future development options) |
| enable | (#4 would enable smooth transitions of responsibility for new employees of the county and state, as expectations would be defined in writing) |

Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture

Alt. solutions:

- 1.) Require new development to locate only on lands appropriate to the use through long range comprehensive zoning and other regulatory mechanisms, e.g., CAO (current zoning allows for a diversity of uses which may or may not be truly compatible - updating the zone code would be helpful to insure the development regs are consistent with the comp plan, a concept required of ALL jurisdictions in WA, as per GMA)
- 2.) Cluster commercial and industrial (and residential) development in such a way as to minimize ag land taken out of production, or interruption to ag practices that could threaten productivity
- 3.) Require buffers (e.g., through the application of sufficient land, plantings of vegetation, tiers in zoning, etc.) to separate incompatible uses

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| direct | (#1 would direct current and future county employees to rely on specific regulations in assessing, development applications, as opposed to the more liberally construed, ad hoc approach) |
| encourage | (#3 would encourage staff to identify and document potential negative impacts produced by development types, thereby standardizing buffer requirements for similar/identical land uses) |
| enable | (#2 would enable unique patterns of development to occur that realize additional flexibility for the would-be developer) |

Rural environmental plan: Alternative techniques

Restricting subdivision development to sewerred lots

(This is NOT going to happen in Adams County, not for a long time, at least. It would essentially fall under the rubric of Takings in land use law. Plus, there is NO NEED to impose this kind of thinking / regulation on this county, especially on the east side, where population densities qualify Adams County, by definition, as "frontier." Current health regulations for septic installation amply protect groundwater resources, given compliance to the law. This issue has been laid to rest for this county by state and local health officials who visited Adams County about 4 years ago during an emergency development moratorium meeting/hearing cycle where Adams County and the city of Othello had grave misgivings about septic systems. To put it simply, there is no reason to enact this sort of regulation, and it would be reprehensible to do it, given that it would stop residential development in the county altogether - with the exception of land contiguous to cities/towns with sufficient capacity and the willingness to extend services.)

Conservation zoning

(Is this like performance zoning? Given the "frontier" comment above, Adams County is lucky to have zoning at all. Application of overlay maps to depict certain features / themes is relevant; but not "conservation zoning." Staff has no interest nor business trying to sell this concept to Adams County.)

Rate building sites to functional criterion: a, b, or c

This approach may occur as a spin-off of the current land use project, but is definitely premature to consider for this SEPA. Uncertainty exists as to continued political support, given the results of the recent election. ONLY time will tell how it all turns out.

(The above section undated Dec/Jan 00-01)

(2) What are the likely impacts from the changes?

Changes in land use

Some people may end up mighty happy, while others won't. There could be winners and losers, as with most other parts of life. Development could take a real turn and make Adams County end up looking like the placelessness that is prevalent throughout the more recently developed United States (since the '70's and the mall mentality). Or, a miracle could happen, and everyone who chooses to develop in Adams County could possess extraordinary comprehension and commitment to produce unique, extremely interesting, aesthetically pleasing and efficiently designed developments that undeniably contribute to the richness that is (already) Adams County. Time will tell; regulation can provide the framework but it certainly falls short of describing the ultimate outcome. More likely, some combination of both these thoughts will eventually occur.

Changes in density of use

Sprawl, which is like pornography, in that it is hard purposefully to describe, but readily recognizable when one actually stumbles upon it, will likely rear its ugly head at some point. This may or may not be perceived as problematic, depending on whom you talk to... Traffic impacts and congestion also come to mind, as do spiraling land costs and increased cost of living expenses. RE: quality of life - it depends on whether you're a fan of convenience stores and video outlets, not to mention mocha java latte moments on command. If you place a high value on wide open spaces with enchanting vistas, fresh air, and a slower pace to life, the answer is going to be somewhat different. Obviously, this issue is subjective.

Changes in management practices

With ever-changing politics typically in the forefront, guiding the various behaviours and cultures of local governments, subject to all kinds of whims and fancies, who really knows what is "likely" to occur in the long run? Suffice it to say, it may get better, it may get worse, but it certainly won't remain the same.

(3) What are potential mitigation measures for these impacts?

SEPA says, "... avoid altogether

minimize (limit the degree or magnitude by affirmative steps or appropriate technology)

rectify (repair, rehabilitate, restore)

reduce or eliminate over time (thru preservation and maintenance)

compensate (replacing, enhancing, providing substitutes for losses) monitoring (with mid-course corrective action)

Adams County will do whatever it has to... some version of the above, obviously.

(4) Will the intent of the proposal still be met if these impacts occur?

Possibly, but as with so many other things in life, unintended consequences are likely to result. Sometimes, things work, and sometimes, they don't.

c) What preliminary decision, if any, was made regarding this key issue?

Sufficient water resource to allow for future development:

To employ a multidisciplinary approach for resolution

Appropriate transportation network to facilitate development:

To employ a multidisciplinary approach for resolution

Potential conflicts with competing land uses, especially as regards agriculture:

To employ a multitudinal approach for resolution

d) Which alternatives will be carried forward for further analysis?

All will be considered further at a later date.

e) For those alternatives not carried forward please describe why not?

N/A

(Previous section updated Dec/Jan 00-01)

Key issue/question #2, 3, ..Repeat above questions for each key issue.

***Guidance #9:** Because of analysis of individual key issues will occur overtime, there may be relationships between the preliminary decisions that could result in adverse impacts. Prior to the issuance of a draft proposal a review should be conducted and any such-impacts be analyzed.*

9) Total Proposal Evaluation

If there is a preferred alternative (draft proposal) or alternative packages, describe any additional impacts and mitigation (over and above those addressed in key issue analysis) when considering the total proposal.

The following sentences comprise the alternative packages, none of which has been elevated to the preferred alternative or total proposal, as of yet-Dec/Jan 00-01.

NOTE: It is important to know that the overwhelming response by workbook participants regarding agriculture is that we must preserve and protect farming opportunity and activities in the county. That is why each alternative has the ag commercial component to it.

Plan Alt. A:

Ag Commercial / Recreation and Retirement Approach (Recreation and Residential Option)

While "Alternative A" would continue to allow the typical land uses found within this county, it would create a new emphasis on retirement facilitates, including b a range of medical and housing choices. Fostering public desire to visit Adams County for recreational pursuits would also be involved. This alternative would likely direct or encourage new housing and medical facilities construction. Recreational emphasis may show up as new and continuing services available to the traveling public. A heightened focus on residential and recreation development would likely result. Density increases will be promoted to achieve compact, efficient development able to afford extension of public services. (Density in this sense has to do with people or structures per acre.)

Plan Alt. B:

Ag Commercial/"Creative Industries" Approach ("Value-Added" Option)

The Ag Commercial "Creative Industries" Approach encourages a multitude of compatible uses within one zone. Opportunities to locate creative industries not typically found in Adams County such as strawboard manufacturing and straw bale insulation would become a priority. While typical land uses within Adams County would continue to be allowed, personal choice on where to locate based on "mixed zoning" would increase substantially. This alternative may spur smaller, independent companies and individuals to seek rural settings in which to focus research and development efforts on unusual and innovative products. It also may encourage opportunities for advanced communications and computer technology to locate within Adams County. One notable feature of this alternative is that creative industries may not rely as heavily (or at all) on public services such as water and sewer. New industries would be welcomed and recruited to pursue novel, entrepreneurial employment arrangements. Density may or may not become an issue.

Plan Alt. C:

Ag Commercial / Manufacturing & Industrial Approach (Status Quo Option)

Alternative C is best described as "more of the same." Zone changes would reflect this alternative by creating MORE areas suitable to continue growing in the manner Adams County developed in the past. Land uses in each zone would reflect traditional zoning patterns, where specific activities are separated by one another according to zone. This alternative is likely to direct and encourage MORE of everything that is currently allowed within the commercial and industrial areas. There will be more areas zoned for commercial and industrial uses, enabling new development to occur in other areas of the county. The changes in land use that may occur most likely will involve WHERE and HOW MUCH, not so much WHAT KIND. Density may or may not become an issue, but, if more commercial and industrial uses develop, issues of intensity will likely apply. (Intensity in this sense deals with how much "covered-with-development" land will be allowed.)

(1) How would each alternative solution likely direct, encourage or enable:

New Development?

ALT A:

This alternative would likely direct or encourage new housing and medical facilities construction. However, enabling is another matter which is directly linked to local capacity to provide and fund essential public services like water and sewer, as well as community and regional travel options. Recreational emphasis may show up as new and continuing services available to the traveling public.

ALT B:

This alternative may spur smaller, independent companies and individuals to seek rural settings in which to focus research and development efforts on unusual and innovative products. It also may encourage opportunities for advanced communications and computer technology to locate within Adams County. One notable feature of this alternative is that creative industries may not rely as heavily (or at all) on public services such as water and sewer.

ALT C:

This alternative is likely to direct and encourage MORE of everything that is currently allowed within the commercial and industrial areas. There will be more areas zoned for commercial and industrial uses, enabling new development to occur in other areas of the county.

Changes in land use?

ALT A:

Changes may occur with a heightened focus on residential and recreation development.

ALT B:

Changes may occur with new industries welcomed and recruited to pursue novel , entrepreneurial employment arrangements .

ALT C:

Changes may occur but most likely will involve WHERE and HOW MUCH, not so much WHAT KIND.

Changes in density of use?

ALT A:

Density increases will be promoted to achieve compact, efficient development able to afford extension of public services. (Density in this sense has to do with people or structures per acre.)

ALT B:

Density may or may not become an issue.

ALT C:

Density may or may not become an issue, but, if more commercial and industrial uses develop, issues of intensity will likely apply. (Intensity in this sense deals with how much “covered-with-development” land will be allowed.)

(The above section updated Dec/Jan 00-01)

10) Consistency of the proposal with other plans, policies and laws.

a) Internal consistency

(1) Is the proposal internally consistent with your agency’s previously adopted or ongoing plans and regulations?

(2) If there are internal inconsistencies, how does the proposal deal with them? Identify any strategies or ideas for resolving inconsistencies with existing, and /or, anticipated future laws, rules, or plans.

b) External consistency

(1) Is the proposal consistent with adopted or ongoing plans and regulations of adjacent jurisdictions and/or other agencies, if applicable?

(2) If there are external inconsistencies, how does the proposal deal with them? Identify any strategies or ideas for resolving inconsistencies with existing, and /or, anticipated future laws, rules, or plans.

11) Unavoidable impacts and impacts to be addressed later.

a) Identify what impacts have been left to be addressed at the project level (i.e., thresholds which trigger further environmental analysis at the project level).

b) For GMA actions, what impacts from the proposal have been designated as acceptable under chapter 36.70A RCW?

12) Monitoring and Follow-up

a) How will the completion of and compliance with mitigation measures be monitored and enforced? Who will do the tracking, how will it be done, etc.?

b) How will the impacts of the proposal be measured in relation to any benchmarks, performance standards and/or thresholds identified in the proposal?

c) What other non-project actions will be necessary to achieve the objectives of this action?

Outstanding issues yet to be addressed:

- 1) Economic forecasts by CTED for Adams Co.
- 2) Amount of acreage in dryland/irrigated farm production
- 3) Threshold determination
- 4) NPRF Sections 10-12