

II. PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT

A. Introduction

The public facilities and services element of the comprehensive plan for the Town of Twisp is designed to be a guide for the future development of schools, municipal buildings, water, sewer, health care and other municipal facilities and services. The technical design and construction does not fall within the scope of the plan except for the fact that they should be coordinated with the comprehensive plan to insure that the facilities will be adequate to handle future demands.

B. Schools

The Twisp School District consolidated with the Winthrop School District in 1973, forming the Methow Valley School District. The District completed a new campus in 1995 that includes all K-12 classrooms and facilities. The campus is located on Twin Lakes Road approximately 7 miles north of Twisp.

The Methow Valley School District owns the former Twisp High School building that is now leased and being used as a Community Center and Senior Citizen Center. The Community Center presently houses the North Central Washington Library branch, Public Utility District office, preschool and other assorted activities. The Methow Valley School District still owns and operates a bus garage on the old school premises. The Methow Valley Alternative School adjoins the bus garage.

It is recommend that the bus garage and the alternative school be moved to other more suitable locations for safety and convenience.

In the event of the sale of the Twisp school properties, the Town of Twisp shall make every effort to purchase all of these properties for public facilities and park/recreational purposes. Special consideration should be given to the community center with its respective parking area.

C. Water System

The Town's water system has been the subject of ongoing studies over the years. Engineering firm Gray and Osborne completed a 2007 update to the Town of Twisp Water Comprehensive Plan, which provides the basis for the following description of the Town's water system.

The existing water system is supplied by three wells and includes three reservoirs capable of storing 675,000 gallons. Current average daily demand is 328,000 gpd (gallons per day) or approximately 550 gpm (gallons per minute). The transmission and distribution system is made of up of 4" or less diameter main lines that serve 31% of the Town, 6" mains that serve 31% of the Town and 8" and 12" mains that serve 38% of the Town.

The Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau evaluated the water system for fire protection and rated it at six on a scale of one to ten, class one being the best rating. This compares to the County Fire District #6 rated an 8, Winthrop -6, Omak/Okanogan -5, Brewster -7. The Town's 2007 Water System Plan states that "in General, the Town's transmission and distribution system is inadequately sized to provide fire flow except for the most recently constructed projects. The hydraulic model projects that over 50 percent of the Town's fire hydrants cannot supply adequate fire flow under Maximum Daily Demand conditions. The smaller mains and their locations are also responsible for inadequate water pressure in some areas of the town.

The greatest challenge to the Town's water system, and to the Town in general, is the lack of water to support expansion. At the time of this update the Town has just lifted an almost two year moratorium on the issuance of water hook-ups while calculating it's water use and enacting efficiency measures. Even with those measures the Town has limited additional capacity, and that capacity will soon be used up as pressure grows for in-town development. The Town must make obtaining additional water rights it's top priority if it is to meet the growth projected in this Plan.

Other needs for the Town's water system have been identified as follows:

1. Perform repairs to existing reservoirs.
2. Install a Booster Station and 8" Loop at Painter's Addition level to correct inadequate pressures. (Alternately, build new reservoir higher than existing)
3. Install a new telemetry system.
4. Test and modify Well #4 to bring into fullest production possible.
5. Upgrades to the water transmission and distribution system as prioritized and described in the 2007 Water Comprehensive Plan

If these things are done, the fire system will adequately meet the fire flow needs of the Town, and thereby improve the Town's fire rating, which can lower Town resident's fire insurance rates.

D. Sewer System

Twisp's sewer system was constructed in 1972 with a life expectancy of 20 years. The treatment plant was completely rebuilt in 2001 and has been well maintained and is expected to provide capacity for the growth for the next 20 years. Annexation of additional areas could potentially require expansion of the existing plant and the possible addition of more lift stations.

The system accesses all areas within the Town limits and consists of 8" to 12" diameter trunk lines. There is a pumping station situated at the south end of Bridge Street which pumps the sewage to the east side of the Methow River where the treatment plant is located at the southeast corner of the Town's incorporated boundary. There is also a lift station at the manufactured home park located on the west side of Town immediately south of the Twisp River.

The Town of Twisp needs to review and update the Comprehensive Wastewater System Plan every 10 years and prioritize identified deficiencies.

E. Town Hall

The Town Hall is not adequate for the present uses or future growth. At present this building services the Clerk/Treasurer, utility billing and collections, building and planning, holds the Public Works shop and garage, and the Police Department as well as a conference room used for town related meetings. Regular staff using this building consists of 8 full-time equivalent employees, plus a desk is maintained for the County Sheriff's use to encourage cross coverage of law enforcement. In the near future there will be a need for additional office space. The police department needs more room for evidence storage, and garage space to work on police vehicles. Town Hall also needs a second restroom.

While recent changes have improved the situation (i.e. dropping ceilings, better heating and use of space), it is important to note that the Town Hall is too crowded for the present police needs. Security and privacy are very marginal. The current layout dictates that suspects be brought through Town Hall for processing, despite their intoxication, combativeness or other form of antisocial conduct. One solution to this might be to move the Public Works garage out of the Town Hall facility to the sewer plant and utilize that space for expansion of the police department, adding of a second bathroom and additional meeting space.

Besides adding space, it is recommended that the Town make public facilities, such as Town Hall, more attractive to reflect "community pride."

F. Fire Protection

The Town of Twisp and the surrounding area is served by the combined forces of the Twisp Fire Department and Okanogan County Fire District #6, both volunteer programs with part-time paid officers on Twisp's part. The U.S. Forest Service and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources protect Federal and State lands within the area. All of these agencies operate under mutual aid and automatic response agreements.

The Twisp Fire Department is well supported by a core group of volunteer fire fighters, a adequate facility and good morale. The Department has several small needs, including larger stipends for training to cover lost wages, and a dedicated budget for equipment replacement.

G. Post Office

Since this plan anticipates growth for the next 10 to 20 years, there is some question about whether the existing Federal Post Office will meet the needs of the Town residents. The current location has many parking and traffic issues. Any new location should take in to consideration the Post Office's role as an important social hub and central information clearinghouse.

H. Solid Waste

Solid waste generated from the Town is deposited at the Okanogan County transfer station located near the east town limits, and then transported to Okanogan County's Central Landfill near Okanogan. The Town of Twisp and the Methow Valley community have been leaders in developing and supporting local recycling efforts, coordinating with Okanogan County in the development of recycling opportunities.

Recycling is offered through the Methow Valley Recycling Center adjacent to the Transfer Station. The Center is run by Methow Recycles, a non-profit corporation/public partnership formed in 2003 with the Town of Twisp, Okanogan County, the Okanogan Electric Coop and the Methow Conservancy. Methow Recycles is a self-sustaining operation, paying for its operating expenses by accepting materials that have value and can be sold for a profit such as cardboard, paper, aluminum, and plastic. The Center also accepts materials that have little value such as steel cans, magazines and mixed paper, and sells them at break even. Glass is also collected, crushed and sold locally at a loss, with some costs covered by donations.

The Recycle Center recycles roughly 12-15% by weight of the material destined for the Transfer Station. The Recycle Center periodically runs metal drives that collect more than 500 tons of material each time, and collects electronic equipment items for reuse and recycling through specialized companies.

I. Health Care

Health care facilities in the town consist of one family medical clinic. Medical clinics, which serve our community, are also located in Winthrop, Omak, Okanogan and Brewster. Hospitals are located in Brewster and Omak, located 40 miles from Twisp.

Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services are provided locally by Aero Methow Rescue Service, and funded by a local taxing district. Life flight helicopters stationed in Spokane and Seattle also service our area.

At present there is a strong organization of Emergency Medical Technicians, which assist as needed with those emergency and non-emergency medical needs. This group has basically allowed the Methow to survive with limited access to medical services.

People with simple medical needs are being adequately served, but services are needed for more complex medical needs. In particular, a need exists for 24 hour access to a doctor. Twisp should encourage the location in town of all types of medical services: medical clinics, pharmacies, chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, psychiatry and mental health, and other medical practitioners. The proposed assisted living facility is an example of health care services that should be encouraged by the town.

J. Air Quality

This plan supports the Washington State Air Quality guidelines. These regulations allow only one wood-burning device per structure and this device must be designed to conform with the State of Washington standards. The Town of Twisp is also subject to Okanogan County Air Quality Regulations as they affect the Methow Valley. As the population of the valley increases, the use of woodstoves will increase and impact the residents of Town. Twisp should take a broader view and work with the County and State to enforce current laws and develop new laws to benefit town residents.

K. Law Enforcement

Law enforcement services within and around the Town of Twisp are provided by the Twisp Police Department, the Okanogan County Sheriff's Office and the Washington State Patrol. The Twisp Police Department consists of one part-time Chief and two officers.

The Town of Twisp provides police protection for the incorporated areas of the Town. The Police Department is located in Town Hall. Law enforcement for the unincorporated areas is provided by the Okanogan County Sheriff's Office. The Washington State Patrol provides traffic enforcement and assistance to the local departments when needed. As noted in Section D, the law enforcement services needed more adequate office and holding facilities.

L. Airport

The Twisp Municipal airport, located approximately 1/2 mile east of Twisp, is part of the Town's corporate limits, covers 66.77 acres of land. An old race track just to the south of the runway has been developed over the past few years by volunteers into a multi-purpose playfield for baseball, softball and soccer. The airport serves as a link for emergency operations and recreational flying. Continued improvements such as improving and maintaining runway surfacing and lighting, improving taxiways, development of water, sewer, bathrooms, terminal facilities, including refueling capabilities, camp sites and non-motorized trails linking the facility to downtown would increase this important asset's visibility as a transportation link that supports commerce and visitors. The property is presently zoned for airport use, which includes commercial and recreational uses. Any development around the airport site needs to consider the approach corridors (clear zones) and airport obstruction standards and other requirements contained in the Town of Twisp or Okanogan County Zoning Codes and the Twisp Airport Layout Plan.

The recently completed Airport Layout Plan (Airside, 2007) should be reviewed for additional details and priorities for the Twisp Municipal Airport.

M. Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste is created by the use of many materials in households, businesses and industries. Town residents participate in bi-monthly County efforts to provide for the collection, disposal, and possible treatment of hazardous waste material. After collection

the hazardous waste material is hauled to a regional recycling and/or treatment center. This service is for households, not industrial or commercial generators. Commercial and Industrial generators are regulated by the State and must dispose of hazardous waste through private processors.

N. Parks

The Town of Twisp owns and operates two parks; the Twisp Park located at the northern end of Lincoln Street, and the Twisp Commons, located adjacent to the Community Center.

The Twisp Park is a multi-use park, with a small stage, playground, basketball court, swimming pool, and undeveloped access to the Twisp and Methow Rivers at their confluence. The pool is a popular summertime facility serving the entire valley, but has struggled with on-going maintenance issues and insufficient funds. Friends of the Pool, a valleywide volunteer group, was formed in 2004 to bolster the Town's efforts to keep the pool open and operating.

The Twisp Commons is a small, passive park with many sitting places. Originally a volunteer effort, the Commons incorporates several features reclaimed from the old bridge, and has a beautiful landscaping scheme which has matured beautifully since being installed in 1998.

Refer to the Parks and Recreation Plan for strategies and recommendations.

O. Parking

Refer to Section III.H, Transportation/Circulation Element.

P. Implementation of the Public Facilities Element

Implementation of the public facilities element of the comprehensive plan is very important for the town's future. Without implementing this portion of the comprehensive plan it will be of little value to the town and as a result, the indicated improvements will be very slow in developing.

This element of the comprehensive plan is the only element where many individuals and civic groups, as well as the town, can physically implement the plan. This element is quite often implemented by donations and volunteer labor; this most often occurs in park development. However, as the individuals and civic groups work on different phases of this program they should do so through the town planning commission and council so as to have a coordinated development of the improvements.

The most common way of implementing this element of a comprehensive plan is for the town to set up a capital improvements program. A capital improvements program is a long-range financial plan for the acquisition and development of public property for the benefit of the entire community. Public facilities, as well as other improvements, should be prioritized in the plan. The financing of capital improvements is based upon grants and

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loans available, estimates of future expenditures, projected costs of improvements, anticipated revenue from taxes and other sources, and the bonding capacity of the town. This plan should be coordinated with the beautification plan laid out in Section V, Community Identity.