Yakima County’s land use codes were adopted in separate decades and modified in response to specific local issues or to meet State mandates:

- 1974  Subdivision
- 1975  Zoning updated 2000  GMA
- 1986  Yakima Urban Area Zoning updated 2003
- 1984  SEPA updated 1998
- 1998  Project Permit Administration
- 1990  Fees CPI adjustments through 1998

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:
- Clarify, simplify and streamline County land development codes consistent with State law and adopted comprehensive plans;
- Integrate & consolidate related code Titles;
- Establish legislative intent for chapters and sections to guide the use of the code;
- Examine unwritten practices & procedures to determine whether they should be incorporated into code or discontinued;
- Differentiate code requirements by urban, rural and resource locations where such development review distinctions make sense;
- Create clear standards & criteria to evaluate project compliance with code requirements;
- Eliminate unclear cut-points & thresholds for development standards;
- Create a basis for modification or adjustment of requirements according to criteria;
- Provide objective standards, predictable process and procedures for project review.
Call for problems, issues, opportunities & ideas by code to customer groups. Prioritize issues & opportunities based on BOCC approved priorities and review criteria. Draft code changes. Consult with working groups. Revise drafts & review with working groups. Draft code changes. Consult with working groups. Review drafts & review with working groups. Draft code changes. Consult with working groups. Review drafts & review with working groups.

**LESSON – ENGAGE THE ELECTEDS**
- The Board started with commitment—a healthy budget, dedicated staff and a two week meetings cycle. All Legislative intent and major issues were vetted.
- Difficult keeping the Board’s interest while Working Groups & Planning Commission developed hearing draft.
- Board thought the hearings would take months when in fact most LWG issues were resolved.
- Board now hyper-focused deliberations thus far on page by page review in study sessions.

**LESSON – TRANSPARENCY**
- Illustrate **HOW** changes are made in a consolidation of codes.
- In addition to traditional **strike through & underlined** text,
  - Identify sources of codes & documents
  - Use edit logs with verbatim comments and responses –
  - Simplify decisions to keep process moving.

**LESSON – SWG & LWG provided REFINING FIRE**
- Two groups added time. Some people did not seem to fully participate until the PC hearings and LWG process.
- Over 35 meeting time investment allowed for the **Refining Fire**
  - Code significantly improved.
  - Learned a lot from each other’s respective roles in community development.
  - Built understandings and relationships that will carry beyond the ULDC.

**LESSON – SCHEDULE IMPLEMENTATION**
- Planning Commission recommended **Implementation Team**
  - Training for staff in all divisions and customer groups.
  - New forms and Development Assistance Bulletins tailored to process and application
  - Revise fee structure to work with new code requirements & procedures
  - **Monitor** Provide mechanism to fix real problems after adoption—“cut the shoelaces but not the content” with annual implementation audit by PC.
  - **Set criteria** now for evaluating how and whether to amend.

THE “REFINING FIRE” OF CODE SIMPLIFICATION & CONSOLIDATION

“Questions and Answers”
THE "REFINING FIRE" OF CODE SIMPLIFICATION & CONSOLIDATION

Zella West
Yakima County Planning Commission Chair

Don't Take it Personally

Consider "All" Opinions

Remove the Personalities

Clearly outline the process

AGREE  MORE WORK  DISAGREE
Patience, Patience, Patience

“Questions and Answers”

THE "REFINING FIRE" OF CODE SIMPLIFICATION & CONSOLIDATION

Thomas Durant
President Durant Development Services Inc.

• Expectations
• What did not go well
• What went well

“Questions and Answers”

Tommy Carroll
Long Range /Environmental Section Manager
**Administrative - Lessons Learned**

- You need all relevant divisions of your jurisdiction (i.e. roads, utilities) involved and committed to the project.
- Release the entire draft to your work groups – don’t piecemeal.
- Allow for enough time for your working groups to read and comment on the materials.
- Allow enough time for staff to make revisions and edits to the initial draft language.
- MOVE to electronic copies and editing among groups.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Yakima County Planning Division  
128 N. 2nd Street  
Yakima, Washington 98901  
planninginfo@co.yakima.wa.us  
(509) 574-2300

APA Washington Chapter  
603 Stewart Street Suite 610 Seattle, WA 98101  
206-632-7438 office@washington-apa.org

**THE “REFINING FIRE” OF CODE SIMPLIFICATION & CONSOLIDATION**

“Questions and Answers”