

Town of Twisp
Town Planning Practicum

Supervisor:	Kurt Danison, Twisp Town Planner
Salary:	\$14.49/hour, 24 hours/week for 10 weeks
Period of Employment:	June 21, 2022 – August 26, 2022 3 days per week
Participation Requirements:	Living in the Methow Valley for the summer Enrollment in UEPP 471 Campus Sustainability Planning Studio course Meets 2 days per week (3 credits) Optional internship credits are available but not required (up to 8 credits)

Overview

The Town of Twisp, population 1015, is a former mill and U.S. Forest Service community in the heart of the Methow Valley. Since the opening of the North Cascades Highway in 1972, closure of the lumber mill 1984 and sale of the U.S. Forest Compound in 2010, the community has slowly transformed. While its roots in the area’s resource based economy is still visible and an important part of community culture, the outdoor recreation industry is slowly eclipsing resource extraction industries.

The community developed it’s first Comprehensive Plan and updated land use regulations in the early 1990’s and has generally initiated amendments to both the Plan and zoning codes every 7 to 10 years in order to keep pace with changing community needs and desires. Most of the changes have been in response to changing state and federal statutes or in response to issues brought forth by staff, Town council or citizens.

Two issues, one that has been ongoing or a number of years and another, that has become an economic as well as community concern presently lie at the forefront of Twisp’s planning and land use efforts. The first is the completion of an updated sign code while the second is an update to the Land Use and Housing Elements of the Town of Twisp Comprehensive Plan. While the former is focused on regulations and the implementation thereof, the latter speaks directly to the issue of housing in the community.

The Town’s Planning Commission, comprised of five volunteer Commissioners, the Deputy clerk acting as Secretary, Town Council representative and contract planner comprise the core of the Town’s planning program.

The Town is presently nearing adoption of a new sign code and one of the issues is non-conforming signs and what to do about it. An inventory of existing signage needs to be conducted resulting in a data base noting sign type, dimensions of possible, and level of compliance, non-compliance. A report would be prepared along with a summary of the inventory findings and suggestions on how to refine the code and/or go about obtaining compliance with the code.

The second project is to conduct a housing condition survey and verify existing land uses as part of the overall effort to update the Town's Land Use and Housing Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Responsibilities

- Complete inventory of existing signs in the community
- Prepare database
- Report weekly to supervisor
- Attend monthly Planning Commission meetings
- Attend one Town Council meeting per month

Required Qualifications and Experience

- Ability to work some nights and/or weekends
- Ability of work alone with limited supervision
- Experience with spread sheet and work processing programs
- Familiarity with social media platforms

Educational/Professional Benefits

The student will gain exposure to some of the real issues planners in rural communities throughout the country face with changing economies and environments. Learning about sign codes and how they are implemented will provide an excellent experience in how to translate sometimes lofty community desires into workable and practicable regulatory solutions. Conducting a housing condition survey and verifying existing land uses as part of the data informing an update to the Land Use and Housing Elements of the Comprehensive Plan and interacting with the Planning Commission and public will be an invaluable experience for a future planner.

Find more information about Sustainability Pathways Fellowships at:

<https://sustain.wwu.edu/pathways>

Please direct all questions to Sustainability Pathways Director, Joshua Porter at:
Joshua.Porter@wwu.edu