

**From:** [Sarah Morton-Erasmus](mailto:Sarah.Morton-Erasmus)  
**To:** [clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us](mailto:clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us)  
**Subject:** Tree ordinance next city council meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 9:03:47 AM

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I was just informed that the city of White Salmon is considering changes to its tree ordinance allowing property owners to indiscriminately cut down trees as they see fit.

I'd like to state that I feel very strongly that the city code should have laws in place to protect our old trees in the city limits. I moved here 20 years ago and in that time the community has changed drastically, and while progress and new business and growth is all good we must not be short sighted about what makes this community attractive, and lovely to live in. I hope the city will find a middle ground and protect the oldest and most impactful trees in the city for the following reasons:

1. Mature trees are a benefit to our community by (eg) providing habitat, being fire resistant compared to young trees, by providing shade and thermal management, by enhancing beauty and livability, and by providing clean air.
2. Much like preserving waterways on private property benefits the entire community, a tree's impact is not restricted by property boundaries and land owners and the community have a duty to preserve them, as the city does with waterways and wetlands.
3. While development within the city limits needs to be allowed, ensuring developers consider trees in their plans as more than just a liability is a good thing to do.

I personally had several trees around my home removed by neighbors, it was devastating to our home, made our yard unbearable to be in with the new hot summers we are having, ruined my view and displaced many critters leaving the last standing trees even more vulnerable to storms and high wind. Please consider all sides and think of how ugly and unliving our town would be if folks just cut them all down down to serve their own purposes. My neighbor said she "hated picking up the pine cones" that was her only reasoning for destroying a 100 year old tree. I cried.

As business owners we personally have paid to remove and replant trees to beautify our town and keep drought tolerant, city scape quality trees part of our downtown. It takes a village, and we should all be willing and able to follow simple rules keep our town green, with shade and habitat.

Thank you for your service to our town and please consider keeping a old growth tree ordinance in place.

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White Salmon resident and business owner  
Sarah Morton-Erasmus

**From:** [Ingrid Hallin](mailto:Ingrid.Hallin)  
**To:** [clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us](mailto:clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us)  
**Subject:** Re: Tree Ordinance opinion  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 9:19:44 AM

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On Oct 24, 2023, at 9:16 AM, Ingrid Hallin <ihallin@yahoo.com> wrote:

Sorry, I had the wrong email yesterday. Please see below

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Ingrid Hallin <ihallin@yahoo.com>  
**Date:** October 23, 2023 at 6:47:00 PM PDT  
**To:** Administrator@ci.white-salmon.wa.us  
**Subject:** Tree Ordinance opinion

Hello,

As a professional Landscaper, and a home owner in White Salmon, I am writing in support of the current Tree Ordinance.

1. Preserving the established large trees is so beneficial to our climate and habitat. The shade that trees provide is un-replaceable. The habitat that it provides for the diversity of birds and animals is also irreplaceable.
2. White Oaks are especially slow growing and should be under special preservation.

Thank you for your efforts in this matter,  
Ingrid Hallin  
707 SE Oak St.  
White Salmon, WA

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Jackie O'Connor](#)  
**To:** [clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us](mailto:clerktreasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us)  
**Subject:** WS Tree Ordinance  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 9:41:38 AM

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Sent from my iPad

As an owner of one of the townhomes in the Wyers End Development, I enjoy immensely the mature oaks scattered throughout our little neighborhood. Especially the one just outside my deck which provides comforting shade from the scorching sun. Those trees are many decades older than my 7 year old townhome. Preserving them has proved a peaceful, aesthetically pleasing environment not just for me, but for all my neighbors and passersby. Having a means by which the city can make insure the preservation of such a valuable asset to our community is crucial. Please, keep the Tree Ordinance!  
Sincerely, Jackie O'Connor

**From:** [Sally Gilchrist](#)  
**To:** [Robert Gilchrist \(Dad\): clerk@treasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us](mailto:clerk@treasurer@ci.white-salmon.wa.us)  
**Subject:** Tree Ordinance  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 4:11:14 PM

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Dear White Salmon City Council,

This is a passionate concern for our entire family, friends, and community. Please log our email on this topic of keeping a strict policy on the cutting of trees in the city.

1. Mature trees are a benefit to our community by (eg) providing habitat, being fire resistant compared to young trees, by providing shade and thermal management, by enhancing beauty and livability, and by providing clean air.
2. Much like preserving waterways on private property benefits the entire community, a tree's impact is not restricted by property boundaries and land owners and the community have a duty to preserve them, as the city does with waterways and wetlands.
3. While development within the city limits needs to be allowed, ensuring developers consider trees in their plans as more than just a liability is a good thing to do.
4. Tree groves - in particular oak groves - on and between properties are highly beneficial to a myriad of species maintaining and enhancing the thread of biodiversity that we prize so highly in our town.

Sally Gilchrist  
Robert Gilchrist Jr  
199 NW Cherry Street  
WS WA 98672  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [Cyndi Strid](#)  
**To:** [Stephanie Porter](#)  
**Subject:** REview of City Tree Ordinance  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:56:29 PM

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10/25/23

To: White Salmon Clerk/ Treasurer  
Re: Tree Ordinance review and changes

It is my understanding that you are in the process of reviewing the tree ordinance policy for the City of White Salmon and I hope that you will take these concerns seriously that have I listed below :

1. Our City and county will continue to see and experience the effects of a warming climate and we need to be proactive in protecting our existing tree inventory and promote the planting of additional trees and understory suitable to our changing climate. Paying attention to the guidance of tree and climate scientists and their recommendations is important. Trees provide a carbon sink we cannot afford to lose.
2. We must take strong and meaningful action to protect the City of White Salmon from wildfire risks. Property owners within the city limits should be required to remove dead trees from their property and to remove dead limbs and fire fuel as recommended by the Underwood Conservation District Fire Safety guidelines ( or as recommended by the White Salmon Fire department ) . Home owners should be issued a warning and possible fines, concerning their dead trees and also be eligible for assistance as available for removal of such fire hazards.
3. Healthy trees should be considered a priority over the NW Natural Gas company's installation of any new infrastructure, that would require the removal of healthy trees on a property - just to put in a new gasline. Residents have affordable, efficient and safer electric alternatives available rather than new gas lines being installed for new home building or remodeling. The city must NOT ALLOW NW Natural Gas company to cut large and healthy oak, fir or pine trees, under the story that they need to "maintain their gas lines — which are not being used, or put the residents at risk when the gas infrastructure is so old that it is at risk for gas leaks and fires. A 3rd party needs to verify there is a need for claimed maintenance procedure that result in ecological destruction.

Thank you for standing firm to protect White Salmon from wildfires and to mitigate global warming.

Cyndi Strid, White Salmon Resident  
[cyndistrid@gmail.com](mailto:cyndistrid@gmail.com)

Jacqueline Wyatt  
102 Pine Drive  
White Salmon, WA 98672

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### **Affordable housing**

Clearly, the city needs to define affordable housing *over time*. How will the city keep it affordable without a land trust structure and active price control?

Is it possible to emphasize another kind of inclusion that integrates the economics of multi-generational housing? Not all cultures and ethnicities separate aging parents from their kids. Many old folks don't have much income and a genuine granny suite within an existing house promotes family cohesion, which supports neighborhood cohesion.

When a group of cottage homes or townhouses or duplexes lands on the horizon of a neighborhood-based land parcel, I believe it is extremely important to involve the neighborhood. My guess is that there is more flexibility and good will in peoples' attitudes than we might assume.

And, I think it is the developer's responsibility to address parking-ingress-egress issues right off the top. Most White Salmon residents own a fleet of large vehicles — this is as serious and contentious an issue as is the structure itself.

Finally, the move toward small lots and smaller homes is real, in fact, underway now. White Salmon is in a good place to establish flexible code, versatile zoning and a *culture-of-inclusion*.

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**Planning and land-use** First, I would like to acknowledge that the city has made some smart moves to improve the planning and development process for private property owners. Team work and transparency appear to be central in this initial phase, so high marks — keep going.

At its highest level, any planning process must follow a clear, reliable path from development through design, from inspection to permitting. I think White Salmon needs two planning and development paths: one for developers and one for private property owners.

Planning and land-use code should reflect the landscape here — rocky, sloped, dotted with critical areas and creeks. Building into hillsides or within a buffered distance of a creek or uneven frontage or within bizarrely-shaped buildable areas — all the stuff of argument, hard turn-downs, delays and frustration — the code must recognize the contour and geology of this slice of the gorge and offer options for development.

Enforceable code must build in reasonable flexibility, be adaptable to current context and existing conditions, and open up opportunities for inclusion and innovation. Text into context.

A significant problem here is the cut-and-dried nature of the planning process. Either you get a green light in the staff report, maybe a few conditions attached, or you get turned down. Subjective interpretation by a planner alone, who backs rigidly into a literal translation of the code, is too hard to overcome and sets a wave of ill will into motion.

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**Question: it necessary to hire a planner?**

Here's an idea. How about maintaining qualified contractors on fee-for-service contracts: a planner, tree board based arborist, a biologist, architect plus one city employee from permitting.

Build a team of mix-and-match contracted professionals — fluent in WS code — who meet with property owners and, as a team, as partners with the owners, bring together the technical disciplines necessary to the dynamics of each development.

- Heritage trees? Let's confirm that — we have an arborist on the tree board — and get an ISA-certified arborist report plus tree protection plan.
- Have an architect already? This person works with the team.
- Next to a creek? We need a biologist to take a look and give us a report related to any critical area.

One hour meetings, share the cost with the city and move forward quickly — three one-hour meetings should do it.

My son and I spent \$30k, over two years, trying to figure out how to work with the city. Three one-hour meetings and, say, \$9k seem like a bargain.

If planning and development was a shared, transparent process in lock-step with the property owners, all the work would be on the front end **as partners**, so that by the time a variance application or renovation gets to the planning commission or council meeting, everything has been worked out — *owners and the city have reached consensus on how the property will develop.*

Owners present their plans on the same side as the city, not opposed, in a desperate last chance to convince the planning commission or city council to allow them to build what they want.

Nobody gets everything they want. BUT, on the back end, all issues are resolved. All parties land on the same page. Everyone learns a great deal.

A planning commission working with feedback from the development-design team and the owners stands a far better chance of making decisions that promote goodwill, permanence and public participation far beyond planning and development.

There will always be one-offs. Perhaps the planning and land-use code sections should acknowledge a range of anomalies, and provide a process whereby owners and the city work together. Not, *Here you go, complete this variance application.* Rather, *This is interesting. Let's take a closer look, and see if this kind of development could work and add value to our comprehensive plan.*

Finally, add a simple, administrative process to replace a flawed, non-code compliant survey with a new up-to-code plat map. So many plat maps here and in Hood River reflect old, error-ridden and suspiciously capricious survey data. New surveys on modern equipment are critical for land-use decisions.

Many thanks for your time and attention.



**To: White Salmon Mayor and City Council**  
**From: Peter Wright**  
**Date: 11/1/23**

**Issue: Based on WSMC 17.76, the city does not allow ADUs to be added to lots with existing nonconforming structures.**

Recent staff findings indicate that the existence of a nonconforming structure on a lot precludes the addition of an accessory structure. The example below is from a simple boundary line adjustment decision for a former property that has since been sold (BLA 2023.001).

**FINDING:** Should Applicant propose accessory structures, these will be reviewed at the time applications are received. Staff notes that accessory structures on Lot 1 would not be allowed as the existing structure on that lot is non-conforming.

(Ord. No. 2012-11-905, 11-26-2012)

I see this as a “low-hanging” fix for several reasons:

- ADUs would be allowed on far more lots than they are today, especially those with older homes
- Minimal code changes are needed to provide a clear resolution
- The existing language conflicts with the intent of the code, which is to prevent the expansion of nonconformities

I believe that the above finding taje provisions of 17.76.090 for structural alternations of an existing structure and missapplies them to new, detached structures. 17.76.090 itself also presents a barrier to attached ADUs by unnecessarily regulating structural alterations in cases where those alterations do not add to the nonconformity, and should also be revised to meet the intent of the chapter in the Comprehensive Plan.

Without question, the code is riddled with issues like this, but this one happens to be a fairly significant barrier to the type housing we are hoping to allow. While code changes addressing setbacks may themselves bring many more existing structures into conformance, a few minor amendments would greatly improve the code for zoning nonconformities that can't be anticipated. I've added a few below that are borrowed from a similarly small city, [Friday Harbor Municipal Code. 17.60.](#)

- **Add as 17.76.080 - Nonconforming Lots:** *A nonconforming lot may be used; provided, that any structure or building erected subsequent to the date of adoption of this title shall meet all other provisions of this title except minimum lot size.*
- **Revise 17.76.090**
  - Remove: ~~Normal repairs and alterations may be made to a lawful nonconforming building, provided that no structural alterations shall be made, except those required by law.~~
  - Add: *A nonconforming structure may remain and be used provided that the structure is not enlarged or altered so as to increase its nonconformity.*