



CITY OF WHITE SALMON
Joint Planning Commission
And City Council Meeting - Wednesday, June 23, 2021

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commission Members:

Greg Hohensee, Chairman
Ross Henry
Michael Morneault
Seth Gilchrist
Tom Stevenson

Staff:

Erika Castro Guzman, City Associate Planner
Jan Brending, City Clerk-Treasurer

Planning Consultants:

Ethan Spoo, WSP Senior Planner
Scott Keillor, WSP Senior Planner

City Council:

Mayor Marla Keethler
Jason Hartmann
Joe Turkiewicz
Jim Ransier

City Council Members Excused:

David Lindley
Ashley Post

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Chairman Greg Hohensee called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. Ten audience members attended by teleconference. A quorum of planning commissioner and city council members was present.

PRESENTATION

1. **Joint City Council/Planning Commission Workshop - Draft Comprehensive Plan**
- 2.

a. **Presentation of Draft Comprehensive Plan by WSP**

Scott Keillor, Ethan Spoo, and Jan Brending presented the Draft Comprehensive Plan prepared by WSP and Staff.

Staff stated that the next step after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is to review primarily White Salmon's zoning chapter.

b. **Discussion and Questions for Consultants**

Staff reminded the planning commission that this discussion is not the time for specific comments on the draft plan; specific comments shall be handled after the public hearing.

Councilman Hartman stated that he thought the comprehensive plan was well done and was a nice upgrade from the previous document.

Councilman Turkiewicz had no questions.

Commissioner Morneault had no questions.

Commissioner Gilchrist had no questions, thanked WSP for staying course during the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Henry appreciated the consultant’s work and looked forward to hearing the public comment.

Commissioner Stevenson suggested organizing and change the order of the element placement for the comprehensive plan; WSP Senior Planner Keillor added that this draft would not be difficult to reorder the elements.

Chairman Hohensee requested WSP review the land-use designation map and its purpose. WSP Senior Planner Keillor stated that there are three noteworthy changes. (1) all of the names of the designation have changed. The prior designation had been grouped into new designation, for example, RL, R1 grouped into low-density residential. This new land designation allows property owners within the corresponding zone to propose zone change without undergoing a comprehensive plan map change. (2) Resign the known Riverfront district to Commercial to best fit what is constructed. (3) North of Spring Street is designated medium density when previously was R1 designation.

Chairman Hohensee clarified that a single-family home community to look like existing within the area of Spring Street. Staff explained that the land-use map provides flexibility as the City moves into the next phase towards updating the City's zoning codes. The zoning map remains the same unless the city council changes accept a re-zone application after the comprehensive plan is adopted. Staff notes that the comprehensive plat map may only be updated once a calendar year and clarified that just because a property is proposed for medium density use, the actual zoning map has not changed. In the future, upon review of Chapter 17 – Zoning, this land-use map flexibility allows the potential for different types of R1. Commissioner Hohensee states that the land use map provides a greater level of flexibility to keep the small-town feel.

Mayor Keethler emphasized staff’s clarification that the land use designation map allows flexibility and that the two maps are not tied together.

The city council was excused at 6:24 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING 6:25

1. Public Hearing - Draft Comprehensive Plan (Planning Commission Only)

Chairman Hohensee opened the public hearing at 5:25 p.m.

Tao Berman, Inside City Limit Resident and Business Owner

Tao Berman stated that he is concerned about Hotel and Motel’s definitions because he thinks they are written too narrow. He believes this item should be tabled until in-person public meetings can allow for more public input. He requests the Planning Commission to consider a gestation period for developers in the active design stage developing property based on the current code.

Joel Maden, Inside City Limit Resident

Joel Madsen, Executive Director with Mid-Columbia Housing Authority and Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation, stated that he works to promote affordable housing through rent assistance and develop affordable housing for rent and ownership. Madsen supports the goals of quality housing to be diverse. The following was Madsen’s written comment:

Housing Element

H-1.1 Our recommendation is to be more clear on nexus to and definition of affordability targets as it relates to considering incentives and bonuses. More specifically, we recommend a firm policy statement that connect incentives and bonuses for high-density residential development are connected to the City's true affordable housing definition and goal, not just blanket to all 'high-density housing.

H-1.2 This policy essentially defines workforce housing to be a product that serves people earning between 80% -120% of medial household income. We encourage the City to acknowledge there are lower wage-earning working households that could otherwise be excluded by this definition.

Goal H-2 Design and Neighborhood Goals.

Design standards are notorious NIMBY platforms. We encourage the City to consider excluding some of this requirement for projects that meet affordability goals; particularly H-2.1 and H-2.2. If this is not practical, we encourage the policy states that development code standards will be clear, objective and will balance the need for additional housing units that will enhance the quality of life for city residents.

Policy H-3.2 We look forward to expanding our partnership with the City of White Salmon in addressing needed housing opportunities.

Land Use and Urbanization Element

Policy LU -3.1 Similar to our comment on Goal H-2 in the Housing Element, we recommend exempting affordable housing developments from Policy LU-3.1 or create a succinct, clear and objective path for certain affordable housing developments.

Written comments received:

1. **Ericka Miller and David Monning**, NE Snohomish Avenue, White Salmon
2. **Bruce Bolme**, NE Scenic Street, White Salmon
3. **Kallie Kurtz**, NE Forester Lane, White Salmon
4. **Shelley Baxter**, NW Cherry Hill Rd, White Salmon
5. **Dorothy Herman**, NW Cherry Hill Rd, White Salmon
6. **Ruth Olin**, SE Wyers Street, White Salmon

Chairman Hohensee closed the public hearing at 6:45 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

2. **Draft Comprehensive Plan (Planning Commission Only)**
3.
 - a. **Discussion**

Commissioner Morneault thinks that written comments from Kallie Kurtz were extensive and would suggest some of her remarks be incorporated, specifically bring balance to White Salmon's Native American history. Staff clarified that time does not allow rewriting the historical background information element. Chairman Hohensee explained that commissioners might update specific areas if seen fit.

Commissioner Gilchrist is happy with the comprehensive plan outcome. He thinks it's a missed opportunity that Kurtz's comments arrived this late in the process but would like to make simple changes to acknowledge her remarks.

Commissioner Henry emphasized that the history element did not need much revision from the previous comp plan. He thinks that focusing on the history element would take time away from the planning commissioner's goal and suggests that this document be seen as a living document. Commissioner Henry supports Commissioner Stevenson's idea to re-organize the comp plan. He also thinks Joel Maden's comments should be explored and discussed.

Commissioner Stevenson believes that the historical section is larger than imagined. Agrees that the Klickitat tribe detail may be valuable to add, as Kallie Kurtz suggested. He would also be interested in adding the history of the Latinx community since their arrival in the 1980s. Commissioner Stevenson thinks the document may be too specific in some areas and would like to see it become general.

Commissioner Hohensee stated that he thinks that beyond word changes, the housing and environmental critical area element needs further review as two of the five commissioners were not present during that meeting, and the primary objective was to review public comments. He states the planning commission did not thoroughly analyze the goals and policies as a group. Therefore he suggested reviewing the goal and policy of housing and environmental critical area elements as a priority.

Commissioners reviewed each Affordability and Diversity Goal and responded to its applicability to the comprehensive plan, policy, or table for a code interpretation conversation. Further discussion included wordsmithing and clarification.

The planning commission agreed-upon changes to the following proposed goals:

GOAL H-1: Establish, support, and maintain a diverse stock of housing that serves the full range of ages, incomes, and household types, including long-term renters and people with special needs. NO CHANGE

Policy H-1.1: no issues. Review and update land use and zoning regulations to remove unnecessary barriers **and provide incentives for the** development of **attainable affordable** housing stock. ~~The 2020 Urbanization Study contains policy recommendations that can be used as guidance for revising the code. Consider providing appropriate incentives and bonuses for high-density residential development, such as townhomes, apartments, and other multifamily housing and affordable housing products, such as income-restricted units, single-resident occupancy units, and employee housing.~~

Policy H-1.2: Use and encourage innovative land use planning tools and strategies

that result in the development of **affordable** “workforce housing,” attainable for households earning between 80 to 120 percent of White Salmon median household income.

This can, in part, be achieved by supporting common-sense housing solutions, including gradual increases in housing density. This policy encourages the development of the following types of housing:

- Cottage housing and other smaller homes (less than 1,000 square feet), which are more affordable to construct and can be built as infill on existing home lots or on smaller lots.
- Low-rise mixed-use buildings with complementary commercial components
- Accessory dwelling units, especially in established neighborhoods
- “Live-work” spaces that support economic development through the allowance of home occupations, artisan/artist spaces, and craft manufacturing or light industry
- Housing for people with special needs, preferably within walking distance to public transportation, shopping, employment opportunities, medical facilities, schools, and other essential services
- Adaptive reuse of preexisting, older, or historic structures
- Infill development near the downtown and hospital areas

Policy H-1.3: Recognize mobile homes/manufactured homes as a necessary, dignified, and functional **attainable affordable** housing solution. Support the continued existence of this **attainable affordable** housing option through the designation of land for mobile home/manufactured home parks. ~~That prevents the development of single family, stick-built homes.~~

Policy H-1.4: Lead local community outreach efforts to explore appropriate strategies that preserve long-term affordability of housing for both renters and homeowners, including, but not limited to, the following.

- Vacation/short-term rental restrictions
- Public/private partnerships
- Public/housing authority acquisitions programs
- Long-term affordability agreements with developers or property owners
- Inclusionary housing policies, which require developers to sell or rent a certain number of new units to lower-income residents in exchange for incentives, such as tax abatements, or flexible development code standards, such as density increases

Policy H-1.5: Promote and support the rehabilitation/renovation of existing, substandard housing.

Commissioners reviewed each Design and Neighborhoods Goal and responded to its applicability to the comprehensive plan, policy, or table for a code interpretation conversation. Further discussion included wordsmithing and clarification. NO CHANGE

Changes to the following proposed goals were consented to by the planning commission:

GOAL H-2: **Maintain, support, and establish** ~~Maintain, establish, support, and maintain~~ defined neighborhoods ~~with homes that meet development code standards and~~ enhance the quality of life for city residents.

~~Policy H-2.1: Establish development and design standards to help protect White Salmon’s small-town feel and other aspects of community character, including site and building design. Consider standards that respond to and enhance the various viewsheds and unique topography of the area.~~

~~Policy H-2.2: Ensure residential development adds to the network of green spaces, and minimizes negative impacts on surrounding uses by • Establishing and maintaining a robust, healthy, and diverse tree canopy in residential neighborhoods. • Encouraging the enhancement of multifamily and mixed-use properties through native landscaping and plantings that provide interest through all seasons of the year.~~

Policy H-2.3: Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle paths into residential site design to connect neighborhoods to each other, to adjacent commercial areas, and to the larger pedestrian and bicycle network. NO CHANGE

Policy H-2.4: Require all residential developments to construct streets, associated pedestrian infrastructure, and street lighting to City standards. Encourage the use of low-impact development strategies, such as stormwater gardens, narrow streets, and native plant conservation to promote minimal impervious surfaces and minimize runoff in residential areas. NO CHANGE

Policy H-2.5: Promote safety and enhance the quality of life in existing and new residential neighborhoods by encouraging the implementation of “slow-and-safe” neighborhood street design features. These features should consider strategies that encourage slow-driving speeds, low-traffic volumes, shared-street behavior among users, narrow lanes where appropriate, and other elements that enhance pedestrian and bicycle networks within residential areas. NO CHANGE

~~Policy H-2.6: Preserve existing neighborhood design, and the village feel of White Salmon as the City accommodates new housing construction, and existing neighborhoods absorb additional density through protection of the architectural and urban design characteristics that are essential to White Salmon’s identity. DELETE~~

Commissioners reviewed each Partnerships and Education Goal and responded to its applicability to the comprehensive plan, policy, or table for a code interpretation conversation. Further discussion included wordsmithing and clarification.

Changes to the following proposed goals were consented to by the planning commission:

~~GOAL H-3: Invest in local and regional partnerships for education and data collection to ensure supportive policies and structures are in place that promotes housing affordability.~~ Engage with regional organizations that focus on housing education and data collection to ensure supportive policies that promote housing affordability.

~~Policy H-3.1: Provide contact information for, encourage, and support organizations, groups, and programs that provide homeownership education, technical and financial assistance, and facilities to populations with special needs so that they can remain and thrive in the community.~~ Develop an implementation plan in coordination with housing

partners **for education and data collection** that supports specific strategies **to prevent homelessness**. Such as • Emergency shelter for youth and victims of domestic or other forms of abuse and trafficking. • Helping first time or veteran homebuyers navigate purchasing a home. • Helping to qualify low-income residents to rent housing with vouchers. • Preventing at-risk or imminently homeless individuals and families from becoming homeless by offering tenant-landlord dispute mediation and emergency financial assistance. • Assisting people on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, or people that require in-home living assistance construct, maintain, or repair the health and safety features of their homes. • Providing chronically or long-term homeless individuals and families with essential services coordination.

Policy H-3.2: Maintain a collaborative and productive partnership with the MidColumbia and Columbia Gorge Housing Authority, and consider enlisting them as the agency of record to act as the Housing Authority for the City of White Salmon. Build new collaborative partnerships with other local and regional, public, and nonprofit housing groups to support efforts that provide attainable housing options in White Salmon. **Maintain existing and build new partnerships with local and regional organizations to support policies that promote housing affordability.**

Policy H-3.3: Continue to collect and evaluate data regarding the state of housing in White Salmon so that the City's response and approach can be tracked, measured, and adjusted over time. Along with studies and plans such as the 2020 Urbanization Study, this data and information should include • Permit data • Home sale volumes and prices • Home values and property tax collected • Buildable acreage • Anecdotal evidence of attainability.

Staff will do the initial editing on tonight's consensus before the consultants provide language and clarification on several items discussed by the commissioners.

Commissioners tabled the remainder of the Draft Comprehensive Plan discussion to a special planning commission workshop, tentatively June 30, 2021.

Commissioners plan to review each comment and responded to its applicability to the comprehensive plan or the city council to incorporate.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Greg Hohensee, Chairman

Erika Castro Guzman, Associate Planner