



City of Stevenson

Phone (509) 427-5970

Fax (509) 427-8202

7121 E Loop Road, PO Box 371

Stevenson, Washington 98648

March 9, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, March 09, 2026

6:00 PM

Call-in numbers 253-215-8782, 669-900-6833, 346-248-7799, 312-626-6799, 929-205-6099 or 301-715-8592, Webinar ID 845 2218 7605, Zoom

link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84522187605>

or via YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4k9bA0IEEvSF6PSoDwjJvA/>

A. Public Comment Expectations: Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be cut off after 3 mins. Disruptive individuals may be required to leave the meeting. Persistent disruptions may result in the meeting being recessed and continued at a later date.

B. Old Business

- 1. Meeting Minutes** - Planning Commission is presented with minutes from February 9th, 2026 for approval.
- 2. Conditional use Permit CUP-2025-003:** Updates from Wesley Houston.

C. New Business

D. Discussion

E. Adjournment

DRAFT MINUTES
City of Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, February 09, 2026
6:00 PM

Attending:

PC Chair Jeff Breckel; Planning Commissioners Charles Hales, Anne Keese, Auguste Zettler. Commissioner Lawson was not in attendance.

City Staff: **City Administrator Wesley Wootten, Daniel Pitairu, Permits and Records Manager**

Skamania County Community Development Staff: Mandy Hertel, Planner II

Public participants: Mary Repar, Andrea Wilbanks, Bernie Bacon, Dave Cox

PC Chair Jeff Breckel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. Public Comment Expectations: Reminders of meeting protocol.

PC Chair Breckel requested **City Administrator Wootten** explain the meeting protocol. Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Please state your name clearly for the minute taker. Individual comments may be cut off after 3 minutes. Disruptive individuals may be required to leave the meeting. Persistent disruptions may result in the meeting being recessed and continued at a later date. Tools for remote or call in participants: *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand.

PC Meeting minutes from January 2026 were approved unanimously following a motion by **Commissioner Hales**, seconded by **Commissioner Keese**.

1. Public Comments:

Mary Repar stated her opposition to the tree removal along Rock Creek by the PUD. She advocated for undergrounding utility lines. She also commented on methane monitors at the site of the former dumpsite.

B. Old Business
None provided.

C. New Business

1.

Public Hearing - Conditional Use Permit (applicant Wesley Huston)

VALUATION: The Planning Commission was asked to review Conditional Use Permit application **CUP-2025-003** and consider whether the proposed use (campground) can be

permitted under Suburban Residential zoning designation (SR) pursuant to CS 17.39.020.

The applications and project plans were available for public review at City Hall during regular business hours and at <https://www.ci.stevenson.wa.us/news>, and notice of the hearing had been published in a newspaper of general circulation on January 21st and 28th, 2026.

The CUP-2025-003 application requested permission to provide customers of Cohoperative, Inc., a nursery (Existing Use) located at 365 Foster Creek Road, Stevenson, Washington with the option of making overnight use of the same property through a limited number of primitive campsites (Proposed Use). Seventeen sites are proposed on the 3.2 acre property, which is also a commercial hop growing business.

a. Appearance of Fairness Doctrine

PC Chair Breckel explained and administered the Appearance of Fairness Doctrine. The Appearance of Fairness Doctrine is a rule of law requiring government decision-makers to conduct non-court hearings and proceedings in a way that is fair, impartial and unbiased in both appearance and fact. Any conflicts of interest must be disclosed to ensure fairness and impartiality. Disclosures include any financial interest in the final outcome, any outside (ex-parte) communications made with any party of interest or anything else that could be construed as a conflict or affects any decision making. Decision makers can be challenged by applicants regarding any perceived conflicts of interest.

Upon questioning, none of the Planning Commissioners disclosed any ex-parte communications concerning the application, and none reported any financial conflicts or other matters that would impede a fair and impartial decision. There were no challenges by the applicant or the public.

b. Presentation by Staff:

Mandy Hertel, Planner II with Skamania County Community Development provided a staff report. She shared a PowerPoint presentation showing the location, topography, and site characteristics of the property and reviewed applicable zoning codes. She noted the site is zoned suburban residential.

The Planning Commission will need to address four questions to determine if the Conditional Use:

- 1. Will not endanger the public health or safety;**
 - 2. Will not substantially reduce the value of adjoining or abutting property;**
 - 3. Will be in harmony with the area in which it is located;**
- and**
- 4. Will be in conformity with the comprehensive plan, transportation plan, or other plan officially adopted by the council.**

She addressed outdoor burning regulations, noise control, sanitation and restroom facilities as required through Environmental Health, and emergency vehicle access.

Bernie Bacon provided written comments on the pack in/pack out description for the site. Garbage, health concerns, generator noise, road access, and fire rings were additional issues raised. She questioned if 17 sites were considered low density under the zoning code.

c. Presentation by Applicant:

Wesley Huston, the applicant provided details on the proposed project. He considers the proposal to be a form of a co-op, as campers would be working on the hop farm. He noted campers would have to be personally known to him, there would be no transient options. For 17 campsites he would allow only 6 people per site for a total of 102 people.

Campers would be required to have their own sanitation and cooking facilities. Fire pits or fire rings will be available with possible limitations due to fire hazards.

He addressed noise concerns by noting generators would be in self-contained vehicles. He stated the Skamania Lodge located above the property could also be loud, but he would manage noise levels at the site.

Commissioners asked a series of questions regarding required restroom facilities, water and sewer usage, visual appearances of the site, density limits and a previous structure shown on the site map.

d. Public Hearing.

PC Chair Breckel opened the public hearing at 6:30.

Public comments received pro:

Andrea Willby spoke in support. She lives across from the site.

Dave Cox suggested looking for ways and conditions that would allow the project to work rather than approaching it negatively.

Public comments received against:

Mary Repar spoke about parking needs, setback requirements and utilities. She questioned if a CUP could be granted without a plan.

PC Chair Breckel closed the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

D. Discussion

Following the presentations and comments, the Planning Commission engaged in a substantial discussion. **PC Chair Breckel** noted the role of the Planning Commission is to determine what conditions to place on the CUP proposal to allow approval. Questions remained on water, sewer, bathrooms, and roadways for access. **Commissioner Zettler** stated it is a unique situation, and in the future there may be more instances of a business entity being in a residential area. He pointed to the need for a site plan as a lot of information was missing.

Mandy Hertel, Planner II suggested determining what parameters are needed prior to making any decisions.

MOTION to table the decision until March was made by **Commissioner Zettler**. It died for lack of a second.

MOTION to continue the public hearing until March 2026 was made by **Commissioner Zettler**, seconded by **Commissioner Keesee**.

The motion passed unanimously.

Following the vote the Commissioners agreed to send to the City Council their recommendations regarding short-term rentals in Stevenson. No changes or revisions were made.

Mary Repar spoke about a seed exchange coming up on April 18th at the Stevenson Library.

E. Adjournment

PC Chair Breckel adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

TERRAPINS OWNER LLC

Skamania Lodge
1131 SW Skamania Lodge Way
Stevenson, Washington 98648

Via Email and Hand Delivery

February 24, 2026

Planning Commission
City of Stevenson
7121 E. Loop Road
Stevenson, WA 98648
planning@ci.stevenson.wa.us

Re: **Objection to Conditional Use Permit CUP-2025-003**
365 SW Foster Creek Road – Proposed Primitive Campground
Applicant: Wesley Huston

Dear Chair Breckel and Members of the Planning Commission:

Terrapins Owner LLC (“Skamania Lodge”) respectfully submits this formal **objection** to Conditional Use Permit Application CUP-2025-003, which seeks approval to establish seventeen (17) overnight primitive campsites on approximately 3.2 acres of Suburban Residential (“SR”) zoned property at 365 SW Foster Creek Road. Skamania Lodge directly abuts the subject property. The proposed campground would operate immediately adjacent to Skamania Lodge property lines and near guest accommodations and operational facilities. After reviewing the application materials and public notice, Skamania Lodge urges the Planning Commission to deny the application. This letter will show you that:

- Campground use is not consistent with the purpose of the SR zone;
- The proposed use is incompatible with surrounding uses;
- The application fails to demonstrate that the use will not be detrimental to adjacent properties;
- The proposed use raises public health, sanitation and safety concerns;
- Approving this would be inconsistent with ongoing city policy discussions regarding transient uses;
- Approving this would constitute a precedent threatening zoning integrity; and required findings necessary to approve this application are absent.

I. Threshold Issue: A Campground Use Is Not Consistent with the Purpose of the SR Zone

The SR zoning designation is intended to preserve and protect suburban residential character. A 17-site transient campground constitutes a commercial lodging use of material intensity. Even if framed as “primitive” or “seasonal,” the use involves:

- Transient overnight occupancy.
- Vehicular camping.
- Commercial activity associated with a business.
- Regular turnover of visitors.
- Concentrated use on a 3.2-acre parcel.

Seventeen sites equate to a density exceeding five sites per acre. That is not incidental to nursery use; it is a standalone recreational lodging operation. The Commission must first determine whether a campground is even contemplated as a conditional use in the SR zone under CS 17.39.020. If not expressly permitted as a conditional use, the application cannot be approved through the CUP process. A variance cannot be used to authorize a use not otherwise allowed in the zone.

II. The Proposed Use Is Incompatible with Surrounding Uses

The CUP criteria require that the proposed use be compatible with surrounding properties and not materially detrimental to adjacent uses. Skamania Lodge is a destination resort operating under Commercial Recreation zoning with significant infrastructure investment, guest expectations, and regulatory compliance obligations. The proposed campground:

- Provides no restroom facilities.
- Provides no sanitary dump station.
- Provides no water or wastewater plan.
- Includes no on-site management plan.
- Includes no noise control standards.
- Includes no lighting or buffering plan.
- Includes no fire mitigation plan.
- Includes no occupancy limits per site.

While characterized as “pack-in, pack-out,” the application provides no enforceable mechanism to ensure compliance. The Skamania Lodge’s guests expect a managed, professionally operated environment. The introduction of an unmanaged transient campground immediately adjacent to Lodge property creates material compatibility concerns, including noise, fire risk, late-night activity, lighting impacts, and potential sanitation issues. The applicant’s assertion that the use “complements” the Lodge is

unsupported by analysis or evidence and is a fallacy. Additionally, Skamania Lodge is the largest provider of transient lodging taxes.

III. The Application Fails to Demonstrate That the Use Will Not Be Detrimental

The CUP standards require affirmative findings that the use will not:

- Be materially detrimental to adjacent properties.
- Create public health or safety concerns.
- Generate excessive traffic or nuisance conditions.

The record contains no:

- Traffic impact analysis.
- Fire protection assessment.
- Stormwater or critical areas report.
- Geotechnical review.
- Operational management plan.

Seventeen campsites could generate 17–34 vehicles at peak occupancy, with unknown guest numbers per site. Foster Creek Road is not designed as a campground access corridor.

The burden rests on the applicant to demonstrate compliance. Assertions are not evidence.

IV. Public Health, Sanitation, and Fire Safety Concerns

The proposal relies entirely on self-contained vehicles and voluntary compliance with “pack-in, pack-out” waste handling. There is no:

- On-site restroom facility,
- Greywater containment system,
- Monitoring plan,
- Enforcement protocol,
- Solid waste plan.

Additionally, the application is silent on:

- Open flame policies,
- Fire pit restrictions,
- Burn bans,
- Emergency vehicle access and turnaround.

In a community with known wildfire sensitivity, approving 17 transient campsites without a detailed fire mitigation plan would be inconsistent with public safety obligations.

V. Inconsistency with Ongoing City Policy Discussions Regarding Transient Uses

The Planning Commission has recently discussed regulation of short-term rentals in residential zones and acknowledged that such uses are commercial in nature. Approving 17 transient lodging sites in SR zoning would materially expand commercial overnight lodging in residential areas without the regulatory safeguards imposed on hotels, licensed lodging facilities, or even short-term rentals. The Commission must apply standards consistently.

VI. Precedent and Zoning Integrity

Approval of this application would establish precedent that large-scale overnight commercial recreation uses may be introduced into SR zones without infrastructure, buffering, or management requirements.

That would significantly blur the distinction between Suburban Residential and Commercial Recreation zones and undermine the predictability of the City's land use framework. Zoning distinctions exist for a reason. The applicant has not demonstrated why this parcel warrants departure from those principles.

VII. Failure of Required Findings

To approve the CUP, the Commission must make specific written findings supported by substantial evidence. Based on the current record, the Commission cannot reasonably find that:

- The use is compatible with surrounding properties.
- The use will not be materially detrimental.
- Adequate provisions exist for sanitation and fire safety.
- The use is consistent with the purpose of the SR zone.
- The proposal will not adversely affect adjacent commercial operations.

Absent substantial evidence, denial is legally appropriate.

VIII. Conclusion

Skamania Lodge respectfully requests that the Planning Commission deny CUP-2025-003. Should the Commission elect to continue review rather than deny, at minimum the applicant should be required to provide:

- Detailed operations and management plan.
- Traffic impact analysis.
- Fire protection and wildfire mitigation plan.
- Sanitation and waste disposal plan.
- Critical areas and geotechnical review.

- Buffering and lighting analysis.

Without such documentation, the application does not meet the standards required for conditional use approval.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Digitally signed by Jeff
Randall
Date: 2026.02.24 08:41:18
-05'00'

Jeff Randall
Authorized Agent
Terrapins Owner LLC