



White Salmon Planning Commission Meeting
A G E N D A
September 09, 2026 – 5:30 PM
119 NE Church Ave and via Zoom Teleconference

Meeting ID: [813 9514 5924](#)
Call in Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 US (Tacoma)

Call to Order/Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

- [1.](#) Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2026

Public Comment

Members of the public attending the meeting, either in person or via Zoom, are welcome to provide general public comment. Each speaker will be allotted three minutes.

Action Items

- [2.](#) Code Interpretation – Are duplexes allowed in R2 zone? Are two duplexes allowed on a single lot?

Adjournment



File Attachments for Item:

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2026



DRAFT

White Salmon Planning Commission MEETING MINUTES

August 26, 2026 – 5:30 PM

119 NE Church Ave and Zoom Teleconference

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Commission Members:

Carl Trabant, Chair
Brendan Brown
Erika Price
Nate Loker
Adam Elliot

Staff:

Rowan Fairfield, City Planner
Miryan Manjarrez-Hurtado, Associate Planner

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Erika Price called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present.

Roll call was conducted by staff:

Chair Carl Trabant — Absent

Commissioner Erika Price — Present

Commissioner Nate Loker — Absent

Commissioner Adam Elliott — Present

Commissioner Brendan Brown — Present

Staff confirmed that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Elliott noted that his last name was misspelled on both sets of minutes. Commissioner Brown moved to approve the July 8 meeting minutes with the correction to last name spelling.

Commissioner Loker seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

July 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Brown moved to approve the July 8 meeting minutes with the correction to last name spelling. Commissioner Loker seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously (4-0).**

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public provided comment.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Draft Ordinance to amend Short-Term Rental regulations in Commercial zones

City Planner Rowan Fairfield presented the final draft of an Ordinance based on previous discussion at the July 22 meeting and invited any comments or questions from Commissioners before the Ordinance has a final review with the City Attorney and then goes to public hearing. The commission found the draft accurately reflected their prior discussion and had no further comments. No motion was made.

Proposed code changes for "Small-Box Discount Stores"

Planner Fairfield gave an overview of a proposed moratorium on “small box discount stores” and related draft code amendments from the Community Development Committee. The draft code amendments would prevent the future development of “small box” discount retail stores in White Salmon. The Council will consider the moratorium at its next meeting. Staff asked the Commission to give some initial feedback about the draft code amendments that could be passed back to the Community Development Committee. The proposed code amendments may come before the Commission for their first public hearing.

Staff noted that the draft amendments had been drafted previously, but the unusual amount of public comments at the recent public hearing for the Center Market project prompted the city to revisit them. However, the Center Market project would not be subject to the moratorium or the draft amendments because they are already vested under Washington state law with a complete application.

The Commission questioned how “small-box discount store” should be defined in Section 17.08, specifically whether the conjunctions that separate the three criteria should be “and” or “or”. The Commission noted that the current language may include convenience stores and asked if that is intentional, and if not intentional, asked what the difference between these two types of retail store is and how to make clearly include one but exclude the other. The Commission said the definition of “discount store” needs clarity, and staff noted that the current application does not ask for that kind of information, so it’s unclear how they would be identified. The Commission indicated that the city should consider the administrative burden, especially for floor area minimum percentages devoted to fresh foods, and how that would be enforced. They floated hypothetical scenarios that could stress-test the draft ordinance, including an approved store that later reduces its floor area devoted to fresh foods to below 15%, and a proposed development that nominally devotes 15% of floor area to fresh foods but spaces the food out such that the overall volume is far less than 15% (e.g. does a single banana on a shelf count towards this requirement?). Lastly, staff noted that other jurisdictions have opted to pass a spatial limitation rather than a ban, for example not permitting new stores within 1 mile of an existing store, and that could be an option for White Salmon. Staff collected these comments and stated they will pass them on to the Community Development Committee. No motion was made.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Erika Price, Vice-Chair

Rowan Fairfield, City Planner

File Attachments for Item:

2. Code Interpretation – Are duplexes allowed in R2 zone? Are two duplexes allowed on a single lot?



CITY OF WHITE SALMON

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: 9/8/2026
From: Rowan Fairfield, City Planner
To: Planning Commission
Subject: Remand for Code Interpretation

This memo is to give context to the Code Interpretation item on the 9/9 Planning Commission agenda.

Procedural History for WS-SPR-2026.002

The Planning Commission held a public hearing for a Site and Building Plan Review on May 13 and May 27, made a decision of Conditional Approval on May 27, and the Notice of Decision was issued on May 29. The applicant and other parties of record submitted a Request for Reconsideration under WSMC 19.10.260, but the Planning Commission declined to grant the request at its June 24 meeting. The applicant and another party of record appealed the decision on July 17. The Hearing Examiner (in lieu of the City Council) heard the appeal on August 14.

The Hearing Examiner returned a decision on September 2. He concluded that:

- 1. The City failed to demonstrate that the cost of paving the section of alley abutting the site is roughly proportional to the impact of the proposed development and therefore, the application must be approved without Condition 4; and*
- 2. Duplexes are a use that is not expressly prohibited or allowed in any zoning district in the City. Therefore, WSMC 17.12.030 requires that the Planning Commission interpret the Code to determine whether duplex dwellings are allowed in the R2 zone and whether two duplex structures are allowed on a single lot. Therefore, the application should be remanded to the Planning Commission to make these interpretations pursuant to WSMC 17.12.030.*

The Commission discussed the city's zoning regulations and the configuration of the proposed residential use during the hearing, but did not make a formal interpretation under WSMC 17.12.030. Staff has prepared draft findings and conclusions for this determination, based on previous Commission discussion, which the Commission may adopt or modify at its discretion.

This code interpretation is to address two narrow questions. The interpretation will affect other applications going forward. It may affect the remanded application WS-SPR-2026.002 and specifically Condition of Approval #12:



CITY OF WHITE SALMON

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

12. *The applicant shall revise the building plans so that the four dwellings are structurally attached by at least one wall from floor to ceiling, and form a single building, sharing a foundation and roof. The revised building plans can be submitted for a building permit and approved by staff with a typical Type I-A process.*

If necessary, staff will prepare a revision for the record.

Relevant Sections of Municipal Code

Chapter 17.08 - DEFINITIONS

17.08.220 - Duplex.

"Duplex" means a two-family structure with a common roof.

17.08.230 - Dwelling.

"Dwelling" means a building or portion thereof providing complete housekeeping facilities for one family.

17.08.250 - Dwelling unit.

"Dwelling unit" means one or more rooms in a building designed for occupancy by one family for living and sleeping purposes and having not more than one kitchen. For the purposes of hosted homeshares and vacation home rentals a dwelling unit is defined in WSMC 5.02.010.C.

17.08.430 - Multiple-family residence; multiplex.

"Multiple-family residence" or "multiplex" (or "multifamily") means a building arranged to be occupied by more than two families, occupying one lot.

17.08.495 - Primary dwelling structure.

"Primary dwelling structure" means any dwelling unit that is not an accessory dwelling unit.

17.08.515 - Rowhouse.

"Rowhouse" means one of two or more houses, each of which is on a separate lot, connected to the other(s) by common sidewalls along property lines, and forming a continuous group. Equivalent to a "townhouse" under the International Building Code.

17.08.525 - Single-family detached.

"Single-family detached" means a home that is detached from other homes, and is typically one primary residence on one lot.



CITY OF WHITE SALMON

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

17.08.526 - *Single-family attached.*

"Single-family attached" means a home that is attached to other homes, each on their own lots and connected to the other(s) by common sidewalls along property lines (also known as a rowhouse).

17.08.590 - *Townhouse.*

"Townhouse" means a single-family dwelling unit constructed as one of two or more attached units separated by property lines at common walls with open space on at least two sides.

Chapter 17.12 - PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

17.12.030 - *Interpretations—Planning commission authority.*

The planning commission may permit, by interpretation, in a zoning district any use not described in this title, not a prohibited use, or not expressly allowed in a less-restrictive district, and deem it to be in general keeping with the uses authorized in such district. A record shall be kept of such interpretations to facilitate equitable future administration and to permit periodic amendments to this title.

Chapter 17.28 - R2 MULTIPLEX RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

17.28.010 *Principal uses permitted outright.*

Principal uses permitted outright in the R2 district include:

- A. *Principal uses permitted outright in residential district R1, plus up to four rowhouse or multiplex units, provided that the end or side units are set back five feet from the adjacent property lines, and meet other development standards of this zone.*

[...]

17.28.040 *Density provisions.*

Density provisions for the R2 district are as follows:

- A. *Maximum number of primary dwelling structures per lot: Four;*
- B. *Minimum area of lot: Three thousand square feet for each single-family structure or up to four rowhouse or multiplex units on the same lot; and eight hundred square feet for rowhouse units on separate lots;*

[...]



CITY OF WHITE SALMON PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Sample Motions

1. I move that the Planning Commission interprets the code to allow not more than one duplex as a principal permitted use in the R2 Multiplex Residential District, based on the findings above.
2. I move that the Planning Commission interprets the code to allow not more than one duplex as a principal permitted use in the R2 Multiplex Residential District, based on the findings above, *with the addition/deletion of the following finding...*
3. I move that the Planning Commission interprets the code to allow duplexes as a principal permitted use in the R2 Multiplex Residential District, when the total number of dwellings does not exceed the maximum number for primary dwellings, based on the findings above, *with the addition/deletion of the following finding...*

Staff Recommendation

As reflected in the draft findings and conclusions, the staff recommendation is for sample motion #1, allowing not more than one duplex as a permitted principal use in the R2 zone.

Respectfully submitted on September 8, 2026,

Rowan Fairfield, City Planner



CITY OF WHITE SALMON

100 N. Main Street, White Salmon, WA 98672

(509) 493-1133

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS FOR A CODE INTERPRETATION REGARDING DUPLEXES IN THE R2 ZONE

Date: September 8, 2026

Site Address: 130 SE WYERS ST
Applicant/Owner: Juan Chavez

Parcel Number: 03111972021300
Legal Description: LOT 10 BLK 2 ORIGINAL TO WS SWSW 19-3-11
Planning File: WS-SPR-2026.002

This matter came to the Planning Commission as a remand from the Hearing Examiner, after an appeal of the Commission's decision on the original application. Specifically, the remand is to the Planning Commission to make interpretations on the questions of:

1. whether duplex dwellings are allowed in the R2 zone, and,
2. whether two duplex structures are allowed on a single lot.

A public meeting was conducted on September 9, 2026. The Planning Commission finds as follows:

FINDINGS

1. The White Salmon Planning Commission may permit, by interpretation, in a zoning district any use not described in the Zoning Ordinance, not a prohibited use, or not expressly allowed in a less-restrictive district, and deem it to be in general keeping with the uses authorized in such district. A record shall be kept of such interpretations to facilitate equitable future administration and to permit periodic amendments to this title. (WSMC 17.12.030)
2. The White Salmon Municipal Code ("WSMC") 17.28.010 lists the principal uses permitted outright in the R2 Multiplex Residential District, including "up to four rowhouse or multiplex units".
3. Duplexes are defined in Chapter 17.08, but are neither prohibited nor expressly allowed in any zoning district in the city, including the R2 zone.
4. Townhouses and rowhouses are both defined as being each on a separate lot but attached by common walls. The density provisions of the R2 zone in WSMC 17.28.040 conflict with the definitions of rowhouse and townhouse, because different standards are given for minimum lot areas and dimensions when the proposed use is "units on the same lot" compared to "units on separate lots".

5. Two rowhouses on the same lot would be functionally identical to a duplex, that is, two dwellings are attached by a common wall on a single parcel.
6. The R2 zone is sometimes called "Two-family residential district", for example in WSMC 17.16.010 and on the official zoning map.
7. "Rowhouse" means one of two or more houses, each of which is on a separate lot, connected to the other(s) by common sidewalls along property lines, and forming a continuous group (WSMC 17.08.515). "Multiple-family residence" or "multiplex" (or "multifamily") means a building arranged to be occupied by more than two families, occupying one lot (WSMC 17.08.430). These definitions indicate that the principal dwellings form a continuous group or are arranged in a (single) building.
8. The Housing element of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan includes 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."

CONCLUSIONS

1. Duplex is a defined use not expressly allowed or prohibited in the White Salmon Zoning Ordinance. A duplex is a residential use that is similar to and in general keeping with the principal uses authorized in the R2 zone.
2. More than one duplex is not similar to and not in general keeping with the principal uses authorized in the R2 zone. Said principal uses may include multiple dwellings only when they are connected to form a continuous group or are in a multiplex building.
3. This interpretation would be consistent with the Housing element of the city's Comprehensive Plan.

DECISION

_____ moved and _____ seconded, the Planning Commission interprets the code to allow not more than one duplex as a principal permitted use in the R2 Multiplex Residential District.

The following is a record of the vote:

Name	Yes	No	Absent	Abstain
Carl Trabant				
Erika Price				
Brendan Brown				
Nate Loker				
Adam Elliott				

Carl Trabant, Chair

Date

DRAFT