



## White Salmon Planning Commission Meeting

### A G E N D A

June 11, 2025 – 5:30 PM

119 NE Church Ave and Zoom Teleconference

Meeting ID: [880 6231 0920](#)

Call in Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 US (Tacoma)

#### Call to Order/Roll Call

#### Approval of Minutes

- [1.](#) Meeting Minutes - December 11, 2024
- [2.](#) Meeting Minutes - March 12, 2025
- [3.](#) Workshop Minutes - April 9, 2025
- [4.](#) Meeting Minutes - April 9, 2025

#### Discussion Items

5. Welcome Nate Loker
  
- [6.](#) Proposed Ordinance for Unit Lot Subdivision
  - a. Possible exclusion of the Single-Family Large Lot (R-L) zone
  - b. Revision of 16.66.020 "Purpose"
  - c. Other clarifications
  
- [7.](#) Annual Work Plan

#### Adjournment



**File Attachments for Item:**

1. Meeting Minutes - December 11, 2024



**DRAFT**

**CITY OF WHITE SALMON**  
**Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, December 11, 2024**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

**Commission Members:**

Greg Hohensee, Chair (Zoom)  
Erika Price (5:32 p.m.)  
Michael Morneault  
Brendan Brown (Zoom)  
Carl Trabant

**Staff:**

Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator  
Troy Rayburn, City Administrator  
Andrew Dirks, Public Works Director  
Kelly Hickok, Assistant Legal Counsel

**Consultants:**

Mike Meskimen, P.E.  
Michael Mehaffy, Housing Consultant  
Alex Capron, Senior Planner  
Hilary Hahn, Environmental Planner  
Deb Powers, Senior Arborist

**CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL**

Chairman Greg Hohensee called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present. Nine members of the community attended the meeting, either in person or via teleconference.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2024**

**Moved by Carl Trabant. Seconded by Michael Morneault.**

**Motion to approve meeting minutes of November 13, 2024, as is.**

**MOTION CARRIES 5-0.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye, Hohensee – Aye.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**2. Cherry Hill Estates Subdivision (Continued)**

Chair Greg Hohensee continued its closed record hearing on the Cherry Hill Estates subdivision at 5:32 PM.

**Staff Presentation**

Senior Planner Alex Capron, Facet Inc, presented updated information regarding Condition of Approval #2, which was revised following discussions between city staff, planning and engineering consultants, and the applicant. In lieu of full half-street frontage improvements, the applicant would construct a four-foot-wide protected pedestrian path along the north side of NW Spring Street, from the subdivision site toward Main Street. This revision aims to support safe routes to school, as outlined in the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP). The revised condition is contingent upon confirmation of adequate right-of-way by the applicant's surveyor.

Engineer Mike Meskimen, Greg and Osborne Inc, shared findings from property records and GIS data indicating that 40 to 45 feet of right-of-way exists in the affected area—sufficient for the proposed improvements. Additional documentation from 1986 supported this conclusion.

The discussion remained focused on verifying right-of-way adequacy and ensuring the proposed pathway could be constructed without requiring the City to pursue further acquisition.

#### Applicant Presentation

Zach Gustin, applicant representative of Curtis Homes LLC, expressed appreciation to the Planning Commission for continuing to consider the Cherry Hill Estates Subdivision proposal. He confirmed that the applicant accepts the revised condition of approval requiring construction of a four-foot-wide pedestrian path prior to breaking ground. Gustin stated there is no objection to the condition, as sufficient right-of-way exists to accommodate the full length of the proposed path. He noted that the clarification achieved with staff and city consultants prior to the meeting represents a positive resolution and a reasonable compromise.

#### Discussion

Chair Greg Hohensee reminded commissioners that their role is not to redesign development applications, but rather to evaluate the information presented, apply legal conditions as appropriate, and ultimately issue a vote. He acknowledged that the applicant, city staff, and city consultants had worked collaboratively to address the primary concern raised in earlier meetings—safe pedestrian access along NW Spring Street.

Commissioner Carl Trabant expressed further concerns about the width and condition of Spring Street, pointing out that the paved roadway narrows to roughly 18 feet in certain sections. He also referenced a previous letter from Public Works requesting an evaluation of construction vehicle traffic impacts, which he felt had not yet been fully addressed.

In response, Public Works Director Andrew Dirks explained that although the City had applied for funding to reconstruct Spring Street, the application was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he did not believe the current roadway condition posed a risk significant enough to delay the project and emphasized that pedestrian safety was the more pressing issue. Senior Planner Alex Capron noted that upcoming water main replacement and franchise utility work would result in added pavement improvements, particularly along the south side of the street.

Commissioner Trabant requested a clarification in the language of the condition of approval, changing “north end” to “north side” of Spring Street, which staff agreed to revise. He also proposed that the City explore the possibility of routing construction access over a gravel base via the utility corridor from Main Street, like an approach used in Hood River, OR, to reduce potential wear on NW Spring Street during development.

Chair Greg Hohensee acknowledged Commissioner Carl Trabant’s earlier comments as more of a potential future condition than a direct question, and tabled them to keep the discussion focused.

Commissioner Morneault expressed concerns about the structural integrity of Spring Street under construction traffic, referencing earlier concerns about whether the roadway could support the anticipated load during site development.

Public Works Director Andrew Dirks responded that, based on observations from ongoing construction along Spring Street, there was no indication the roadway would suffer significant damage from legal-weight vehicles. He clarified that the construction activity would likely be staggered, and equipment would comply with transportation standards. Therefore, he did not believe the current condition of Spring Street warranted any delay to the project.

Commissioner Morneault followed up with questions about the pavement materials to be used for the proposed pedestrian path, to which Senior Planner Alex Capron confirmed it would be paved with asphalt.

Morneault then asked about the potential impact of future utility work and whether it would be coordinated with Spring Street reconstruction. Capron and Dirks explained that the City had applied for, but did not receive, Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) funding during the most recent grant cycle. The earliest the City could apply again would be in 2025, with potential construction starting in 2026 if successful.

Concerned about the potential for deterioration during construction, Commissioner Morneault asked whether the City would monitor road conditions throughout the project. Dirks confirmed they would keep an eye on it and, if needed, would coordinate with the developer to address any damage. The applicant representative, Zach Gustin, added that his company fully intends to maintain the condition of Spring Street. He emphasized that a damaged road would be detrimental to the marketability of the lots and clarified that they have no intention of leaving the road in disrepair.

Applicant representative Gustin also noted that both the City and NW Natural would be conducting utility upgrades on Spring Street prior to site development—including water main replacement on the south side and gas line relocation on the north side. He stated that the resulting repairs would likely improve the road condition overall. Dirks agreed, noting that the approach area connecting the development to Spring Street would be entirely repaved, and any utility trench work would be backfilled to current City construction standards—improving subgrade conditions compared to what currently exists. In conclusion, both parties affirmed their commitment to maintaining and improving Spring Street as part of the broader infrastructure coordination.

Chair Greg Hohensee invited Commissioner Erika Price to ask any questions for staff or the applicant. Commissioner Price indicated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Brendan Brown raised two questions for clarification. First, he pointed out that the term "short plat" was used multiple times throughout the staff report and conditions of approval, even though the Cherry Hill Estates proposal is a full subdivision and not a short plat. He expressed concern that this terminology was misleading and requested that it be corrected. In response, Senior Planner Alex Capron acknowledged the oversight and confirmed that "short plat" appears erroneously in at least one location—specifically Condition of Approval #18. He noted that the mistake was likely a scripting or copy-paste error that would be corrected in the final version of the document.

Commissioner Brown's second question concerned Condition #6, which addresses access for emergency services but does not reference the distinction between developments with 30 or fewer lots versus more than 30—a distinction that triggers the requirement for a secondary

access point. He noted that while this requirement is mentioned elsewhere in the packet, it seemed appropriate to include it directly within Condition #6 for clarity.

Chair Greg Hohensee explained that the 30-lot threshold is a requirement under the International Fire Code, which is referenced by the municipal code, and thus does not necessarily need to be repeated in each condition. Senior Planner Alex Capron confirmed this interpretation and added that the code requirements were identified during the City's technical review. Applicant representative Zach Gustin pointed out that the limitation is already addressed in Condition #14, which states that no more than 30 building permits may be issued until a secondary access point—through the adjacent Four Oaks development—is approved by Public Works. Chair Hohensee directed everyone to Page 22 of the meeting packet, where this condition is laid out.

Senior Planner Capron added that Condition #6 focuses more broadly on public health and safety related to ingress and egress and is tied to final plat approval, while the 30-lot restriction is enforced through the permitting process.

Chair Hohensee thanked Commissioner Brown for identifying the terminology error and then transitioned the conversation, inviting Commissioner Carl Trabant to revisit a previously suggested condition for further discussion.

Commissioner Carl Trabant revisited his earlier suggestion that construction traffic for the Cherry Hill Estates development be routed from Main Street through the adjacent Four Oaks development. His proposal involved requiring a gravel base to be laid over the utility easement already planned to run through Four Oaks, which would allow construction vehicles to bypass the narrower and more constrained NW Spring Street. Trabant referenced a similar approach taken in Hood River, OR, where a developer was required to create such an access route across a neighboring property.

Chair Greg Hohensee turned to City Attorney Kelly Hickok to determine whether such a condition could be legally imposed. Hickok clarified that while the idea was understandable, the City cannot impose conditions on one development that would require work or access through another, separately approved project. Since the Four Oaks property is a separate development, the City cannot legally require Cherry Hill Estates to secure or utilize access through it for construction purposes.

Commissioner Trabant acknowledged that the law might differ from Oregon's and requested that Hickok consult with the Hood River City Attorney to understand how they implemented a similar requirement. However, both Senior Planner Capron and City Attorney Hickok reiterated that the current plan is to use Spring Street for construction access unless Four Oaks happens to proceed first. Commissioner Trabant maintained that the alternate route through Four Oaks Development would be safer and more efficient for construction vehicles, especially given the narrow width and difficult turns on Spring Street.

Chair Hohensee pressed for legal clarity, asking City Attorney Hickok directly whether the Planning Commission could condition Cherry Hill Estates to use another developer's property for construction access. City Attorney Hickok explicitly stated that it would not be legally permissible to require access through another person's property without a separate agreement or easement.

Following this, Consultant Planner Capron noted that Ezra Hammer, the applicant's legal representative from Jordan Ramis, had raised his hand. Hammer confirmed that while there will be a utility easement through the adjacent Four Oaks property, that easement is not designed for vehicular use. He explained that utility easements and vehicular access easements are distinct, and a new legal easement would need to be recorded to permit construction traffic—something that cannot be required as part of this subdivision's approval. Hammer supported the city attorney's position and confirmed that the applicant could not be compelled to use or expand an easement across another property without a separate legal arrangement.

Chair Greg Hohensee moved the discussion forward by asking each commissioner for a quick response regarding Commissioner Carl Trabant's suggestion to condition construction access through the adjacent Four Oaks development. Chair Hohensee emphasized that, per the city attorney's guidance, the City cannot legally require access across a separate property and noted that commissioners have had ample time since September to present potential conditions. He asked for brief input from the remaining commissioners on whether this was an issue they still wanted to pursue.

Commissioner Michael Morneault responded by acknowledging Commissioner Trabant's concerns and agreed that any construction road or utility work must comply with city code. He sought clarification on whether the backfill used for utility installation—if later used as a road—would meet City standards. Chair Hohensee confirmed that utility backfill would need to comply with requirements, but any discussion about road construction on a separate property was moot given the legal limitations already stated.

Morneault clarified that he was referring specifically to the backfill used under areas that could eventually support a city roadway. Public Works Director Andrew Dirks confirmed that utilities in that area would not be installed until road construction was also underway, and that all installations—whether utility or roadway—would need to meet City construction standards. Dirks also confirmed that although the developer installs the utilities and roads, those assets would eventually be deeded to the City, requiring full compliance with city standards at the time of installation.

Chair Greg Hohensee invited final comments from the commissioners before moving toward a vote.

Commissioner Erika Price reaffirmed that if a condition—such as the proposed alternative construction access—is not legally enforceable, the Commission cannot include it.

Commissioner Brendan Brown reiterated concerns previously shared at an earlier meeting, stating that the proposed hammerhead turnaround did not seem adequate. He also expressed discomfort relying solely on international fire code standards in a high-risk fire area like White Salmon, emphasizing the importance of a secondary or at least temporary emergency access route for safety.

Chair Hohensee acknowledged these concerns but reminded the Commission that the applicant had submitted a complete application and deserved an up-or-down vote. He noted that staff had proposed a key revision—swapping the requirement for full half-street improvements with a new condition requiring a four-foot-wide paved pedestrian path from the development to Main Street. He added that many of the issues raised throughout the process stemmed from historical

inconsistencies in city infrastructure and annexation policies, not from the actions of the applicant.

Chair Hohensee emphasized that the applicant had worked collaboratively with staff to address the Planning Commission’s primary concern—pedestrian access—and that lingering concerns over long-term road conditions were ultimately the City’s responsibility.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok requested that the amendment be specifically stated for the record, including the correction of the term “short plat” and the revised pedestrian path condition. Chair Hohensee confirmed the language and clarified that the motion included those edits and accepted findings and conclusions consistent with applicable code provisions.

#### Motion

**Moved by Erika Price. Seconded by Greg Hohensee.**

Moved to recommend that the City Council approve the preliminary plat for subdivision file WS-2024-001, subject to the conditions outlined in the staff report, with the correction of the term “short plat” and the revised pedestrian path condition.

#### Discussion

During the motion discussion, Chair Greg Hohensee invited final reflections from each commissioner on the motion as presented and amended, and asked whether any additional legally sound conditions could be added to the Cherry Hill Estates Subdivision application to support its advancement.

Commissioner Carl Trabant and Commissioner Michael Morneault had no further comments.

Commissioner Erika Price reiterated that establishing a safe walking route to Main Street had been one of the two key concerns throughout the review process, along with confidence in Spring Street’s condition under construction use.

Chair Hohensee agreed, emphasizing that routing construction traffic through a controlled intersection on Main Street was safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers than routing it through an uncontrolled driveway. He added that the majority of schoolchildren already use alternative paths rather than Spring Street, and reemphasized that much of the issue stems from the City’s own annexation and infrastructure shortcomings—not the applicant’s actions.

Commissioner Brendan Brown had no further comments.

#### **MOTION FAILED. 2-3**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Nay, Brown – Nay, Trabant – Nay, Hohensee – Aye.**

#### Discussion after Failed Motion

Chair Greg Hohensee reopened discussion by addressing commissioners who had voted against the motion. He asked whether there was anything in the current version of the application that would allow them to feel comfortable supporting it. Chair Hohensee further inquired if there were any additional conditions—within legal bounds—that could be added to the application to facilitate approval.

Commissioner Carl Trabant stated that the responsibility to improve Spring Street falls on the City or, alternatively, that the Four Oaks development should proceed first to provide safer access. He did not feel comfortable approving the project as is.

Chair Hohensee asked whether upcoming utility work and repaving on both sides of Spring Street—by the City and NW Natural—would address his concerns. Commissioner Trabant replied that without seeing full utility and roadway plans, he assumed the repairs would only improve small segments of the street rather than the full stretch up to the development. Public Works Director Andrew Dirks and applicant representative Zach Gustin responded that both the water main and gas main work were expected to span the full length of Spring Street between Main Street and the development site. Engineer Consultant Mike Meskimen confirmed this based on available plans and GIS data, although he noted that recorded plat maps and surveys would provide the final verification.

Despite clarification, Commissioner Trabant expressed concern that these documents had not been included in the official Planning Commission packet for prior review and could not be properly evaluated during the meeting.

Commissioner Michael Morneault echoed these concerns, stating that having detailed, paper-based documentation of the proposed utility lines, easements, and road work might have influenced his vote. He indicated that a verbal condition was not sufficient for his support and emphasized the need to see the scope of physical improvements.

Commissioner Brendan Brown reiterated his opposition to the project, specifically due to the lack of secondary ingress and egress. He noted that while the hammerhead turnaround meets the minimum standard under the International Fire Code, those codes are not tailored for high fire-risk areas like White Salmon. Commissioner Brown stressed the need for either a second permanent access or a guaranteed emergency route, especially for a densely populated subdivision.

Chair Hohensee clarified that Commissioner Brown's primary concern was fire access, while Commissioners Trabant and Morneault were focused on Spring Street's capacity and condition.

Chair Hohensee asked if any additional conditions could be developed within the next few minutes that would resolve the remaining concerns. Commissioners Morneault and Trabant both replied that their concerns could not be addressed adequately in that time frame. As a result, the motion to recommend approval of the application failed.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok confirmed that although the Planning Commission had not approved the application, it would still move forward to the City Council for consideration—with a negative recommendation from the Planning Commission due to the failed motion.

Applicant attorney Ezra Hammer asked whether the Planning Commission intended to provide any specific negative findings.

Chair Hohensee summarized that the failed vote was primarily due to unresolved concerns about Spring Street's readiness for construction traffic and the lack of documentation confirming full-length improvements. He added that Commissioner Brown's separate concern about fire safety and lack of a second access point also contributed to the decision.

Chair Hohensee formally closed the public hearing, concluding that the application would move forward without a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Chairman Hohensee closed the public hearing at 6:41 p.m.

3. **Ordinance Amending Commercial Zoning Code**

Chair Greg Hohensee opened a public hearing to review proposed amendments to Title 17, Section 17.48.020, which outlines principal commercial uses permitted outright at 6:41 p.m.

Presentation

Housing consultant Michael Mehaffy presented the proposed changes, clarifying that the ordinance was intended to amend the commercial zoning code—not the form-based code, as incorrectly noted in the agenda. The amendment would allow schools and daycare facilities serving 50 or fewer students or children to operate as permitted uses in commercial zones, rather than requiring conditional use permits.

Housing consultant Mehaffy explained that the proposal supports broader efforts to encourage mixed-use development and aligns with state law mandating that cities accommodate childcare in residential and commercial areas. He noted that impacts from larger facilities, such as traffic, would still be addressed through a conditional use permit process for those serving more than 50 children.

The example of the vacant DSHS building at 221 N Main was cited as a potential location where a small school could be located under this proposed change. Additional edits based on feedback from the City Council and legal counsel included the cap and corresponding conditional use threshold, currently proposed at 50 students or fewer.

Public Testimony

Chair Greg Hohensee opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 6:46 p.m.

No public testimony was given.

Chair Greg Hohensee closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 6:47 p.m.

Discussion

The Planning Commission discussed key elements of the draft language.

Commissioner Carl Trabant had no questions.

Commissioner Michael Morneault inquired whether the proposed 50-student cap for permitted use was defined elsewhere in the city code. Mehaffy confirmed it was not, but that the number had been selected in consultation with the city attorney as a reasonable threshold to limit traffic and operational impacts, aligning the use with typical commercial activity levels.

Chair Greg Hohensee expressed concern that counting only students or children could underestimate the total number of people present at a facility, particularly for daycares requiring additional staff based on child age groups. He suggested revising the language to reference total “attendees,” including staff, volunteers, and others on site.

Commissioner Erika Price proposed reducing the student cap to 40 to better align with practical staff-to-child ratios and simplify enforcement. Chair Hohensee supported the revised number after doing a quick calculation using Washington State childcare staffing ratios.

The Commission agreed on the 40-student threshold and briefly discussed potential comparisons to local examples such as Little Oak Children's.

Commissioner Brendan Brown confirmed he had no questions or concerns about the revision.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok then advised that, for consistency, Section 17.48.030 (which addresses conditional uses) should also be updated to include schools and daycare facilities serving more than 40 students or children as conditional uses. Housing Consultant Mehaffy confirmed that, if directed, he would update the draft accordingly for submission to the City Council.

#### Action

**Moved by Brenden Brown. Seconded by Erika Price.**

Motion to recommend amending Title 17.48.020 to outright allow schools and daycare facilities with up to 40 children as permitted uses in commercial zones and simultaneously update Chapter 17.48.030 to require a conditional use permit for such facilities with over 40 children.

#### **MOTION CARRIED. 5-0**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye, Hohensee – Aye.**

Chairman Hohensee closed the public hearing at 6:57 p.m.

#### 4. **Ordinance Amending Tree Protection Code (Continued)**

Chair Greg Hohensee opened the continuation of the public hearing to review proposed amendments to Title 18, specifically Chapter 18.04 – Tree Protection, and Chapter 13.01.050 – Stormwater Runoff Control Standards, at 6:57 p.m.

#### Presentation

Deb Powers, Senior Arborist with Facet Inc, provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the City's Tree Protection Ordinance and related updates to stormwater standards. She began by noting that while the current project began in April 2024, its roots trace back to White Salmon's 2019 Community Forest Management Plan, which called for the adoption of stronger tree protections. The revisions were also prompted by recent updates to the City's Critical Areas Ordinance and the broader goals of balancing tree preservation with development, affordable housing, and wildfire safety.

Senior Arborist Powers presented a high-level summary of updates made since the September 25 Planning Commission hearing, organized into three categories: development-related provisions, non-development provisions, and general code-wide changes. Key revisions included clarification of when arborist reports are required, simplification of the tree removal allowances by property size through a table format, and removal of a previously proposed incentive for tree retention through reduced parking requirements for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). However, the incentive for stormwater credit remains in place.

One notable change was the removal of language allowing the removal of nominated heritage trees. Senior Arborist Powers explained that existing mechanisms for delisting heritage trees or removing hazardous or nuisance trees already provide sufficient flexibility. She also emphasized that the code does not prohibit tree removal—it allows for removal of trees under 18 inches in diameter and includes allowances based on lot size and tree health. In addition, the revised draft includes diagrams and clearer language to support easier implementation and understanding.

For general changes, Senior Arborist Powers highlighted an increase in the minimum trunk diameter (DBH) for protected trees, reflecting wildfire mitigation guidance by allowing smaller scrub trees to be removed more easily. She clarified that a fire hazard overlay was not added, since the state-mandated 2025 DNR Wildland-Urban Interface mapping project will address that. Other updates include clarifying how trunk diameters are measured and reinforcing that staff can require arborist reports when specialized knowledge is needed to assess a site plan.

Finally, Senior Arborist Powers addressed prior concerns about pruning standards. She clarified that pruning references in the code are limited to enforcement contexts—such as identifying unauthorized removals or topping—and are not intended to regulate general pruning practices on private property.

#### Public Testimony

Chair Greg Hohensee opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 7:10 p.m.

#### **Shelley Baxer, Inside City Limits**

Shelley Baxer expressed concerns based on her personal experience with the City's tree ordinance. She shared that it took over a year to complete a boundary line adjustment on her property—without requesting a building permit—due in part to complications related to heritage tree protections. She noted the contrast between the extended timeline for her minor request and the relative speed of subdivision approvals. Baxer described being unexpectedly asked to obtain an arborist report simply to identify tree locations, despite not planning to build. While she ultimately resolved the issue with her surveyor, she emphasized the need for clarity and consistency in the ordinance's application. She also expressed skepticism about enforcement, citing a conversation with a local arborist who claimed that trees are often removed without oversight. Baxer concluded by affirming her general support for tree preservation while encouraging improvements to the process and enforcement mechanisms.

Chair Greg Hohensee closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 7:14 p.m.

#### Discussion

Following public comment and the consultant's presentation, the Planning Commission discussed the proposed updates to the Tree Protection Ordinance and Stormwater Runoff Control Standards.

Commissioner Carl Trabant stated that the latest revisions addressed all of his concerns from the previous meeting and had no further comments.

Commissioner Michael Morneau asked for clarification regarding the use of state building code references in the draft ordinance—specifically as it relates to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and fire safety standards. Senior Arborist Deb Powers responded that the code intentionally

avoids directly referencing the RCWs and state building code due to their complexity and limited applicability to tree protection. Instead, the draft incorporates locally approved language from the fire authority, with the understanding that more detailed state-mandated WUI mapping and requirements will be implemented in 2025.

Commissioner Erika Price expressed appreciation for the work put into the revisions and noted she had no further questions.

Commissioner Brendan Brown also indicated he had no additional comments.

Chair Greg Hohensee acknowledged the extensive effort that went into revising the ordinance, especially the effort to make it more user-friendly and accessible for the average homeowner. He emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility and affordability while still achieving meaningful tree protection.

#### Action

**Moved by Carl Trabant. Seconded by Erika Price.**

Move to recommend amending Title 18 by revising Chapter 18.40, to update the Tree Protection Ordinance and Chapter 13.01.050 Stormwater Runoff Control Standards as is for eventual approval by the City Council.

#### Discussion

Chair Greg Hohensee offered final remarks before the vote on the proposed ordinance revisions. He acknowledged ongoing concerns about the complexity of the tree code and referenced public feedback, including comments from Shelley Baxer, noting that the current ordinance can be difficult for residents to navigate when undertaking relatively simple property adjustments. While expressing that the updated draft remains complex, he stated it is an improvement over the existing code and voiced hope that it will offer greater clarity and flexibility to residents. Chair Hohensee also encouraged the City to remain responsive and amend the ordinance in the future if it continues to present challenges.

#### **MOTION CARRIED. 4-0-1**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye, Hohensee – Abstained.**

Chairman Hohensee closed the public hearing at 7:24 p.m.

#### **5. Ordinance Amending Land Use Fees**

Chair Greg Hohensee opened a public hearing to review proposed amendments to Title 3, Chapter 3.36 of the White Salmon Municipal Code regarding updates to the land use fee schedule at 7:24 p.m.

#### Presentation

Facet Consulting Planner Hilary Hahn presented the findings of a comprehensive land use fee study conducted for the City of White Salmon. The study aimed to assess whether the City's land use fees are appropriately aligned with the economic and operational demands of processing permit applications.

Planner Hahn noted that the current fee schedule (W.S.M.C. 3.36.010) had not been updated since 2007. The study included both external comparison and internal cost analyses, using a range of neighboring jurisdictions—such as Hood River, Stevenson, The Dalles, and Klickitat County—as benchmarks. These comparisons accounted for regional development competition and rising costs across similar municipalities.

Planner Hahn explained that a key metric used in the study was “average percent difference,” which compared White Salmon’s fees to neighboring jurisdictions. Where neighboring jurisdictions charged significantly more (sometimes over 500%), Facet used a sliding scale approach to recommend moderate increases—capped to avoid cost shocks while still closing revenue gaps. In addition to comparative analysis, an internal cost review was conducted using historical permit data and staff time estimates, adjusted for inflation. The team applied an updated staff hourly rate of \$90 to better reflect current administrative costs.

Specific permit categories were examined in detail, including variances, subdivisions, and short plats. For example, a recent variance application required over 120 staff hours across four sub-requests, equating to an estimated \$2,770 in staff time while the City only collected \$750 in fees.

Similar gaps were observed in subdivision reviews, which require significant resources from planning, engineering, and fire departments. Planner Hahn and Capron proposed a new “department-level structure” that would more accurately reflect the scope and complexity of each application by bundling review costs from all relevant departments up front.

To encourage housing density, the study recommended fee incentives for multifamily and townhome developments, such as freezing or reducing short plat fees in those categories, while modestly increasing single-family short plat fees. Planner Capron also previewed future development types like “fee simple unit lot subdivisions,” which could support townhomes. Though not yet codified, fee provisions were proposed in anticipation of its future adoption.

Additional recommendations included adding a 5% technology fee to recover costs associated with the City's use of the permit software platform (SmartGov and Granicus), and the option for applicants to receive task order estimates for large or complex consultant-led reviews. The consultant team emphasized that many neighboring jurisdictions with contracted planning staff already include such provisions in their fee structures to improve cost transparency and cost recovery.

A visual chart displaying the average percent differences between White Salmon and its peer jurisdictions showed that, on average, other jurisdictions charge approximately 42% more for land use permits. Planner Hahn noted that the full proposed fee schedule and supporting data were included in the meeting packet for further review.

#### Public Testimony

Chair Greg Hohensee opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 7:56 p.m.

No public testimony was given.

Chair Greg Hohensee closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 7:57 p.m.

Discussion

Commissioner Carl Trabant opened discussion by noting that land use fees currently generate only about \$100,000 in revenue out of the City's approximately \$4 million annual budget. He emphasized the need to align fees more closely with actual costs, particularly given the City's reliance on consultants. Commissioner Trabant encouraged greater use of internal data, cautioning that fees from neighboring jurisdictions with outdated or low rates may be skewing the analysis. He also suggested that fee incentives should be carefully targeted, perhaps prioritizing individual property owners building single-family homes over large-scale developers. Commissioner Trabant recommended that the 5% technology fee be calculated based on the proposed new rates rather than outdated figures.

Commissioner Michael Morneault sought clarification on why the Planning Commission was handling the ordinance instead of the Finance Committee and acknowledged the Planning Commission's legislative role in approving code changes. He also raised concerns about calculation inconsistencies and the term "profit margin" being used in the fee study, suggesting a more accurate term like "net margin" since municipalities are not profit-driven entities.

Commissioner Erika Price raised a technical question about a zoning approval fee for grading permits being removed without replacement in the proposed fee table. The consultant clarified this was an error and should be corrected. Commissioner Price also requested improved formatting for public readability and supported incremental increases over sharp jumps, suggesting the City adopt annual fee reviews moving forward.

Commissioner Brendan Brown voiced strong concerns about the methodology, noting the study placed too much emphasis on fee comparisons with other jurisdictions instead of actual City costs. He cited specific discrepancies in the study, including mischaracterization and inflated consultant hours billed for minor applications. Commissioner Brown recommended greater oversight on consultant billing, such as a not-to-exceed clause in future contracts.

Chair Greg Hohensee supported the need for a fee update, remarking that the City has not revised the schedule since 2007. However, he opposed offering fee waivers or discounts for developers of townhouses or planned unit developments (PUDs), arguing that such incentives could result in minimal public benefit while placing a financial burden on the City. He proposed removing all references to fee waivers and incentives from the ordinance for now and reconsidering them later when more refined policies are in place. He did support targeted fee reductions for individual property owners or income-qualified residents.

The commissioners ultimately agreed to proceed with the proposed fee update, incorporating two key edits: (1) removing all proposed fee waivers and discounts, and (2) calculating the 5% technology fee based on the updated fee schedule rather than outdated rates.

While some commissioners expressed interest in refining the methodology by eliminating low outlier data, they agreed it was more important to implement immediate changes and revisit refinements during future annual reviews.

Action

**Moved by Carl Trabant. Seconded by Michael Morneault.**

Move to recommend amending Title 3 by revising Chapter 3.36, to update the Land Use Fees, as modified, for eventual approval by the City Council.

**MOTION CARRIED. 5-0**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye, Hohensee – Aye.**

Chairman Hohensee closed the public hearing at 8:34 p.m.

**6. Ordinance Amending WSMC 15.28 (FEMA Update)**

Chair Greg Hohensee introduced the public hearing to review updates to Title 15 of the White Salmon Municipal Code, specifically Chapter 15.28 at 8:36 p.m.

Chair Hohensee explained that the proposed changes include repealing the existing floodplain construction restrictions and replacing them with a newly drafted flood damage prevention ordinance. These updates are supported by the Washington State Department of Ecology to ensure compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Presentation

Senior Planner Alex Capron (Facet) provided a brief overview of the proposed updates to WSMC Chapter 15.28, noting that the changes were minimal and primarily administrative. The updates are required in advance of Klickitat County's revised FEMA floodplain and floodway maps, which go into effect on February 14, 2025.

The changes impact a four-mile section of Jewett Creek that intersects portions of White Salmon, but over 99% of parcels within city limits will not be affected. The revised ordinance includes updated references to the new maps and corrects minor scrivener errors in the existing code.

Senior Planner Capron emphasized that no substantive changes were made to the code's content, and the revisions had already received preliminary approval from both FEMA and the Washington State Department of Ecology. As required by code, the ordinance must undergo two public hearings—one at the Planning Commission and one before the City Council.

Public Testimony

Chair Greg Hohensee opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 8:39 p.m.

No public testimony was given.

Chair Greg Hohensee closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 8:40 p.m.

Discussion

The item proceeded without Planning Commission discussion.

Action

**Moved by Carl Trabant. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move to recommend repealing WSMC 15.28 Floodplain Construction Restrictions and adopting the new WSMC 15.28 Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance as is for eventual approval by city council.

**MOTION CARRIED. 5-0**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye, Hohensee – Aye.**

Chairman Hohensee closed the public hearing at 8:41 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

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Carl Trabant, Approving Chair

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Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator

**File Attachments for Item:**

2. Meeting Minutes - March 12, 2025



**DRAFT**

**CITY OF WHITE SALMON**  
**Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, March 12, 2025**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

**Commission Members:**

Carl Trabant, Chair  
Erika Price (5:35 p.m.)  
Michael Morneault  
Brendan Brown (Zoom)

**Staff:**

Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator  
Paul Koch, Interim City Administrator  
Kelly Hickok, Legal Counsel

**Consultants:**

Michael Mehaffy, Housing Consultant

**CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL**

City Attorney Kelly Hickok called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present. Three members of the community attended the meeting, either in person or via teleconference.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**1. Electing a Chairperson**

**Moved by Michael Morneault. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move to nominate Carl Trabant as Chairperson of the White Salmon Planning Commission for the term of one year.

**MOTION CARRIES 3-0-1.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Abstained.**

**2. Electing a Vice-Chairperson**

**Moved by Brendan Brown. Seconded by Michael Morneault.**

Move to nominate Erika Price as Vice-Chairperson of the White Salmon Planning Commission for the term of one year.

**MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

**3. Confirm Election Results**

**Moved by Michael Morneault. Seconded by Carl Trabant.**

Move to confirm the election of Carl Trabant as Chairperson and Erika Price as Vice-Chairperson of the White Salmon Planning Commission for the term of one year.

**MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**4. Unit Lot Subdivision**

Chair Carl Trabant opened a public hearing to review proposed Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 16.66 – Unit Lot Subdivision at 5:38 p.m.

Presentation

Housing Consulting Michael Mehaffy opened the discussion by acknowledging the long-standing effort behind the proposed unit lot subdivision ordinance, emphasizing that its adoption is required by state law and will support increased infill development and more affordable housing options. He clarified that this ordinance marks the first step in a multi-phase process, with future work needed to address key implementation issues such as utilities, lot placement, and unusual lot configurations in White Salmon. Housing Consulting Mehaffy presented examples from state Department of Commerce guidance, including diagrams of potential development types such as rowhouses and duplexes with shared access and utilities. He highlighted feedback from state officials, noting that the draft ordinance has passed initial legal review and is aligned with model language recently issued by the Department of Commerce.

Public input was also reviewed such as concerns around shared utilities, lot access, and implementation challenges. Housing Consulting Mehaffy reiterated that issues like CC&Rs, infrastructure upgrades, and site-specific layouts must be addressed case-by-case during the application process. He distinguished the unit lot subdivision process from condominium ownership and short plats, clarifying that the ordinance allows separate ownership of individual dwellings within a parent lot, while common areas would be jointly owned and governed. He emphasized that some of the concerns raised—such as utility easements, improvement requirements, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) classifications—fall outside the scope of the ordinance itself and are best handled during project review and permitting.

In conclusion, Housing Consulting Mehaffy acknowledged the many valid questions surrounding implementation and supported the recommendation to move the ordinance forward while concurrently addressing these operational issues. He encouraged the City to maintain momentum toward zoning reform to expand housing options, cautioning against delaying the ordinance due to unresolved but manageable implementation concerns.

Public Testimony

Chair Carl Trabant opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 5:56 p.m.

**Peter Wright, Inside City Limits**

Peter Wright emphasized that the unit lot subdivision ordinance is primarily an ownership tool—not a tool for regulating physical development. He raised concerns about provisions like treating ADUs as primary dwellings, which could conflict with parking requirements and undermine ADU flexibility. While not planning to use the ordinance himself, Wright stressed the need for it to be simpler than the condominium process, which he noted is now more accessible in places like Seattle. He urged the Commission to ensure strong city oversight and thoughtful implementation.

Chair Trabant noted that three written comment documents had been submitted to the Planning Commission and were entered into the official meeting record.

Chair Carl Trabant closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion

Chair Carl Trabant opened the public hearing discussion, asking members for comments.

Commissioner Erika Price had none.

Commissioner Michael Morneault inquired about the term “middle housing,” which was clarified by Housing Consultant Michael Mehaffy as a broad term referring to housing types like duplexes and townhomes. City Attorney Kelly Hickok and Mehaffy noted the term comes from state models and does not require definition but could be added if desired.

Further discussion covered fee simple ownership and shared utilities. Housing Consultant Mehaffy explained fee simple as full land ownership and distinguished it from condominiums and common areas. Concerns about shared utilities were discussed, including cost sharing, and infrastructure responsibility, which Housing Consultant Mehaffy noted are complex and better addressed outside the ordinance.

Commissioner Brendan Brown questioned the procedural timeline, and Chair Trabant emphasized public concern and the need for clarity.

Commissioner Morneault suggested referencing applicable state laws in the ordinance.

Chair Trabant recommended more discussion, possibly in a workshop, and warned against tabling the ordinance without clear next steps, citing Robert’s Rules.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok outlined the options for the Planning Commission: they could postpone the decision to a specific time, table it, or make a motion to move forward. She clarified that the purpose of the ordinance is to comply with a 2023 state law requiring cities to allow unit lot subdivisions in their short plats processes. The ordinance was drafted based on the Washington Department of Commerce’s model, and issues like shared utilities are outside the ordinance’s scope and should be addressed by Public Works.

Action

**Moved by Erika Price. Seconded by Michael Morneault.**

Move to recommend adding Title 16.66 by adopting Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance, as is, for eventual approval by the City Council.

Discussion

Paul Koch, Interim City Administrator, advised that any action should be based on the specific needs of White Salmon. He acknowledged the importance of complying with state law but cautioned against rushing decisions without full understanding. He suggested tabling the item if necessary and providing a list of questions or concerns for staff to address before the next meeting.

City Attorney Kelly Hickok noted that a motion was already on the table and should be voted on before further discussion.

**MOTION FAILED. 1-3**

**Price – Aye, Morneault – Nay, Brown – Nay, Trabant – Nay.**

**Moved by Carl Trabant. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move that the Planning Commission schedule a workshop with interested stakeholders, and bring the ordinance back for consideration at a future meeting following the workshop.

**MOTION CARRIED. 4-0**

**Price – Aye, Morneau – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

Chairman Trabant closed the public hearing at 8:34 p.m.

5. **Administration Update**

Interim City Administrator Paul Koch announced that the planner candidate will visit on Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a 2:30 p.m. meeting slot for Planning Commission members at City Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

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Carl Trabant, Chair

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Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator

**File Attachments for Item:**

3. Workshop Minutes - April 9, 2025



**DRAFT**

**CITY OF WHITE SALMON**  
**Planning Commission Workshop - Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

**Commission Members:**

Carl Trabant, Chair  
Erika Price  
Brendan Brown (Zoom)

**Staff:**

Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator  
Paul Koch, Interim City Administrator

**Consultants:**

Michael Mehaffy, Housing Consultant  
Mandy Hartel, Skamania County Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Carl Trabant called the workshop to order at 4:31 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present. Three members of the community attended the meeting, either in person or via teleconference.

**1. Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance (with public engagement)**

The White Salmon Planning Commission held a workshop to review and refine the proposed Unit Lot Subdivision (ULS) ordinance. Chair Carl Trabant opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and noting that the ordinance had first been presented to the Commission on March 12, following an initial delay from its original schedule last fall. The purpose of the workshop was to address stakeholder concerns and work toward finalizing the ordinance for potential adoption.

Housing Consultant Michael Mahaffy gave a presentation outlining the background and context of the ULS ordinance. He explained that it's required by state law for the next comprehensive plan update, tentatively set for 2027. The ordinance is also part of grant deliverables due June 1, 2025. Dr. Mahaffy emphasized that the ULS is intended as a tool for fee-simple infill development and an alternative to condominiums. He noted that the draft has been reviewed by the Department of Commerce, city attorney, and city surveyor.

A key point of discussion was the tension between quickly adopting a basic ULS ordinance versus taking more time to refine details. Housing Consultant Mahaffy and city staff advocated adopting the ordinance soon, with the option to refine it later if needed. However, community members expressed concerns about ensuring the ordinance achieves its intended purpose and clarifying how it will be interpreted and applied.

Community members raised several specific concerns about how the ULS would interact with existing zoning and subdivision regulations, particularly for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and duplexes. They emphasized the need for clarity on whether applying for a ULS application would trigger changes to development standards like parking requirements. It was argued that if the ULS process results in more restrictive standards than what's possible under current zone or through a condominium structure, it would fail to achieve its purpose of facilitating infill development.

*Planning Commission Workshop Minutes – April 9, 2025*

Mandy Hertel, the City's Consulting Planner from Skamania County, offered her perspective as someone who would be implementing the ordinance. She advocated adopting the ordinance to have something in place, then adjusting through implementation. Planner Hertel emphasized the importance of consistency in interpretation and application of the code.

The Commissioners discussed several key issues that need to be addressed in the ordinance. These included refining the purpose statement to clearly convey intent, clarifying how ULS impacts development standards, and resolving potential conflicts between subdivision and zoning regulations. The critical role of interpretation and application by planning staff was highlighted throughout the discussion.

Utility requirements emerged as a significant concern, particularly for infill projects. Community members noted that the building inspector has reportedly been prohibiting shared utilities, which they identified as a major cost factor for infill projects.

As the workshop neared its end, the Commission began to outline the next steps. These included merging the state template and stakeholder-proposed purpose statements, clarifying intent and interpretation guidelines in the ordinance, and considering codifying key principles (such as specifying that lot lines created through ULS don't trigger new restrictions).

The general consensus seemed to be to adopt a basic ordinance relatively soon, then refine it through implementation, while addressing utilities, parking, and other issues in future work.

The workshop concluded with a brief discussion about the imminent hiring of a full-time planner for White Salmon, which was seen as important for consistent interpretation and application of the new ordinance. The meeting adjourned with plans to continue the discussion in the formal Planning Commission meeting immediately following the workshop.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The workshop was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

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Carl Trabant, Chair

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Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator

**File Attachments for Item:**

4. Meeting Minutes - April 9, 2025



**DRAFT**

**CITY OF WHITE SALMON**  
**Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

**Commission Members:**

Carl Trabant, Chair  
Erika Price  
Brendan Brown (Zoom)

**Staff:**

Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator  
Paul Koch, Interim City Administrator  
Kelly Hickok, Legal Counsel

**Excused:**

Michael Morneault

**Consultants:**

Michael Mehaffy, Housing Consultant

**CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL**

Chair Carl Trabant called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present. Four members of the community attended the meeting, either in person or via teleconference.

**Moved by Erika Price. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move to excuse the absence of Commissioner Michael Morneault from the April 9 Planning Commission meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED. 3-0**

**Price – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Aye.**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**1. Unit Lot Subdivision (Continuation from March 12, 2025)**

Chair Carl Trabant opened to continue a public hearing to review proposed Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance, Chapter 16.66 – Unit Lot Subdivision at 5:30 p.m.

**Presentation**

Housing Consulting Michael Mehaffy provided a brief recap of the ordinance's background. He explained that the unit lot subdivision was required by state law and needed to be adopted prior to the next comprehensive plan update in 2027. However, due to a grant from the Commerce Department ending in June 2025, there was a push to move forward with the current draft ordinance. Housing Consulting Mahaffey noted that while stakeholder issues had been identified, these would be addressed in separate processes.

**Public Testimony**

Chair Carl Trabant opened the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 5:33 p.m.

**Doug Rainbolt, Inside City Limits**

Doug Rainbolt thanked participants in the previous workshop and expressed strong support for the Unit Lot Subdivision concept, noting its potential for increasing middle housing availability. He raised concerns that some of his earlier comments weren't incorporated into the final ordinance and warned that certain provisions could slow down the approval process. Rainbolt advocated for a quicker, more agile approach and suggested simulating property and ownership

scenarios to stress-test the ordinance. He recommended conducting this within a two-week timeframe to identify potential issues before full implementation.

**Peter Wright, Inside City Limits**

Peter Wright expressed agreement with Doug Rainbolt’s suggestion for stress-testing the ordinance. He emphasized the need for a thorough review to understand how the ordinance would work in practice, particularly in terms of outcomes and equitable housing goals. Wright stressed that the purpose of the ordinance should be clear and well-understood by those involved in its implementation. He recommended incorporating specific language from a public comment letter to ensure the intent of the ordinance is clearly expressed and understood by planners, preventing subjective interpretations.

Chair Carl Trabant closed the Public Testimony portion of the hearing at 5:39 p.m.

Discussion

The Planning Commission held a brief discussion. Commissioners Price and Brown both indicated they had no questions for staff or Dr. Mehaffy. With no additional comments, Chair Trabant stated that the next step was for a commissioner to make a motion.

Action

**Moved by Erika Price. Seconded by Brendan Brown.**

Move to recommend adding Title 16.66 by adopting Unit Lot Subdivision Ordinance, as is, for eventual approval by the City Council.

Discussion

Commissioner Brendan Brown noted that many issues discussed over the past year should be revisited once a full-time planner is hired. He found the suggestion that things may be more satisfactory in writing than in practice to be worth considering.

Commissioner Brown recommended reviewing the ordinance again after the hiring of a full-time planner to evaluate any potential changes. However, he stated that he had no issues with the ordinance in its current form for now.

**MOTION CARRIED. 2-0-1**

**Price – Aye, Brown – Aye, Trabant – Abstained.**

Chair Trabant closed the public hearing at 5:42 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

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Carl Trabant, Chair

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Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator

**File Attachments for Item:**

6. Proposed Ordinance for Unit Lot Subdivision

**CITY OF WHITE SALMON  
ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WHITE SALMON, WASHINGTON, AMENDING TITLE 16  
TO ADD CHAPTER 16.66; SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**WHEREAS**, the City of White Salmon (“City”) acknowledges the need to provide legal mechanisms to implement its Housing Action Plan, to provide more infill housing opportunities, and to accommodate more diverse and affordable housing; and

**WHEREAS**, the City recognizes the current barriers to infill development, including the current limitations of its subdivision procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, the City recognizes the State of Washington RCW 58.17.060(3) requires that “All cities, towns, and counties shall include in their short plat regulations procedures for unit lot subdivisions allowing division of a parent lot into separately owned unit lots;” and

**WHEREAS**, the unit lot subdivision process is well-established in a number of other Washington cities, offering effective models for implementation in White Salmon; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has conducted public outreach and gathered public comments in accordance with the City’s Public Participation Plan, sufficient to establish regulations in accordance with RCW 36.70A;

**NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITE SALMON DOES  
ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

That the following amendments be made to White Salmon Municipal Code Title 16:

**SECTION 1. Amendment to Title 16, adding Chapter 16.66, “Unit Lot  
Subdivisions.”**

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## **Chapter 16.66 UNIT LOT SUBDIVISIONS**

### **16.66.010 Definitions.**

The following definitions apply to this chapter:

- A. "Lot, parent" means a lot which is subdivided into unit lots through the unit lot subdivision process.
- B. "Lot, unit" means a lot created from a parent lot and approved through the unit lot subdivision process.
- C. "Unit lot subdivision" means the division of a parent lot into two or more unit lots within a development and approved through the unit lot subdivision process.

### **16.66.020 Purpose.**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a process which allows greater flexibility in the development of single-family detached and attached housing on lots which do not strictly conform to the development standards of Chapters 16.60 or 16.65. This process may be used as an alternative to a conventional subdivision or short subdivision.

### **16.66.030 Applicability.**

- A. Unit Lot Subdivisions are permitted in any zone that allows for the development of single-family detached dwellings.
- B. In the event of a conflict between this chapter and any other provisions of Titles 16 or 17, the requirements of this chapter shall control.

### **16.66.040 Development Standards.**

- A. A lot developed or to be developed with two or more attached or detached dwellings may be subdivided into individual unit lots as provided herein. Each unit lot shall contain one dwelling, and no dwellings shall be stacked on another dwelling or another use.
- B. Development as a whole on the parent lot, rather than individual unit lots, shall comply with applicable design and development standards.
- C. Portions of the parent lot not subdivided for individual unit lots shall be owned in common by the owners of the individual unit lots, or by a homeowners' association comprised of the owners of the individual unit lots.

- D. Access easements, joint use and maintenance agreements, and covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) identifying the rights and responsibilities of property owners and/or the homeowners' association shall be executed for use and maintenance of common garage, parking and vehicle access areas; underground utilities; common open space; shared interior walls; exterior building facades and roofs; and other similar features shall be recorded with the county auditor.
- E. Within the parent lot, required parking for a dwelling unit may be provided on a different unit lot than the lot with the dwelling unit, as long as the right to use the parking is formalized by an easement set forth on the face of the plat and recorded with the county auditor.
- F. Subsequent platting actions, additions, or modifications to the structure(s) may not create or increase any nonconformity of the parent lot.

#### **16.66.050 Application Requirements.**

- A. Unit lot subdivisions follow the application procedures for a short subdivision (4 or fewer lots) or subdivision (more than 4 lots), depending on the number of lots.
- B. All developments using the unit lot process are required to submit a site plan for review and approval as part of the land division application.

#### **16.66.060 Approval Criteria.**

Unit lot subdivisions shall be given preliminary approval, including preliminary approval subject to conditions, upon finding by the city that all the following have been satisfied:

- A. The proposed unit lot subdivision conforms to all applicable city, state and federal zoning, land use, environmental and health regulations and plans, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - 1. White Salmon comprehensive plan;
  - 2. White Salmon zoning code (Title 17) and land division code (Title 16), unless superseded by provisions in this chapter.
  - 3. Engineering design standards;
  - 4. Critical areas ordinance (Chapter 18.10 WSMC);
  - 5. City trees ordinance (Chapter 18.35 WSMC) and heritage trees ordinance (Chapter 18.40 WSMC)
- B. Utilities and other public services necessary to serve the needs of the proposed unit lot subdivision shall be made available, including open spaces, drainage ways, streets, alleys, and other public ways.
- C. The probable significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed unit lot subdivision, together with any practical means of mitigating adverse impacts, have been considered such that the proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse effect

upon the quality of the environment, in accordance with Title 18 WSMC and Chapter 43.21C RCW;

- D. Approving the proposed unit lot subdivision will serve the public use and interest and adequate provision has been made for public health, safety, and the general welfare.

#### **16.66.070 Review Process.**

- A. An application for a unit lot subdivision with four (4) or fewer units shall be processed according to the procedures for Type I-B land use decisions established in Chapter 19.10 WSMC, Land Development Administrative Procedures. An application for a unit lot subdivision with more than four (4) units shall be processed according to the procedures for a Type III land use decision.
- B. The city planner shall solicit comments from the public works director, fire chief or designee, local utility providers, police chief, building official, school district, adjacent jurisdictions if the proposal is within one mile of another city or jurisdiction, Washington State Department of Transportation if the proposal is adjacent to a state highway, and any other state, local or federal officials as may be necessary.
- C. Based on comments from city departments and applicable agencies and other information, the city shall review the application subject to the criteria of WSMC 16.45 and 16.60, unless superseded by provisions herein, and the criteria in Section 16.66.060.
- D. An applicant for a unit lot subdivision may request that certain requirements established or referenced by this chapter be modified. Such requests shall be processed according to the procedures for modifications of standards in Chapter 16.65.075 WSMC.

#### **16.66.80 Decision.**

- A. The city shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the unit lot subdivision within the applicable time requirements. The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth findings of fact supporting the decision.
- B. Effect of Preliminary Approval.
  - 1. Preliminary approval constitutes authorization for the applicant to develop the required facilities and improvements, upon review and approval of construction drawings by the public works department.
  - 2. Approval or approval with conditions shall authorize the applicant to proceed with preparation of the final unit lot subdivision, following the applicable procedures of WSMC 16.65.
- C. If the preliminary approval of the unit lot subdivision requires the meeting of conditions, construction of private roads, utilities and/or water systems, or the applicant needs time to obtain required certifications, then the applicant's unit lot subdivision shall be granted conditional approval for up to a two-year period, or as otherwise provided by state law, to provide time to complete the conditions.

- D. Upon fulfillment of the conditions of approval, and upon acceptance of such proof by the city, the city shall then authorize the recording of the unit lot subdivision.
- E. Recording.
  - 1. Notes shall be placed on the face of the plat as recorded with the county auditor to state the following:
    - a. The title of the plat shall include the phrase "Unit Lot Subdivision."
    - b. Approval of the development on each unit lot was granted by the review of the development, as a whole, on the parent lot.
  - 2. It is the responsibility of the unit lot subdivision applicant to record the unit lot subdivision map with the county auditor. The unit lot subdivision applicant shall pay the current recording fee.
  - 3. Upon recording the unit lot subdivision, the city shall obtain one copy of the unit lot subdivision for city records.
- F. The applicant shall not submit to the county auditor any unit lot subdivision plat that does not bear the city's certificate of approval. Filing a unit lot subdivision plat without the city's certificate of approval shall be a violation of this chapter.
- G. Revision and Expiration. Unit lot subdivisions with four (4) or fewer units shall follow the revision and expiration procedures for a short subdivision, and those with more than four (4) units follow the revision and expiration procedures for a long subdivision.

**SECTION 2. Severability / Validity.** The provisions of this ordinance are declared separate and severable. If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion of this ordinance.

**SECTION 3. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall take effect and be in force five (5) days after its approval, passage and publication as required by law.

**SECTION 4: Transmittal to the State.** Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106, a complete and accurate copy of this ordinance shall be transmitted to the Department of Commerce within ten (10) days of adoption.

**PASSED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ by the City Council of the City of White Salmon, Washington, and signed in authentication of its passage.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marla Keethler, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk/Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

5/28/2025

### **Council's Motion**

Motion to remand it back to the Planning Commission for review overall, but also with a specific focus on:

- Clarity of language
- Clarity of intent
- Clarity of process
- Consider scaling back to zones R1, R2, and R3, and excluding RL (pros and cons)
- And other clarifications as deemed reasonable by the Planning Commission

### **Summary of revisions by staff**

- Reorganized some sections & sentences to be more categorical. Added one new group\* and renamed some headers.

16.66.010 Definitions

16.66.020 Purpose.

16.66.030 Applicability.

\*16.66.040 Development standards.

16.66.050 Application requirements.

16.66.060 Approval criteria.

16.66.070 Review process.

16.66.080 Decision.

- Added the two clarifications from the staff report dated 5/21/2025.
- Deleted a few repetitive sentences (about 50 words)
- Changed references from “Administrator” or “Director” to be “the city” (most times) or “the city planner” (1 time). This is because a ULS with more than 4 units would come to the Planning Commission and then Council for review and decision, just like a regular subdivision.
- Made numbering and formatting consistent
- Removed references to “single-family”, “accessory” dwellings, and “middle housing” and simplified to “attached or detached dwellings”. Also, clarified that ULS must have 2+ units, and each unit lot must have only one dwelling (16.66.040 A)
  - “Single-family” is only referenced in Purpose section (to be revised) and Applicability section

**File Attachments for Item:**

7. Annual Work Plan



# Annual Work Plan 2025

## White Salmon Planning Commission

**Goal 1: Approve the meeting minutes at the very next meeting**

**Goal 2:**

### Activity 1: Proposed Ordinance for Unit Lot Subdivisions

Item	Notes	Timeline	Who
City Council Public Hearing	Council remanded the proposed Ord. back to Planning Commission.	May 21, 2025	Council
Staff revisions	Revisions for consistency and organization of sections (nothing substantive)	Before June 11 (or June 25)	Staff
Planning Commission workshop	Check staff's revisions, then affirm or change as needed. Discuss substantive issues, revise the "Purpose" statement, and more.	June 11 (or June 25)	Commission & staff
Staff revisions	Based on PC's directions from the workshop	Before June 25 (or July 9)	Staff
Planning Commission public hearing	Public hearing for the revised Ordinance	June 25 (or July 9)	Commission & staff

<b>Activity 2: Operational review of the Commission</b>			
Item	Notes	Timeline	Who
Review & revise the bylaws and other documentation	Especially with regards to the date & frequency of the PC meeting. Would be a business item on a PC agenda.	July or August	Commission
Define the role and responsibilities of the PC	Clarify questions like: Does PC only take direction from Council? Can PC set its own priorities for research or proposed ordinances?	July or August	Commission
<b>Activity 3: Explore the possibility of shared utilities</b>			
Item	Notes	Timeline	Who
Basic research memo	Questions like: what other jurisdictions allow shared utilities, and why does that work for them (or not)? What are the pros and cons? What would it take if WS wanted to explicitly allow them?	August or September	Staff
PC Workshop ?	tbd	September	Commission
<b>Activity 4:</b>			
Item	Notes	Timeline	Who