



Staff Report – Public Hearing

December 1, 2025 Council Regular Meeting

Public Hearing - 2025 Annual Municipal Code Amendments

Presenter: Robert Maul, Planning Manager

Time Estimate: 20 minutes

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BACKGROUND: City staff annually review the Camas Municipal Code to ensure consistency with state law, respond to community needs, clarify or improve processes, and align with the comprehensive plan. The annual code amendment process serves as an important housekeeping tool, allowing staff to address clarifications, corrections, and technical updates that improve the usability and administration of the code. It also provides an opportunity to incorporate new or revised state requirements.

City staff have prepared draft code amendments that implement state requirements related to middle housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and permit processing timelines. Also included are various improvements to Title 2, Title 8, Title 12, Title 15, Title 16, Title 17, and Title 18 that have been prepared by building, engineering, fire, and planning staff.

These amendments were presented by staff at workshops before the Planning Commission on October 21 and Council on November 3. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 18 and recommended that Council approve the proposed municipal code amendments.

SUMMARY: The Planning Commission's recommendation includes various updates to Title 2, Title 8, Title 12, Title 15, Title 16, Title 17, and Title 18 of the Camas Municipal Code, including substantive changes to the City's middle housing and ADU codes and changes to permit processing timelines in Title 18.

Following is a high-level summary of the proposed amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission. Full text of the proposed amendments is included in the meeting packet, organized by Title.

Title 18 – Zoning

Chapter 18.03 – Definitions – This section includes updates to various definitions for middle housing, ADUs, unit lot subdivisions, and adult family home to align with state law.

Chapter 18.05 – Zoning Boundaries – The proposed amendment to this section clarifies treatment when zoning boundaries bisect a lot. Under the proposal, owners may apply for development under the zone that occupies the majority of the lot or utilize split zoning.

This change particularly applies to the North Shore Subarea where the adopted zoning map does not necessarily follow parcel boundaries.

Chapter 18.07 – Use Tables – This section includes updates to the allowed land use tables to accommodate middle housing with a new reference to new Chapter 18.25 Middle Housing code. Also included is a change to allow automotive repair in the North Shore – Mixed Use zone in limited circumstances on properties where the use was previously established.

Chapter 18.09 – Density and Dimensions – Proposed changes would revise residential front yard setback standards to encourage façade depth variation and reduce the visual prominence of garages along a street by providing for a setback reduction for non-garage portions of dwellings. Currently garages must be setback 5 ft. from the front of a dwelling. The proposal would instead allow for a setback reduction of 5 ft. for non-garage portions of a dwelling.

This section also introduces a density bonus in the MF-18 and HD-NS zones to encourage apartment development on larger sites and discourage development of detached single-family dwellings in zones intended for multi-family. The current density of 18 units/acre has produced small lot single-family developments and the density bonus is intended to support development of apartment units.

Chapter 18.17 – Supplemental Development Standards – This section includes minor changes to revise accessory structure setback and fence height requirements to align with building code.

Chapter 18.25 – Middle Housing – This new code chapter provides for middle housing and satisfies the requirements of HB 1110, including allowing two units per lot in residential zones.

Chapter 18.27 – Accessory Dwelling Units – These revisions of the City's current ADU chapter would allow two ADUs per residential lot and comply with other requirements of HB 1337.

The Planning Commission recommended an addition to the language in Section 18.27.040(H) of the draft code regarding utility requirements for ADUs. The proposed change would allow for ADUs to share water and sewer connections with a primary unit when the existing utilities are found to be adequately sized to serve the demands of both the ADU and primary unit. The amendment would also require that ADUs that are separately owned from a primary unit maintain their own utility services.

Utilities. An ADU shall connect to public sewer and water. A home or lot not connected to public sewer and water, which adds an ADU, shall connect to public sewer and water. An ADU may share water and sewer connections with the primary unit only when the meter, service lines, and any STEP/STEF tank are adequately sized to serve the primary unit and ADU. ADUs that are or will be separately owned shall maintain fully independent utility services.

Chapter 18.55 – Administration and Procedures – Proposed amendments to the chapter would revise the City’s development permit processing and review timelines to comply with SB 5290. Type I reviews would need to be completed in 65 days, Type II reviews in 100 days, and Type III reviews in 170 days. The current review target for all review types is 120 days.

Title 17 – Land Development

Chapter 17.09 – Short Subdivisions – Proposed amendments provide for new unit lot subdivisions required by state law, allowing middle housing, ADUs, or multi-unit detached developments to be subdivided into individual unit lots under a parent lot.

Chapter 17.19 – Design and Improvement Standards – Various updates to infrastructure standards for curbs, sidewalks, utilities, and street improvements. Removes redundancies between the development code and design standards manual.

Title 16 – Environment (Critical Areas)

Chapter 16.55 – Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARA) – This chapter includes substantial revisions to be consistent with best available science for protecting critical aquifer recharge areas. The changes clarify what activities require critical areas review and when Level One or Level Two hydrogeologic assessments are required. The changes update the lists of allowed, prohibited, and permitted activities and include new performance standards for activities that may have more of an impact on CARAs. The changes require more intensive review and requirements for CARAs that are more susceptible to impacts and for more intensive activities.

Title 15 – Buildings and Construction

Chapter 15.04 – Building Code – Proposed changes to this chapter adopts the latest state-adopted building, fire, mechanical, plumbing, energy, and specialty codes per RCW 19.27 and relevant WACs. Adds or revises administrative provisions, such as new definitions relating to the Building Division, updated permit expiration rules, and revised provisions for refunds or fee adjustments. Also provides for hearing examiner review of appeals.

Chapter 15.17 – Automatic Fire Sprinklers – Various minor updates to fire sprinkler code requirements including clarification that sprinkler requirements apply to townhomes in addition to detached single-family units and duplexes. Also clarifies when sprinklers are required in a substantial remodel.

Title 12 – Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places

Chapter 12.36 – Gates and Other Barriers – New or clarified requirements for gates on private roads affecting emergency access. Introduces distinct requirements for commercial and residential gates.

Title 8 – Health and Safety

Section 8.06.040 – Public Health, Safety, and Welfare Nuisances – Updates language referencing barrier requirements for swimming and landscape pools to align with current editions of the International Residential Code and state WAC references.

Title 2 – Administration and Personnel

Section 2.15.080 – Powers of the Hearing Examiner – These text amendments provide the Hearing Examiner the authority to include appeals of building and fire code interpretations under Title 15 and of any determinations otherwise delegated within the code to the Hearing Examiner or Board of Adjustment.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: The proposed code amendments will make the City's code current with state law, clearer to administer, and consistent with the City's long-range goals and policies. By updating provisions related to middle housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), permit timelines, and other portions of the development related codes, the amendments support housing choice and efficiency in development review for city staff and customers.

STRATEGIC PLAN: The proposal supports the Strategic Plan's Economic Prosperity priority by providing clarifications, corrections, and technical updates that improve the usability and administration of the code in support of economic development.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: The state-mandated middle housing and ADU changes are significant and may have impacts to neighborhood character and public infrastructure. The revised permit timelines may also require internal process adjustments.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no direct budget impact associated with the adoption of these amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission at its November 18, 2025, meeting recommended that City Council adopt the proposed 2025 annual municipal code amendments, with the addition of language in Section 18.27.040(H) to provide for the sharing of utilities for certain ADUs

Staff recommends Council hold the public hearing, take public testimony, and approve the proposed code amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission, and direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance for adoption on December 15, 2025.