



Staff Report

September 8, 2026, Council Workshop Meeting

Our Camas 2045 – Draft Development Code Amendments

Presenter: Alan Peters, Community Development Director

Time Estimate: 20 minutes

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BACKGROUND: The *Our Camas 2045* Comprehensive Plan Update is entering the adoption phase this month, with a Planning Commission hearing scheduled for September 15. Over the past year, staff and the Planning Commission have been developing zoning code and development regulation updates to implement the new plan.

SUMMARY: The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on September 15 to consider a recommendation to Council on the proposed Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Subarea Plan, and zoning code updates. A special Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for September 29 for deliberations and development of a recommendation to the City Council. Following the Planning Commission's review, the City Council will hold a public hearing on October 19 to consider the proposal.

Development regulations are aligned with the draft plan's goals, policies, growth objectives, and changes to state law. Staff has scheduled time at each City Council workshop through October to review the proposed plans and code updates.

Proposed Development Code Amendments

As part of the *Our Camas 2045* update, the City is also reviewing and updating portions of the zoning code to ensure that development regulations are aligned with the updated plan's goals, policies, growth objectives and changes to state law. The Planning Commission has reviewed several proposed code updates in batches over the past several months. This report covers proposed amendments to Chapter 17.09 – Short Subdivisions, Chapter 18.03 – Definitions, Chapter 18.13 – Landscaping, Chapter 18.15 – Signs, Chapter 18.18 – Site Plan Review, Chapter 18.23 – Planned Residential Development (PRD), Chapter 18.26 – Flexible Development, Chapter 18.32 – Park and Open Space Zoning, Chapter 18.43 – Conditional Use Permits, Chapter 18.45 – Variances, and Chapter 18.51 – Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendments.

CMC Chapter 17.09 – Short Subdivisions

HB 1096, adopted by the Washington Legislature in 2025, requires cities to establish an administrative lot split process allowing an existing residential lot to be divided into two lots through an administrative decision. The proposed amendments establish a new

Section 17.09.080, Administrative Lot Split. Pursuant to RCW 58.17.145, this section would allow an existing lot in a residential zone to be divided into two lots through a streamlined process.

Although lot splits do not require the immediate construction of subdivision improvements, applicants must demonstrate that access and utility easements will be provided to serve the newly created lot. The code allows the City to condition approval on right-of-way dedications and frontage improvements when the newly created lot is developed. The flexibility in the timing of improvements is a key distinction between lot splits and other subdivision processes.

CMC Chapter 18.03 – Definitions

This chapter includes definitions for various terms used throughout Title 18. Currently, definitions are separated into three sections: 18.03.030, Definitions for Land Uses; 18.03.040, Definitions for Development Terms; and 18.03.050, Environmental Definitions. For ease of use, all of these terms will be listed alphabetically in one section. The chapter will also be updated to incorporate several new terms added to Title 18 through various proposed code amendments.

CMC Chapter 18.13 – Landscaping

Section 18.13.051 establishes the minimum tree density requirements for development. When first established, the required minimum tree density was set at 20 tree units per acre. In 2023, when adopting North Shore zoning, the City established a standard of 30 tree units per acre in the North Shore subarea. Additionally, the 2023 changes required that at least 50 percent of the tree density be achieved with existing trees in most cases and that replacement trees be native or coniferous.

The proposed amendments to this section increase the citywide tree standards by increasing the minimum tree density from 20 to 30 tree units per net acre and eliminating the separate North Shore tree density standard.

CMC Chapter 18.15 – Signs

Limited amendments are proposed to this chapter at this time. Section 18.15.040(D)(3) has been updated to provide a separate height standard for signs affixed to awnings over pedestrian areas and to resolve a conflict between the sign code and building code requirements for awnings. Awnings must maintain a minimum vertical clearance of 7 feet 6 inches above sidewalks. The current sign code requires a 10-foot clearance over sidewalks for signs. This conflict would prohibit signs from being affixed to awnings anywhere below 10 feet.

A minor change to Section 18.15.100 would prohibit the placement of temporary signs within center roadway medians. A change to Section 18.15.070 would clarify that a Master Sign Permit does not authorize signs within the public right-of-way that exceed the size limits established by Chapter 18.15.

Chapter 18.18 – Site Plan Review

The amendments refine the chapter's applicability and exemptions, clarify that middle housing and ADUs located on a single residential lot are exempt from site plan review, and remove references to outdated zoning districts.

CMC Chapter 18.23 – Planned Residential Development

Policy LU-1.4 of the draft Our Camas 2045 Plan is to "Promote the use of flexible development options (e.g., planned residential developments and development agreements) to create a variety of accessible housing types within new developments." This policy is implemented through Chapter 18.23 of the Zoning Code, Planned Residential Development (PRD). The proposed amendments would establish objective approval criteria for PRDs and make them subject to quasi-judicial review by the Hearing Examiner.

The proposed changes would require all PRDs to provide a minimum of 15% open space and would guarantee a 15% density bonus.

Chapter 18.26 – Flexible Development

The Flexible Development code is similar to the PRD code because both provide flexibility intended to promote efficient land use, ensure compatibility between developments, and preserve community resources. However, the PRD code focuses on innovative residential development, while the Flexible Development code promotes sustainable and environmentally responsive design in any zoning district.

Minor amendments to this chapter expand the purpose of the flexible development program to more explicitly support climate and sustainability goals, including renewable energy, EV infrastructure, low-impact development, and tree retention.

Chapter 18.32 – Park and Open Space Zoning

There are currently four different parks/open spaces zones: Neighborhood Park, Special Use, Open Space, and North Shore – Parks/Open Space. Most properties within these zones are City-owned, although the zones also include several privately owned parcels. The proposed Parks and Open Space zone would consolidate the four existing zones, recognize the privately owned properties within the zone, and better accommodate public park projects.

Chapter 18.43 – Conditional Use Permits

The proposed amendment would increase the required performance bond amount to 150 % of the cost of the proposed improvements and authorize the Hearing Examiner to require a bond when necessary. The current code assigns this authority to the City Council; however, Council does not review conditional use permits.

Chapter 18.45 – Variances

Variances are divided into minor and major categories, which differ based on the degree of variation requested and the applicable review process. Minor variances up to 10% of a numerical standard are Type I reviews, meaning they can be approved administratively by City staff. Any variance request over 10% is considered a Major variance. Major variances are Type III reviews, requiring a public hearing for approval.

A proposed amendment to this chapter would allow for variances of 10% or 1 foot of setback to be approved as a minor variance. This would allow for a lower threshold of approval for a 1-foot reduction of setbacks, even when this would amount to a reduction of greater than 10%.

Major variances would now be limited to a maximum variance of 40%. The amendments also clarify that the hearing examiner, not the defunct board of adjustment, is the approval authority for major variances. This is consistent with prior changes in the municipal code granting this authority to the hearing examiner.

Chapter 18.51 – Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Amendments

This chapter establishes procedures for amendments to the comprehensive plan, zoning map, and zoning code text, which may be requested by any party. The proposed amendments would establish application requirements for zoning text amendments and authorize concomitant rezones.

A concomitant rezone is a zoning map amendment approved with specific, binding conditions governing how the property may be developed. This tool would allow the City to impose site-specific conditions related to matters such as permitted uses, density, design, phasing, and public improvements.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: The proposed amendments would implement the Our Camas 2045 Comprehensive Plan. They would establish a streamlined administrative lot split process to support additional housing, increase citywide tree-density standards, encourage sustainable and flexible development, consolidate park and open-space zoning, and improve the clarity and predictability of development review procedures. The amendments would also update standards and procedures for signs, site plan review, planned residential developments, conditional uses, variances, and comprehensive plan and zoning amendments.

STRATEGIC PLAN: This item most directly supports the Strategic Plan’s “Economic Prosperity” priority by improving the clarity, consistency, and efficiency of the City’s development regulations and review processes.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: Some amendments may affect project design and costs, specifically the increased citywide tree-density standards. City staff and the development community will need to adapt to new standards and procedural changes. Staff will

continue to refine the amendments based on Planning Commission, Council, agency, and public input before adoption.

BUDGET IMPACT: The comprehensive plan update and preparation of zoning code updates is being completed by City staff and previously authorized consultant resources. The amendments will facilitate future development activity, resulting in corresponding City revenues and costs.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and provide feedback on the proposed text amendments.