



Staff Report

July 20, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

Our Camas 2045 – Zoning Code Amendments

Presenter: Alan Peters, Community Development Director

Time Estimate: 60 minutes

Phone	Email
360.817.7254	apeters@cityofcamas.us

BACKGROUND: The City of Camas is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan. As part of this effort, the City will also be reviewing and updating portions of the zoning code to ensure that development regulations are aligned with the updated plan's goals, policies, and growth objectives. The Planning Commission is reviewing several updated code sections as part of this implementation effort.

SUMMARY:

CMC Chapter 18.05 – Zoning Map and Districts

Chapter 18.05 establishes the City's zoning districts and describes the purpose and intended character of each district. The Planning Commission previously reviewed the revised list of zones and plan designations in CMC 18.050.020. The total number of zoning designations will be reduced from 26 to 25. The Light Industrial, Business Park, and Light Industrial/Business Park zones will be consolidated into a new Mixed Employment zone. Four park zones will be consolidated into a new Parks and Open Space zone. New zones will include a Multifamily Residential – 24 zone and four new downtown zones – Downtown Residential, Downtown Mixed Use – Low Rise, Downtown Mixed Use – Mid Rise, and Downtown Historic Main Street Core.

Section 18.05.040 would be revised to clarify that the R-6, R-7.5, R-10, R-12, and R-15 zones accommodate both single-family and middle housing. The zone densities are also revised from "units" or "dwellings" per acre to "lots" per acre, consistent with recent middle housing changes. This section would also include descriptions for two new residential zones, MF-24 and Downtown Residential.

Section 18.05.050 would be renamed to expressly include mixed-use zoning. This section includes descriptions for four new zones: DT-HMSC, DT-MXM, DT-MXL, and Mixed Employment. The Heavy Industrial zone description would be amended to allow residential uses west of Lacamas Creek and the Washougal River as a conditional use when included as part of a mixed-use redevelopment. The descriptions of the Downtown Commercial, Light Industrial, Business Park, and Light Industrial/Business Park districts would be removed as these zones are made obsolete with other proposed updates.

Section 18.05.070 would be updated to be consistent with the proposed Parks and Open Space zoning district which applies to both public and private parks, open spaces, and natural areas.

Chapter 18.07 — Use Authorization

Chapter 18.07 identifies the land uses that are permitted, conditionally permitted, temporarily permitted, or prohibited within all zoning districts. The chapter is organized into tables for commercial and industrial zones, residential zones, the parks zone, and a new table for downtown zones.

Table 1 - Commercial and industrial land uses would be reorganized to correspond with the revised zoning districts established in Chapter 18.05. The Downtown Commercial, Business Park, Light Industrial/Business Park, and Light Industrial columns would be removed. A new Mixed Employment column would be added, and downtown uses would be moved into a separate downtown use table.

The table would also remove obsolete or redundant footnotes. A new footnote #8 establishes a new conditional-use pathway for residential development in the Heavy Industrial district west of Lacamas Creek and the Washougal River, occupied by the Camas Mill. Residential development would be subject to conditional use requirements in CMC 18.43 and allowable only when part of a mixed-use redevelopment and when heavy industrial uses have ceased on the site proposed for residential development. The proposed residential development would also need to demonstrate that it would not interfere with any continuing industrial operations on adjoining properties.

Minor changes to Table 2 - Residential land uses would add fourplexes as a recognized middle-housing type and add limited neighborhood commercial uses in residential zones. Limited neighborhood commercial uses would be allowed on corner lots at intersections with collector or arterial streets within design overlay areas.

Table 3 – Park and open space land uses would consolidate the Neighborhood Park, Special Use Park, Open Space, and North Shore Parks/Open Space columns into a single POS zoning column. Uses traditionally associated with parks and open space including recreation facilities, community centers, community gardens, trails, concession stands, restrooms, utilities, and park-support buildings—would be administered under the consolidated district. The table would also add public administrative facilities as a permitted use in the POS district to accommodate the development of public facilities serving governmental or administrative functions.

A new Section 18.07.060 and Table 4 would establish a separate use table for the DT-HMSC, DT-MXM, DT-MXL, and DT-R districts. The new table distinguishes between active and passive retail uses and regulates whether uses are allowed on the ground floor, upper floors, or both. The use table generally reserves ground-floor space in the Historic Main Street Core for active retail and pedestrian-oriented uses.

Pursuant to RCW 35A.21.460, any childcare centers would be changed to a permitted use in all zones except Heavy Industrial where it would be a conditional use.

Chapter 18.11 — Parking

Chapter 18.11 would be substantially reorganized and updated to provide more flexible parking standards, establish clearer procedures for parking reductions, and reflect changes in state law and development practices.

In 2025, Washington adopted SB 5184 which limits how much parking local governments can require for certain residential uses and commercial spaces. The bill applies to cities with a population of 30,000 or more. Camas's population as of April 1, 2026, is estimated at 28,490 by the Washington Office of Financial Management. While these requirements do not yet apply to Camas, they will apply in just a few years once Camas reaches this population threshold.

SB 5184 sets the following limits on local government development regulations regarding parking:

- No more than 0.5 off-street stalls per multifamily unit.
- No more than 1 stall per single-family unit.
- No more than 2 stalls per 1,000 square feet of commercial space.
- No parking may be required for residences under 1,200 square feet, commercial spaces under 3,000 square feet, affordable housing, senior housing, childcare centers, ground level non-residential space in mixed-use buildings, or for buildings changing use.

Another 2025 law, HB 1183 eliminated parking requirements for certain types of residential projects. Cities and counties planning under the GMA may not require off-street parking as a condition for permitting affordable housing, new construction or the retrofit of existing buildings meeting passive house requirements, modular construction, or mass timber construction. This bill is applicable to Camas currently.

Minimum Parking Standards

The proposed draft substantially retains the existing off-street parking standards in Table 18.11-2. Changes are proposed only to certain residential uses to comply with state law and to be consistent with the City's recent middle housing code updates. Single-family dwellings and middle housing would have the same parking standards which will be based on lot size.

Pursuant to HB 1183, there would be no minimum parking requirements for affordable housing, new construction or the retrofit of existing buildings meeting passive house requirements, modular construction, or mass timber construction. The state's definitions for the terms would be adopted into Title 18.

Alternative Minimum Parking Standards

A new Section 18.11.120 would establish an administrative process through which an applicant could request that the reduced parking requirements of SB 5184 be applied to their project. The alternative standards would allow parking requirements to be reduced to:

- One-half space per multifamily dwelling unit.
- One space per single-family dwelling.
- Two spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial space.

No minimum parking would be required under the alternative standards for:

- Residences smaller than 1,200 square feet.
- Commercial spaces smaller than 3,000 square feet.
- Affordable housing.
- Senior housing.
- Child care centers.
- Ground-floor nonresidential space in mixed-use buildings.
- Certain residential or commercial changes of use.

The applicant would be required to submit a parking assessment explaining the requested reduction, anticipated parking needs, available on-site and on-street parking, transportation options, and relevant site constraints.

Multifamily projects containing more than 20 units would be required to submit a full parking study instead of an assessment.

Downtown and Mixed-use Parking Standards

Title 18 currently contains inconsistent parking provisions for downtown and mixed-use zones. Section 18.11.010 generally requires off-street parking in the Downtown Commercial (DC) and Mixed Use (MX) districts but allows the Community Development Director the discretion to waive the requirement for projects one-half block or less in size when the City Engineer determines that parking demand can be accommodated by existing on-site and adjacent on-street parking.

18.11.010 - Parking policy designated.

Except as hereafter provided for the MX District and DC District, in all Districts there shall be provided minimum off street parking spaces in accordance with the requirements of Section 18.11.020.

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For projects one-half block or less in size in the DC District and MX District, the Community Development Director may waive the off street parking requirements if the City Engineer finds that the anticipated parking needs of the project can be adequately met by existing off street parking on site, if any, and on street parking adjacent to the project. The Community Development Director may, as a condition of waiving the off street parking requirements of Section 18.11.020, require that on street parking be converted at the expense of the applicant to angle parking or another parking configuration approved by the City Engineer.

In contrast, Section 18.19.050 categorically states that downtown commercial and mixed-use areas are not required to provide on-site parking. As written, the provisions create uncertainty regarding whether the parking exemption is automatic or discretionary and whether it applies to all development or only to commercial and mixed-use components.

2. Commercial and Mixed Uses.

a. On-site parking areas shall be placed to the interior of the development unless site development proves prohibitive. All on-site parking areas along adjacent roadways shall be screened with landscaping. Downtown commercial and mixed-use areas shall not be required to provide on-site parking.

The proposal includes new language under Section 18.11.130 which blends the two provisions into a single, more clearly defined standard. In Downtown and Mixed-Use zones only, commercial uses and ground-floor nonresidential space within mixed-use buildings would have no minimum parking requirement. Other uses, including residential uses, would remain subject to the applicable parking requirements. However, for projects one-half block or less in size, the Community Development Director could reduce those requirements when the City Engineer finds that anticipated parking demand can be adequately accommodated by existing on-site parking and adjacent on-street parking. In either scenario, the Director could also require the applicant to convert adjacent on-street parking to angle parking or another approved configuration when necessary to increase parking capacity.

Downtown and mixed-use zones. Commercial uses and ground-floor nonresidential space in a mixed-use building have no minimum parking requirements. For other uses in projects one-half block or less in size, the Community Development Director may reduce the off-street parking requirements if the City Engineer finds that the anticipated parking needs of the project can be adequately met by existing off-street parking on site, if any, and on-street parking adjacent to the project. The Community Development Director may, as a condition of this section, require that on-street parking adjacent to the project be converted at the expense of the applicant to angle parking or another parking configuration approved by the City Engineer.

Parking Study

A new Section 18.11.110 would establish when a parking study is required. A study would be required when:

- Parking is proposed below the alternative minimum standards.
- A multifamily project containing more than 20 dwelling units seeks to use the alternative standards.
- No reasonably comparable parking standard exists for a proposed use.
- The Community Development Director determines that the scale, mix, phasing, or operating characteristics of a project warrant additional analysis.

The study would evaluate anticipated parking demand, project phasing, shared and off-site parking, on-street parking, transit access, transportation demand management, accessible parking, and other relevant site and operational conditions. The Director could impose conditions such as parking agreements, monitoring, management measures, or additional review if the use changes materially.

A parking study could allow for fewer parking spaces than the parking standards or alternative minimum standards.

Shared and Joint Parking

The existing fixed-percentage joint-use provisions would be replaced by a more flexible shared-parking methodology. Applicants could calculate shared parking based on occupancy rates for residential, office, industrial, retail, hotel, restaurant, entertainment, conference, and religious uses during weekday and weekend day, evening, and nighttime periods.

The required shared parking supply would be based on the period with the highest combined demand. Uses that do not fit the occupancy-rate table, seasonal variations, or requests for larger reductions could be evaluated through a parking study.

Bicycle Parking

The draft also includes new bicycle parking standards, requiring most developments to provide a modest amount of short-term and long-term bicycle parking. The standards are intended to make bicycle travel more practical by ensuring that visitors have visible and convenient parking near building entrances, while residents and employees have covered and secure parking for longer-term use.

Other Changes

Additional changes to Chapter 18.11 include:

- Minor reorganization and renumbering
- Addition of requirement for wheel stops as a tool to maintain pedestrian sidewalk clearances and preserve landscape maintenance.
- Elimination of Section 18.11.040. Other proposed changes to parking standards provide for more logical reductions in parking requirements.
- Unspecified land uses can have parking requirements determined by a similar land use or through a parking study rather than a conditional use.
- Includes a reference to existing electrical vehicle charging requirements in WAC 51-50-0429