



# City of Stevenson

## Planning Department

(509)427-5970

7121 E Loop Road, PO Box 371  
Stevenson, Washington 98648

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Ben Shumaker  
**DATE:** September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Zoning Interpretation – Personal Services in the R1 Single-Family Residential District

### **Introduction**

The Stevenson Planning Commission is asked to interpret the Zoning Code based on the request in Attachment 1. In conducting this interpretation, the Planning Commission is constrained by the process and standards of [SMC 17.12.020](#). The Planning Commission's interpretation can a) prohibit, b) allow staff review/approval as an accessory use, or c) allow Planning Commission review/approval via a conditional use permit.

This memo analyzes the request in 2 ways. More conservatively, it deals with "Day Spa" as an unlisted use in the Zoning Code generally. More permissively, it deals with Personal Services as an unlisted use in the R1 Single-Family Residential District.

### **Recommendation**

The Planning Commission should evaluate this proposal based on how wide it wants to open the door to any type of Personal Services in the R1 Single-family Residential District.

In both cases it should evaluate its understanding of a) whether Personal Services or Personal Services (Day Spas) are consistent with the purpose of the R1 District and b) and whether the use is of the same general character as other uses in the district. Draft interpretations are attached based on the assumption that either approach could occur.

### **Use Descriptions**

Stevenson Municipal Code Table [17.13.020-1](#) describes Personal Services as a different suite of uses from other commercial uses (e.g., retail, professional office, and food service, etc.). The abridged table is below along with a working description for Day Spa, should the Planning Commission prefer the conservative approach.

<b>Table 17.13.020-1: General Sales or Service Uses</b>		
<b>Use</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Reference</b>
...		
9. Personal Services	Commercial establishments providing individual services generally related to personal needs. Unless specifically listed in the district, Personal Services includes all subcategories listed herein.	
a. Recreation Services	A Personal Services use providing services related to recreational amenities, including lessons and tours for such activities as water sports, bicycling, skiing, fishing, photography, camping and hiking.	
b. Salon	A Personal Services use providing services related to barbering, hair styling, or the cosmetic arts (e.g., makeup, skin care).	
c. Day Spa	A Personal Services use providing services related to bodily relaxation, rejuvenation, or restoration. Examples include massage, hydrotherapy, facials, wet or dry saunas, steam rooms, float tanks, etc.	

### **Approval Standards**

Affirmative findings shall be made on the following criteria before any unlisted use is allowed in a zoning district.

1. The use (Personal Services or Personal Services (Day Spa)) is consistent with the purpose of the applicable zoning district (R1 Single-family Residential);

**GUIDANCE:** Staff sees nothing to prevent an affirmative finding by the Planning Commission.

**Use:** See description of Personal Services and operating description of Day Spa, above.

**Zoning District:** The City has stated the purpose of the district is as follows:

*R1 Single-Family Residential District. The single-family residential district (R1) is intended to provide minimum development standards for residential uses where complete community services are available and where residential uses are separated from uses characteristic of more urban and/or rural areas.*

AND

2. The use is expressly allowed in a less restrictive district (R2, R3, MHR, SR, PR, ED, CR, C1, and M1 Districts);

**GUIDANCE:** An affirmative finding is appropriate for this criterion when considering Personal Services, broadly, and inappropriate when considering Personal Services (Day Spa).

**District Allowances:** The Salon subcategory of Personal Services uses is conditionally allowed in the R3 Multi-family Residential District. The Recreational Services subcategory of Personal Services is expressly allowed as a P – Permitted use in the CR District. The broad Personal Services use category is expressly allowed as a P – Permitted use in the C1 District.

OR

3. The use is of the same general character as the principal and conditional uses authorized in such district.

**GUIDANCE:** Staff sees nothing to prevent an affirmative finding by the Planning Commission.

**Character of Uses:** The following uses are of the same general character and listed as principal (P) and conditional (C) uses in the district: Ben & Breakfast (C), Hostel (C), Family Day Care Home (P), Mini-Day Care Center (C), Kennel (C).

### **Accessory Use, Supplemental Standard**

In limited circumstances, an unlisted use which satisfies the approval standards above may be interpreted as an accessory use in the district under consideration. Such circumstances require an additional affirmative finding that:

1. The proposed use (Personal Services or Personal Services (Day Spa)) serves a purpose customarily incidental to the instant principal use (Vacant) on the property under consideration.

**GUIDANCE:** An affirmative finding should not be made for this criterion.

**Instant Principal Use:** Staff will caution (repeatedly) to avoid discussion of a specific site and/or property while making a decision on this interpretation. On a district-wide basis, staff finds it hard to imagine a scenario where Personal Services or Personal Services (Day Spa) could be considered an accessory use to a vacant use.

Prepared by,

Ben Shumaker  
Community Development Director

Attachment

- Request for Interpretation
- Draft Interpretations (ZON2025-02A, ZON2025-02B)



Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

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## Reinterpretation request!

Mali Drexelius <freebirdgoods@gmail.com>

Wed, Sep 3, 2025 at 11:39 AM

To: "Ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us" <Ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Hi Ben! Thanks so much for your time today. I think I'm going to explore both options, but I am leaning towards using my own land! Here is my request for reinterpretation!!

My plan would be to park the horse trailer sauna at the top of my property at 460 Kanaka creek. The trailer is about 16x6, so just under 100 square feet. Because it is under 400 square foot, I'm hoping this can be done without a parking spot needed for patrons! The thought would be that folks can rent out the sauna individually for a set amount of time via online booking (up to 4, possibly 6 people, maximum at a time.) If needed, I could install a shower, but would prefer to skip showers and restrooms if allowed! If so, I'd propose to build a small covered area attached to the trailer for an outdoor enclosed shower, still not to exceed the 400sq ft area. My thought was to use an electric sauna with a small power draw, but would a wood stove-operated sauna also be an option? I am open to any and all ideas and feedback! I will contact Skamania County Health to find out standards as well. Let me know if I missed anything or are needing anything else from me! Many many thanks!



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### Planning Commission Interpretation

#### Single-family Residential District—Personal Services (Day Spa) (ZON2025-02A)

##### Issue:

The use table adopted at SMC 17.15.040 did not contemplate whether Personal Services uses would be compatible in the R1 Single-family Residential District. At their regular meeting in September, 2025, the Planning Commission addressed whether this use would have been permitted had it been previously contemplated and whether it is compatible with the other listed uses in the district.

##### Guiding Policy

This interpretation is guided by SMC 17.12.020 which requires the following approval standards and considerations, for which affirmative findings are required before an unlisted use could be allowed.

- 1) SMC 17.12.020(C)(1) – The use is consistent with the purpose of the applicable zoning district;  
  
AND
- 2) SMC 17.12.020(C)(2) – The use is expressly allowed in a less restrictive district;  
OR
- 3) SMC 17.12.020(C)(3) – The use is of the same general character as the principal and conditional uses authorized in such district  
  
AND
- 4) SMC 17.12.020(E)(1) – The proposed use serves a purpose customarily incidental to the instant principal use on the property under consideration.

##### Discussion

**Use:** The Personal Services use has the following description from SMC Chapter 17.13:

*Commercial establishments providing individual services generally related to personal needs. Unless specifically listed in the district, Personal Services includes all subcategories listed herein.*

**Zoning District:** The purpose of the R1 Single-family Residential District is listed at SMC 17.15.020(A):

*The single-family residential district (R1) is intended to provide minimum development standards for residential uses where complete community services are available and where residential uses are separated from uses characteristic of more urban and/or rural areas.*

**District Allowances:** This use is expressly allowed in a less restrictive district (C1 Commercial).

**Character of Uses:** In the R1 District, 29 uses are either permitted (P) or conditional (C). Personal Services is of the same general character as 5 of those uses [Ben & Breakfast (C), Hostel (C), Family Day Care Home (P), Mini-Day Care Center (C), Kennel (C)].

**Instant Principal Use:** Vacant properties have no instant principal use. There is no ability for an accessory use to be established where there is no principal use.

### **Findings**

Based on the discussion below, the following findings are made:

- 1) The Professional Services use is consistent with the purpose of the R1 Single-Family Residential District.
- 2) The Professional Services use is expressly allowed in a less restrictive district than the R1 District.
- 3) The Professional Services use is of the same general character as the principal and conditional uses authorized in the R1 District.
- 4) The Professional Services is not customarily incidental to vacant property, which have no instant principal use.

### **Interpretation:**

In the R1 Single-family Residential District, the Professional Services use satisfies the criteria of SMC 17.12.020(C)(1, 2 & 3). As a result, the use may be allowed upon issuance of a Conditional Use Permit.

For the Planning Commission:

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Chair

Date



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## Planning Department

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7121 E Loop Road, PO Box 371  
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### Planning Commission Interpretation

#### Single-family Residential District—Personal Services (Day Spa) (ZON2025-02B)

##### Issue:

The use table adopted at SMC 17.15.040 did not contemplate whether the Personal Services (Day Spa) use would be compatible in the R1 Single-family Residential District. At their regular meeting in September, 2025, the Planning Commission addressed whether this use would have been permitted had it been previously contemplated and whether it is compatible with the other listed uses in the district.

##### Guiding Policy

This interpretation is guided by SMC 17.12.020 which requires the following approval standards and considerations, for which affirmative findings are required before an unlisted use could be allowed.

- 1) SMC 17.12.020(C)(1) – The use is consistent with the purpose of the applicable zoning district;

AND

- 2) SMC 17.12.020(C)(2) – The use is expressly allowed in a less restrictive district;  
OR
- 3) SMC 17.12.020(C)(3) – The use is of the same general character as the principal and conditional uses authorized in such district

AND

- 4) SMC 17.12.020(E)(1) – The proposed use serves a purpose customarily incidental to the instant principal use on the property under consideration.

##### Discussion

**Use:** The Personal Services (Day Spa) use is not described in SMC Chapter 17.13. The following is a working description: has the following description from SMC Chapter 17.13:

*A Personal Services use providing services related to bodily relaxation, rejuvenation, or restoration. Examples include massage, hydrotherapy, facials, wet or dry saunas, steam rooms, float tanks, etc.*

**Zoning District:** The purpose of the R1 Single-family Residential District is listed at SMC 17.15.020(A):

*The single-family residential district (R1) is intended to provide minimum development standards for residential uses where complete community services are available and where residential uses are separated from uses characteristic of more urban and/or rural areas.*

**District Allowances:** This use is not expressly allowed in any district (less restrictive or otherwise).

**Character of Uses:** In the R1 District, 29 uses are either permitted (P) or conditional (C). Personal Services is of the same general character as 5 of those uses [Ben & Breakfast (C), Hostel (C), Family Day Care Home (P), Mini-Day Care Center (C), Kennel (C)].

**Instant Principal Use:** Vacant properties have no instant principal use. There is no ability for an accessory use to be established where there is no principal use.

### **Findings**

Based on the discussion below, the following findings are made:

- 1) The Professional Services (Day Spa) use is consistent with the purpose of the R1 Single-Family Residential District.
- 2) The Professional Services (Day Spa) use is not expressly allowed in a less restrictive district than the R1 District.
- 3) The Professional Services (Day Spa) use is of the same general character as the principal and conditional uses authorized in the R1 District.
- 4) The Professional Services (Day Spa) is not customarily incidental to vacant property, which have no instant principal use.

### **Interpretation:**

In the R1 Single-family Residential District, the Professional Services (Day Spa) use satisfies the criteria of SMC 17.12.020(C)(1 & 3). As a result, the use may be allowed upon issuance of a Conditional Use Permit.

For the Planning Commission:

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Chair

Date