

# Planning Commission Workshop



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## STAFF REPORT

## PACKWOOD SUBAREA PLAN

**Date:** May 12, 2023  
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## SUMMARY

On March 28, 2023, the Planning Commission remanded the Packwood Subarea Plan to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to reconsider three topics:

1. Future land uses for properties surrounding the Packwood Airport.
2. Future land uses for the historic mill site.
3. A potential short term rental policy.

The CAC has met once since the remand and will meet again on May 17 and June 13. At the first meeting their discussion focused on the properties surrounding the airport. May 17, the CAC will conclude their discussion on the properties around the airport and discuss the historic mill site. June 13, the CAC will finish the discussion on the historic mill site and discuss short term rentals.

This memo focusses on information related to the Packwood Airport and land use compatibility. Because the CAC will not have finalized their discussion by the date of this memo, there is no recommendation included. At the May 23 Planning Commission workshop staff will share the CAC recommendation for land uses surrounding the Packwood Airport.

## BACKGROUND

The topic of land use compatibility surrounding the airport began with a request from one property owner to maintain the existing density of residential development that is allowed under the Small Town Mixed Use (STMU) zone. This brought up the issue of what land uses are compatible with the airport. The CAC's discussion has included the property where the request originated as well as all of the properties surrounding the airport. The discussion has not focused on the specific property owner request, and instead the discussion has focused on the WSDOT Aviation's [Airports and Compatible Land Use Guidebook](#).

For background, please refer to RCW [36.70A.510](#) and [36.70A.547](#) that require jurisdictions in which there is a general aviation airport to discourage siting of incompatible uses adjacent to the airport.

Another piece of background information is that Lewis County Public Works is currently updating the [Packwood Airport Master Plan](#). Please review Chapter 2, Existing Conditions. Packwood is a low volume

airport that serves single prop planes. However, Packwood is also a piece of critical infrastructure that was utilized to fight the Goat Rocks fire in Summer 2022. The Packwood Airport is FAA funded and it is imperative that the grant assurances are met, which includes following the WSDOT guidance and RCW's cited above.

## **AIRPORT LAND USE COMPATIBILITY**

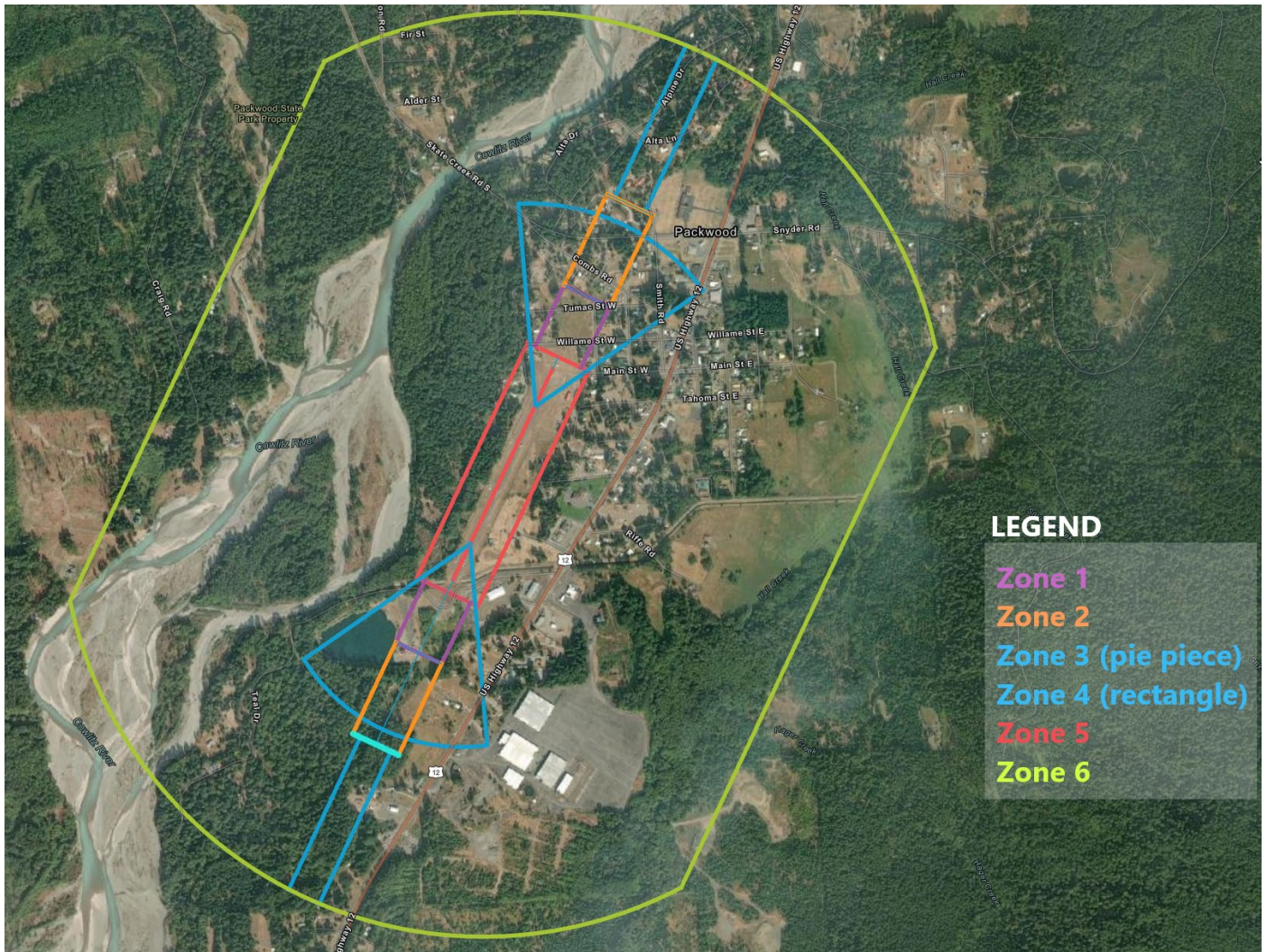
Compatibility means that the use of the land (e.g., residential, commercial, mixed use, recreation) is compatible with the airport and airport operations. Compatibility is important for two primary reasons:

1. Safety. There is a concern about an airplane crashing during landing or take-off and hitting a structure. There is also a concern about nearby land uses causing a safety hazard to the airplane, such as an industrial use that creates a lot of smoke or dust thus obscuring visibility.
2. Complaints. Airports are noisy and result in nearby residents complaining about the noise. Over time there can be significant pressure on the airport to change operations or, in extreme cases, even shut down. A low use airport may seem like it could be shut down to eliminate the noise nuisance, but the Packwood Airport critical infrastructure for life flight, wildfire, etc.

There are six (6) zones around the airport runway that have range of what is considered compatible (see map):

- Zone 5 – Most restrictive. Covers the runway and 500 feet on either side (from centerline) and 200 feet off each end of the runway. No new incompatible (no new residential) uses are recommended.
- Zone 1 – Second most restrictive. 1,000 feet straight off the end of the runway. No new incompatible uses are recommended, but infill similar to surrounding uses could be allowed in limited circumstances.
- Zone 2 – Extends further straight off the end of the runway. Residential infill that is similar to surrounding development patterns can be allowed.
- Zone 3 – A cone around Zone 5 and Zone 1. Like Zone 2, residential infill similar to surrounding development patterns can be allowed.
- Zone 4 – Extending further out. Low density residential development is OK.
- Zone 6 – 1 mile around the runway. Anything goes.

Note – These zones are not the same as the obstruction zones. There is a relationship between the compatibility zones and the obstructions zones; however, obstruction zones are about height of structures or other obstructions that could be hit by an airplane during landing or take off. Obstruction zones are not necessarily tied to a land use because a residential use could be 50 feet tall, as could a commercial use or an industrial use.



Map – Land Use Compatibility Zones around the Packwood Airport (source: WSDOT Aviation and ESRI)

**NEXT STEPS**

May 23, 2023 the results of the CAC conversation on the properties surrounding the airport will be shared with the Planning Commission, along with a draft updated future land use map that reflects the discussion. Planning Commission will not be voting on the map on May 23, 2023, it will be a workshop with an opportunity for commissioners to ask questions or provide more direction to the CAC.

The tentative Planning Commission public hearing scheduled for September 12, 2023 at 6:00pm. The hearing will be on the full Packwood Subarea Plan including changes made based on the remanded topics. The hearing will be at the Packwood Community Hall. A public notice will be posted on August 24, 2023 in the Chronicle and East County Journal, as well as sent to the Packwood Email List and posted on social media.