

Packwood Subarea Plan
Community Advisory Committee
June 21, 2023 Meeting 16 Notes

The Lewis County Planning Commission asked the CAC to reconvene to discuss three topics:

1. Land use designations for properties around the airport (April 19, 2023)
2. Land use designations for the mill site (May 17, 2023)
3. Short term rental policy (June 21, 2023)

At the June 21 meeting, CAC focused on short term rental policy, as well as two other requests that were brought up at the May 6 Open House/Listening Forum and a final issue related to the Packwood Airport.

1. Short Term Rental Policy

Policies related to short term rentals would only apply to the Packwood subarea plan boundary, which does not include the neighborhoods of High Valley or Timberline. These policies would need to be implemented through development regulations created during Phase 2 of the subarea planning process. Those regulations would also only apply within the Packwood subarea plan boundary.

The CAC discussed two new policies:

1. *NEW* – Ensure an appropriate balance of residential housing and short term rentals to support people’s ability to live in Packwood.
2. *NEW* – Within the Mixed Use (MU) and Residential High (RH) areas, require newly built multifamily housing, such as triplexes, rowhouses and apartments, to be provided for long-term residency, including seasonal rentals.

There was overall support for both policies to be included in the plan. However, there were some concerns expressed:

- Who determines what the “appropriate balance” is? Although that would be determined during Phase 2, some CAC members were uncomfortable supporting the policy without more clarity on what a balance would mean.
- While future multifamily housing will only be located where there is sewer, which is likely to be the Mixed Use and Residential High areas during the next 20-years, there was a request not to exclude the Residential Medium areas which could have multifamily in the future.
- There was a general concern about regulating short term rentals at all because it takes away people’s freedom to use their property. However, there was acknowledgement that some regulation is needed to get affordable housing in Packwood.

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2. Fire & EMS Policy

At the May 6 Open House/Listening Forum, two participants asked for a policy related to fire and emergency services. There is one existing policy in the draft plan - TR2.2: Add streets near Downtown Packwood to improve neighborhood connectivity and emergency vehicle access.

The CAC discussed one new policy and recommended amending the existing policy:

1. *Existing/updated* – TR2.2: Improve the existing streets and add streets near Downtown Packwood to improve neighborhood connectivity and emergency vehicle access.
2. *NEW* – Provide adequate emergency services and facilities to serve existing and new residents, businesses and visitors.

There was overall support for both policies to be included in the plan. However, there were some concerns expressed:

- While the idea of improving the existing streets for emergency services makes sense, there was concern that improving connectivity might mean requiring sidewalks, lighting and other costly improvements that private property owners would need to fund.
- While the rights-of-way in Packwood are pretty large, the houses and businesses in many cases are built too close to or within the right-of-way. How will those structures be addressed?

3. Noise

At the May 6 Open House/Listening Forum, there was a discussion about noise, specifically related to the use of the historic mill site for racing. Participants asked for a more specific noise ordinance. Note – There is a countywide noise ordinance that applies between 10pm and 7am, and it is enforced by the Sherriff's office.

The CAC discussed one new policy:

1. *NEW* – Preserve the rural atmosphere of Packwood by limiting artificial noise and light.

There was overall support for the policy to be included in the plan. However, there were some concerns expressed:

- The noise related to the racing at the mill site will become mute when the site develops. Therefore, writing a new noise ordinance specifically for that use doesn't make sense.
- Enforcement is very difficult because it is done through the Sherriff's department and there is inadequate staffing to support the east end of the county.

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4. Airport Policy

At the May 17, 2023 CAC meeting there was a request to add a policy related to the county acquiring land around the airport. There is an existing policy in the draft plan - PF1.6: Support continued use of the Packwood Airport.

The CAC discussed revising that policy:

1. *Revised* – PF1.6: Support continued use of the Packwood Airport and prevent incompatible land uses and development surrounding the airport when practicable.

The only concern raised with this policy was related to how the county would acquire the property. The county typically would purchase property when it became available; however, as a government agency, the county could exercise eminent domain if there was sufficient need to acquire a specific property.