

# **Lewis County Planning Commission**

## **Public Meeting**

In-Person & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**May 13, 2025 - Meeting Notes**

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Jason Alves, District 1; Jeff Skutley, District 2; Frank Corbin, District 3; Roger Moore, At-Large; Gretchen Fritsch, District 3; Bob Russell, District 2

**Staff Present:** Mindy Brooks, Director of Community Development; Guilherme Motta, Senior Long-Range Planner; Megan Sathre, Administrative Assistant;

**Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Notes – May 7, 2025
- Staff Report: Draft Potential Motions
- Draft Comprehensive Plan Redline Version

### **1. Zoom Guidelines**

The clerk dispensed with the Zoom Guidelines.

### **2. Call to Order**

A. Determination of a Quorum

6 Commissioners were present; there was a quorum.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the agenda for May 13, 2025. Commissioner Alves made the motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Russell. The motion carried unanimously.

### **4. Approval of Meeting Notes**

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes for May 7, 2025. Commissioner Alves made the motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Russell. The motion carried unanimously.

## **5. Public Comment**

There were no members of the public who wished to provide public comment.

## **6. Public Hearing - Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update**

Chair Corbin recommended taking each topic individually for a motion, deliberation and then vote. He asked Mindy to provide a quick summary of each topic prior to a motion being made.

### **Lewis County Comprehensive Plan**

This is an updated document with the goals and policies for Lewis County based on Growth Management Act elements.

Commissioner Russell moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan with the amendments, as shown in Attachment A. Seconded by Commissioner Alves.

Commissioner Russell praised the county staff and the consultants for the work done on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. He also noted good work being done regarding critical areas.

Commissioner Skutley asked for clarification about non-dam alternatives and green infrastructure. Mindy responded that the local action non-dam alternative and green infrastructure are items that is being considered within the Chehalis Basin strategy. There are ongoing negotiations to make decisions about what will be the future of managing the floodplain, therefore, including this in the policy during negotiations is appropriate.

Commissioner Fritsch asked if county staff have made any changes based on Futurewise's concerns about the affordable housing element. Mindy responded that most of the comments are about details that will be coming before the commission next, and the comments will be taken into consideration when working on the development regulations and implementation measures around housing.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **Packwood Urban Growth Area**

The UGA is a tool that allows the requirement of multifamily housing in the Residential High (RH) zone and allows retail uses, such as a grocery store, to be up to 20,000 square feet in the Commercial Business District (CMZ) zone. Mindy gave a presentation on the Packwood Urban Growth Area and zoning (*see presentation for details*).

Commissioner Fritsch moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve applying an Urban Growth Area to a portion of the Packwood Subarea Plan as shown in

Attachment B. Seconded by Commissioner Corbin.

Commissioner Russell noted that the Rural Residential Center (RRC) impact is different in the Packwood Subarea Plan than in the rest of the county.

Commissioner Fritsch commented that she does not believe that the Commercial Business District (CBZ) zoning allowing up to 20,000 square feet for retail uses is necessary to meet the Packwood Subarea Plan vision and goals. Mindy responded that this recommendation was made by the Advisory Committee because they want to encourage a second grocery store to develop in Packwood. Most grocery stores will not be less than 10,000 square feet, which is what the current LAMIRD zoning allows. The Advisory Committee considered allowing larger than 20,000 square feet in the CMZ to allow for a Safeway-sized store, but decided to only allow up to 20,000 square feet at this time and revisit the size limitation in 5-10 years. Commissioner Russell believes that the development regulations will offer enough constraints to keep the development within what the community desires. Commissioner Moore added that although development is allowed up to 20,000 square feet, that does not mean that it must be only one business – there could be multiple businesses developed in one 20,000 square foot building such as a pharmacy and doctor's office, which would help people age in place.

Commissioner Skutley asked about the zoning for multifamily housing. Mindy responded that if the UGA is approved, multifamily housing would be required in the Residential High Density areas, as recommended by the Community Advisory Committee. The largest area of proposed RH zoning, approximately 10 acres, is located at the old mill site and is primarily undeveloped at this time. Skutley asked what density this area would be. Mindy responded there will be a range of densities proposed to the Planning Commissioners to consider if they decide there should be zoning applied to require multifamily housing. Mindy notes that if the UGA is not applied, then multifamily housing can be allowed, but it will be capped at 4 dwelling units per lot because of new state laws passed during this legislative session.

Commissioner Alves commented that the UGA does a good job directing growth in a way that the community is asking for. Commissioner Moore added that growth is inevitable, and this is a good opportunity to control and manage it.

Commissioner Fritsch asked what would happen if the funding were not available for sewer by the end of the year. Mindy responded that she would rely on the County Commissioners to make a decision if funding is not available. Grants and loans are available annually, so if the funding does not come through this year, it can be applied for again next year. If the County Commissioners make a decision to abandon pursuit of the sewer project, the entire Subarea Plan would need to be reevaluated. Commissioner Skutley asked about sewer design progress. Mindy responded it is at 60% design and the treatment locations have been approved by the state. Funding is needed to get to 90% design and then additional funding will be needed for construction.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

## **Packwood Zoning**

Zoning designations that implement the adopted Packwood Subarea Plan Future Land Uses Map.

Commissioner Fritsch moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the zoning designations as shown in Attachment B1. Seconded by Commissioner Russell.

Commissioner Skutley expressed concern about the Rural Residential Center in the Packwood Subarea Plan. He stated that the density allowed is not rural. Mindy responded that the same density is already allowed under the existing Small Town Mixed Use zoning. Skutley expressed concern about having a well and septic on quarter acre lots. Mindy clarified that there is a water system in Packwood so lot size would be dependent on septic needs.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

## **Onalaska Subarea Plan**

The subarea plan is a document with goals and policies, including a future land uses map, for the Onalaska Urban Growth Area.

Commissioner Alves moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve adoption of the Onalaska Subarea Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Skutley.

Mindy expressed thank you to the Community Advisory Committee for dedicating time creating the subarea plan.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

## **Onalaska Zoning**

Zoning designations that implement the Onalaska Subarea Plan Future Land Uses Map.

Commissioner Russell moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the zoning designations with an expansion of the Residential High zone as shown in Attachment C2. Seconded by Commissioner Corbin.

Commissioner Alves asked what the Advisory Committee's response was to extend the Residential High Density (RH). Mindy responded that they did not reconvene to discuss this suggested change. The Advisory Committee did talk about where a good place would be to designate Residential High and decided on this location on Leonard because it is within walking distance of the main street. Mindy commented that she believes the committee would still want to control the size and scale of development if extending the RH zoning, which can be accomplished in the development regulations.

Commissioner Russell commented that the Onalaska community has done a good job developing

the town and believes they will continue to do so in the RH zone.

Commissioner Skutley asked if RH density is multi-story multifamily. Mindy responded yes it could be, but it will be limited to 35 ft tall. There will be standards in the development regulations.

Commissioner Fritsch asked how the proposed expanded property is currently being used. Mindy responded that it is a largely undeveloped open field.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **Rural Residential Centers**

Consolidating the RRC and STR zones into one that allows minimum lot size for new lots of ¼ acre.

Commissioner Alves move to recommend the Board of County Commissioners deny consolidation of the Rural Residential Centers and Small-Town Residential zones and to leave the minimum lot sizes as they are currently listed in the Lewis County Code. Seconded by Commissioner Fritsch.

Commissioner Alves notes that because the Rural Residential Centers have been stated by county staff as not necessary to accommodate growth, he believes it could be considered at a later date and does not need to be pursued at this time. He said that the RRC proposal is a good idea and may be necessary in the future if the county continues to grow.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **TransAlta Zoning and Master Planned Resort**

Revise the zoning designations for the decommissioned TransAlta Mine to recognize lands that will be converted to forest and lands that will remain optional for energy production or industrial uses, and to apply a Master Planned Resort overlay zone.

Commissioner Fritsch moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the zoning changes for the reclaimed TransAlta mine, as shown in Attachment E. Seconded by Commissioner Alves.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **Thompson Road Master Planned Resort**

Apply a Master Planned Resort overlay zone to the Rural Development District 10 (RDD-10) parcels located along Thompson Road in East Lewis County. RDD-10 allows the same uses – hotels, motels, RV parks and campgrounds, restaurants and event centers – as are allowed by the Master Planned Resort overlay. But under RDD-10, each parcel can be developed individually. Under MPR all parcels would need to be coordinated under one Binding Site Plan, cumulative impacts

and services would need to be planned and 40% of the land would need to be preserved as open space – none of which is required by RDD-10.

Commissioner Russell moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners deny the Master Planned Resort zoning designation along Thompson Road. Seconded by Commissioner Fritsch.

The Planning Commissioners expressed concerns about the Master Planned Resort Overlay. These concerns included lack of communication with the landowners in the proposed zoning area, the ability to coordinate amongst multiple property owners, increasing transient accommodation, and encumbering property owners. Mindy responded that most of the land was sold to a new owner approximately two weeks after the notices to property owners were sent. After learning about the new ownership, staff sent a letter but have not heard back.

The Planning Commissioners discussed the benefits of a Master Planned Resort. The benefits include coordinated and controlled development and using this as an extension of the Packwood Subarea Plan to help develop Packwood with a vision/plan.

The motion tied 3 to 3.

Commissioner Alves moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the Master Planned Resort zoning and expand it to include all parcels zoned Rural Development District from Thompson Road to the Packwood Subarea Plan boundary, as shown in Attachment F2. Seconded by Commissioner Corbin.

Commissioner Fritsch expressed concerns about supporting a larging-scale resort when there is already significant tourism in Packwood and controls are being put in place at Mt Rainier, such as timed entry. She feels that additional tourism is not needed and would be difficult to accommodate. But she expressed that she understands that the RDD-10 also allows hotels; therefore, not applying the MPR overlay won't necessarily stop that kind of development.

Commissioner Russell stated that he is uncomfortable that the primary property owner is not aware of the proposal. He would prefer if the property owner was requesting MPR overlay. He asked if adding a MPR overlay later would be allowed. Mindy responded yes, the county can update the Comprehensive Plan and zoning annually. She also cautioned that it could be too late if a property owner applies for permits before a MPR overlay is adopted because the permit would be vested in the code.

Commissioner Skutley asked if the property owners are required to build a resort. Mindy responded that no, they could develop residential uses on 10 acre lots as allowed by RDD-10, even with the MPR overlay. However, if any of the property owners wanted to develop transient accommodations, then they would have to work together and bring forward a coordinated proposal.

Commissioner Alves stated that the MPR is the best opportunity to control and manage uses that are allowed by the current zoning. While he generally does not like additional regulations,

planning for growth in Packwood is needed because it is happening anyway. If the property owners decide not to develop a resort, they can still build houses.

The motion passed 5 to 1.

### **Toledo Urban Reserve**

The Urban Reserve designation allows the City of Toledo to evaluate future expansion of the Urban Growth Area; the designation does not change the existing zoning or development regulations.

Commissioner Alves moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the Urban Reserve designation amendments, as shown in Attachment G. Seconded by Commissioner Skutley.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **Centralia Urban Growth Area (UGA)**

Two areas are being removed from the Centralia Urban Growth Area (UGA) and zoned Rural Development District with a 5-acre minimum lot size because the City of Centralia will not be extending sewer service to these areas within the next 20-years.

Commissioner Alves moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve removal of the UGA designation and applying the RDD-5 zone to two locations, as shown in Attachment H. Seconded by Commissioner Russell.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **Skate Creek Park & Cowlitz River Access**

Skate Creek Park is currently zoned RDD-10 and the Cowlitz River Access is zoned RDD-20. This change to Park would remove the option for residential development.

Commissioner Fritch moved to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve applying the Park zone to Skate Creek Park and Cowlitz River Access, as shown in Attachment I. Seconded by Commissioner Alves.

The motion passed 6 to 0.

### **Next Steps**

Mindy shared the schedule for the next steps of Periodic Update (*see presentation for details*).

### **7. Good of the Order:**

### **A. Staff**

Mindy gave an update on the implementation of SmartGov software for permitting. It was originally planned to be utilized by July 1<sup>st</sup> but this timeline has now been pushed back to November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **B. Planning Commissioners**

Commissioner Alves stated that voting is the least important thing that the Planning Commissioners do, emphasizing that the discussions and debates provide a depth of information to help the County Commissioners make the final decision.

### **8. Calendar:**

The next Planning Commission meeting will be on May 27, 2025, and the agenda item will be a workshop on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Development Regulations, Small Town UGAs and Master Planned Resorts.

### **9. Adjourn**

Commissioner Russell made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.