

# Planning Commission Workshop



Community Development • 125 NW Chehalis Avenue, Chehalis, WA 98532 • Phone: (360) 740-1146

## STAFF REPORT

## CANNABIS RETAIL CODE AMENDMENTS

**Date:** April 20, 2026

**Staff:** Natalie Kamieniecki, Senior Long-Range Planner

**Attachments:** A – LCC 5.20 License  
B – LCC 17.10.030 "C" Definitions  
C – LCC 17.10.130 "M" Definitions  
D – LCC 17.42 Table 2 Land Use Summary  
E – LCC 17.142.140 Cannabis Production and Processing  
F – LCC 17.142.075 Cannabis Retail

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## SUMMARY

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has directed Community Development to bring forward a code package for consideration that would allow retail sale of cannabis in unincorporated Lewis County. Title 5, Business Licenses and Regulations, and Title 17, Land Use and Development Regulations, will need to be amended to allow cannabis retail.

Attachment A – F are the draft code amendments as presented by staff. A reminder when reviewing the attachments, that commentary is on the first page and describes the code amendment shown in the next page. Commentary describes the amendments. Planning Commission will be voting on the code amendments as shown in the attachments, not the commentary.

## BACKGROUND

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is reviewing potential new revenue sources, including excise and sales tax revenue from cannabis retail. Based on population and retail activity, the County could receive both a per capita share of state cannabis revenue, if retail is not prohibited, and a share based on actual sales relative to statewide totals. Revenue estimates are not precise, as they depend in part on future sales activity. For reference, local distribution in Centralia and Chehalis from 2019–2025 totaled \$243,464 and \$252,833 respectively.

## COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS

At the Planning Commission workshop on April 14, the identified issues that staff are responding to in this staff report and will present on April 28.

1. Issue – Commission concerns regarding Sheriff response time and increased crime.

Staff Response – The proposed zoning framework limits where retail cannabis is allowed to areas that are located along major transportation corridors with ease of access for emergency response. This approach eliminates the possibility of remote locations with limited transportation access. Sheriff response times are expected to be comparable to other permitted retail uses, such as convenience stores.

2. Issue – Potential allowance of cannabis retail use in the STMU Zone

Staff Recommendation – Map 1 shows the STMU zones (orange) in Lewis County, along with the current proposed zones FC (yellow), CBZ (purple) and MU (green). Staff do not recommend expanding allowing cannabis retail to STMU because of the density of development STMU are not densely populated areas and have little commercial uses. Whereas, CBZ and MU are located in Urban Growth Areas with higher density of development and many existing commercial uses. Therefore, additional retail meet current character of development.

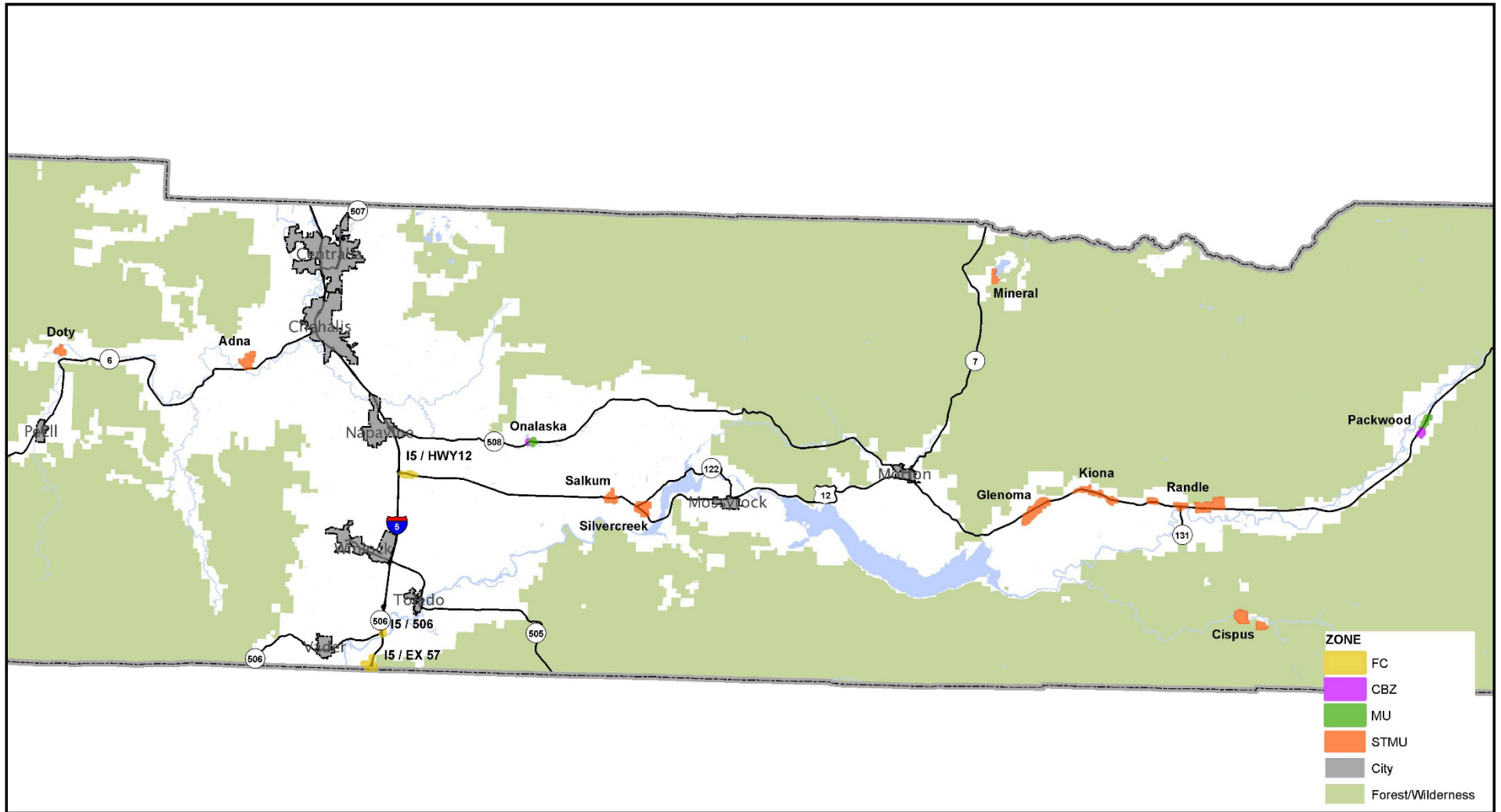
3. Issue – Separation requirements for medical clinic, hospitals and places of worship.

Staff Recommendation – Staff does not recommend separating cannabis retail from hospitals or medical clinics because cannabis is a normal and routine prescription in Washington State. Staff does support adding a separation from places of worship, which in Lewis County often include child care and/or preschool uses.

4. Issue – Outdoor sales or consumption area for cannabis (e.g., festivals or outdoor “smoking garden” / beer garden style consumption space)

Staff Response – Licensed cannabis retailers in Washington State are restricted to fixed indoor retail premises sales only under RCW 69.50.325 and related Washington Administrative Code provisions governing cannabis retail operations. Retail cannabis sales must occur only at a licensed retail location and may not be conducted as temporary, outdoor, mobile, or event based sales activity.

Washington law further restricts cannabis retailers under RCW 69.50.357 and WAC 314-55-079 to the sale of approved cannabis products only within the licensed premises, and prohibits retail operations from functioning outside of the licensed store environment or expanding into hospitality-style consumption spaces.



**Lewis County  
FC, CBZ, MU, STMU Zones**



Updated 04/16/2026  
Planning Division, Community Development



This map was created by Lewis County Geographic Information System. The accuracy of the map has not been verified and should be used for informational purposes only. Any possible discrepancies should be brought to the attention of Lewis County GIS.  
State Plane Washington South FIPS 4602  
North American Datum 1983  
North American Vertical Datum 1988 (Topography)

## **PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS**

The proposed amendments are found in Attachment A – F as well as summarized below:

### **LCC 5.20 Marijuana Production, Processing and Retail Sales**

This chapter is to be stricken from the code in its entirety. Removing the county licensing requirement and relying on the state’s established regulatory framework for retail cannabis sales would simplify the code, reduce administrative overhead, and eliminate confusion for business owners. It would also avoid duplicative licensing while still allowing the county to regulate land use and development considerations.

### **LCC 17.10.130 – “C” Definitions**

This section consolidates and updates cannabis-related definitions from the “M” section, including cannabis processing, production, and retail sales, to ensure consistency with state licensing categories. While definitions for cannabis processing and production are included, the county’s code amendments allow only retail cannabis uses. Production and processing are not permitted in any form, whether as a principal or accessory use, and this is further stated in the amended cannabis retail development regulations.

### **LCC 17.10.130 – “M” Definitions**

This update aligns definitions with current state terminology by replacing “marijuana” with “cannabis”. Definitions related to marijuana processing are eliminated and replaced in the “C” definition section. The amendment removes “miscellaneous or future marijuana uses,” in its entirety. This category is not needed as it attempts to anticipate undefined future uses and references to medical marijuana that are fully regulated at the state level in coordination with licensed medical providers. Only explicitly listed uses are permitted under LCC 17.42, Table 2, Summary Land Use.

### **LCC 17.42 – Table 2 Land Use Summary**

The table is amendment to strike cannabis processing entirely and to change cannabis retail from X – prohibited to A – Administrative in the Freeway Commercial (FC), Mixed Use (MU) and Commercial Business District (CBZ) zones.

### **LCC 17.142.140 – Cannabis Production and Processing**

This section is stricken entirely. Cannabis production and process will continue to be prohibited in Lewis County per BOCC’s direction.

### **LCC 17.142.075 – Cannabis Retailers**

This section revises development standards for cannabis retail uses to improve clarity, ensure consistency with state law, and implement the County’s direction limiting cannabis activity to retail sales only.

New section 17.142.075 (1) clarifies the scope of permitted retail activity, explicitly stating that cannabis retail does not include any activity defined as cannabis production or cannabis processing under this

title. This distinction is intended to eliminate ambiguity and ensure that retail establishments remain strictly limited to sales of cannabis and related products authorized under state licensing.

New section 17.142.075 (2) includes signage standards aligned with RCW 69.50.369 and applicable WSLCB advertising regulations. Each cannabis retailer is limited two (2) exterior signs, with maximum size with each sign not exceeding 1,600 square inches and total aggregate square footage 3,200 square inches. Signage content must comply with state prohibitions on advertising that is appealing to minors or that uses cartoons, imagery, symbols, slang, or colloquial references commonly associated with cannabis. Depictions of cannabis plants, products, paraphernalia, smoke, or similar visual representations are prohibited. Off-site advertising, including billboards, flags, inflatables, sandwich boards, human signage, A-frame signs, and similar displays, are also prohibited in accordance with state restrictions. Limited window signage, decals, and adhesive materials are permitted only when consistent with state law, do not obscure required visibility and egress standards, and comply with applicable zoning and building requirements.

New section 17.142.075 (3) pertains to building design standards, particularly within UGA–Small Towns. Exterior building materials and colors are required to be low-intensity, non-reflective, and limited to neutral tones. High-saturation, fluorescent, neon, or highly reflective finishes are prohibited on all exterior surfaces, accents, and signage. Exterior glass must be non-mirrored and designed to prevent visibility of cannabis products or transactions from outside the building. Acceptable methods include interior screening, frosted glass, or window film. These requirements are intended to reduce visual impacts and maintain compatibility with surrounding uses. External lighting must comply with existing county lighting standards contained in 17.142.020(3)(e).

New section 17.142.075 (4) replaces and consolidates the previous code sections 17.142.150 (3) & (4). Cannabis retailers must comply with county solid waste regulations and applicable state environmental standards for sewage and wastewater disposal. Where required, establishments must also provide approved potable water systems in accordance with state and local health regulations in accordance with established permit review process.

New section 17.142.075 (5) updates siting standards and are refined to regulate both state requirements and local controls. State separation requirements prohibit retail locations within 1,000 feet of sensitive uses, including schools, playgrounds, child care facilities, public parks, recreation facilities, transit centers (not including bus stops), libraries, community centers, and similar youth-oriented or public-serving uses. Additional local controls proposed hospitals (other than health clinic), correctional or detention facilities, and other cannabis retail uses. Distance is measured property-line to property-line using the shortest straight-line method, consistent with state guidance.

Finally, the section clarifies that MSR permits for cannabis retail are contingent upon maintaining a valid state-issued license. Any revocation, expiration, or invalidation of the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board license results in automatically revoking of the corresponding county approval. Retail establishments must maintain compliance with Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board licensing requirements, with local approvals conditioned on the validity of the state license.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing on amendments to LCC 5.20 and LCC 17.10, 17.42, and 17.142 on May 26, 2026 to receive testimony. Staff recommend that the written record be opened early on May 7, with comments due on May 22 at 4:00pm to account for the Memorial Day holiday.

After close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission may deliberate and vote to transmit the proposed amendments to the Board of County Commission. After the Board of County Commissioners reviews the proposal, they will hold a public hearing before voting to adopt the amendments.