



City of Medical Lake
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3/26/2026 Planning Commission Meeting

To: Planning Commission
From: Elisa Rodriguez, Senior Planner
TOPIC: Periodic Update: MLMC amendments regarding Specialized Housing

Requested Action:

Provide feedback and guidance on potential amendments regarding specialized housing to the Medical Lake Municipal Code (MLMC).

Key Points:

HB 1220 (effective in 2021) requires jurisdictions to allow permanent supportive housing and transitional housing in zones that allow residences and hotels. This means Medical Lake must allow these uses in all zones except the public facilities zone. This same bill requires jurisdictions to allow emergency shelters and emergency housing in any zone that allows hotels. Hotels are allowed in the Mixed Use and Central Business zones.

ESHB 2266 (effective in 2026) prevents jurisdictions from having extraordinary requirements for any of the above housing. However, it does allow jurisdictions to request information about the housing, require notification and a community meeting, and safety provisions.

HB 1956 (effective in 2010) allows a religious organization to host the homeless on property owned or controlled by the religious organization.

HB 1377 (effective in 2019) allows an increased density bonus consistent with local needs for any affordable housing development located on real property owned or controlled by a religious organization.

All of these State mandates are the legislature's response to an acute shortage of affordable housing, resulting in housing insecurity and a growing number of people experiencing homelessness.

Background Discussion:

The terms used above are defined in State law as noted below.

"Transitional housing" means a project that provides housing and supportive services to homeless persons or families for up to two years and that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless persons and families into independent living." (RCW 84.36.043)

"Permanent supportive housing" is subsidized, leased housing with no limit on length of stay that prioritizes people who need comprehensive support services to retain tenancy.... Permanent supportive housing is paired with on-site or off-site voluntary services designed to support a person living with a complex and disabling behavioral health or physical health condition who was experiencing homelessness or was at imminent risk of homelessness...." (RCW 36.70A.030)

"Emergency shelter" means a facility that provides a temporary shelter for individuals or families who are currently homeless. Emergency shelter may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement. Emergency shelter facilities may include day and warming centers that do not provide overnight accommodations." (RCW 36.70A.030)

"Emergency housing" means temporary indoor accommodations for individuals or families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless that is intended to address the basic health, food, clothing, and personal hygiene needs of individuals or families. Emergency housing may or may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement." (RCW 36.70A.030)

Public Involvement:

A public hearing will be held with both the Planning Commission and the City Council. In addition, language will be provided on the City website for review and comment by the public.

Next Steps:

After a workshop with the City Council on April 7, 2026, amendment language will be provided to the Planning Commission prior to the public hearing on April 16, 2026. At that meeting, the Planning Commission will be expected to make a recommendation to the City Council.