



City of Medical Lake Planning Department
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STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

File: Periodic Update: MLMC Affordable Housing (ADUs)

Date of Staff Report: March 19, 2026

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2026

Staff Planner: Elisa Rodriguez 509-565-5019 or erodriguez@medical-lake.org

SEPA: Determination of Non-Significance was made on March 2, 2026

Procedure: This request requires a legislative review, therefore, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will hold a public hearing to consider an ordinance to adopt the amendments to the Medical Lake Municipal Code. The complete process can be found in the Medical Lake Municipal Code (MLMC), Section 19.270.050 – Type IV Reviews.

Proposal: It is proposal is to amend the municipal code to add accessory dwelling units as a permitted use on lots with detached single-family houses in residential zones. These amendments are to provide affordable housing options in line with House Bill 1337.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

SEPA DNS Issued – March 2, 2026

Notice of a Public Hearing Published in Cheney Free Press – February 26, 2026

Public Comment Period Closed – March 17, 2026

PROPOSED LANGUAGE

Chapter – Accessory Dwelling Units

Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to expand housing options by permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in residential zones, consistent with RCW 36.70A.680–.681, ADUs provide opportunities for affordable housing, supplementing household incomes, aging in place, family support, and efficient land use.

Applicability. ADUs are permitted on lots that contain a detached single-family house in a residential zone.

Development Standards. All ADUs must meet the following standards.

- A. Density. ADUs are exempt from the maximum density of the zone.
- B. Number of Units. Two (2) ADUs are allowed per lot.
- C. Lot Size. ADUs are allowed on lots that meet the minimum lot size of the zone.
- D. Location on Lot. ADUs may be constructed within or attached to a single-family house, in combination with another accessory structure, or as a stand-alone structure. ADUs shall not be located closer to the street than the single-family house.
- E. Size. ADUs shall not be more than 1,000 square feet in floor area.
- F. Height. ADUs shall not be more than 24 feet in height.
- G. Setbacks. ADUs shall meet the setback requirements of the zone, except, they may have a zero lot line setback adjacent to an alley.
- H. Parking. Each ADU requires one parking space that meets the standards of MLMC Chapter 17.36 – Off-Street Parking.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received from agencies or the public.

ZONING CODE APPROVAL CRITERIA

Amendments to development regulations are subject to MLMC Section 19.143.050 – Approval Criteria.

- A. The proposed amendment(s) implements the goals, policies, and objectives of the Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. Goal #19 of the Comprehensive Plan states, “Provide a variety of densities and housing types to promote greater choices and opportunities.” Accessory dwelling units provide an affordable solution for aging in place, supporting family, and gaining income to help make the primary home more affordable. Policy #46 of the Comprehensive Plan states, “Encourage flexibility in residential housing types and project design, including manufactured homes and affordable housing.” Action Item #50 of the Comprehensive Plan states, “Revise zoning and subdivision standards as necessary to encourage a variety of housing options including residential located above street-level commercial, accessory dwelling units, and cluster housing.” Therefore, the proposal implements the goals, policies, and objectives of the Comprehensive plan by providing affordable housing in a form that is specified. **For these reasons, the criterion is met.**

- B. The proposed amendment(s) complies with all requirements of the state's Growth Management Act, including growth boundaries, critical areas, and future housing needs.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. The Growth Management Act requires that jurisdictions provide for housing at every income level. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are expected to provide an affordable home to households earning 50%-80% of the area median income. In addition, House Bill 1337 has mandated that jurisdictions amend their municipal codes to allow accessory dwelling units. ADUs provide additional housing to meet Medical Lake's future housing needs, which will accommodate more population before the urban growth boundary will need to be expanded. ADUs must conform to critical area regulations. Therefore, the proposal is complies with the Growth Management Act. **For this reason, the criterion is met.**

- C. The proposed amendment(s) does not conflict with the Shoreline Master Program.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. ADUs must conform to the Shoreline Master Program. Therefore, ADUs do not cause an inherent conflict. **For this reason, the criterion is met.**

- D. The proposed amendment(s) is consistent with other adopted City plans, including, but not limited to, the Strategic Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, Parks Master Plan, Water Plan, Sewer Plan, Stormwater Plan, and Transportation Plan.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. Strategic Objective #2, Quality Neighborhoods, of the Healing Waters Strategic Plan, states, "Provide a variety of densities and housing types to promote greater choices and opportunities." ADUs are not inconsistent with any other adopted City plan and as those plans are updated, the impact of ADUs will be considered. Therefore, allowing ADUs is consistent with other adopted City Plans. **For this reason, the criterion is met.**

- E. The proposed amendment(s) will not adversely affect the ability to provide City services in a cost-effective manner.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. ADUs will require additional services, however the number of ADUs expected in the short term is expected to be low based on other jurisdictions in the region that have been allowing them for several years. As time goes on, the City will have the opportunity to adjust plans for infrastructure and service fees to meet the demand. Therefore, the proposal does not adversely affect the ability for the City to provide services in a cost-effective manner. **For this reason, the criterion is met.**

- F. The proposed amendment(s) will not be detrimental to and will result in long-term benefits to the community as a whole and is in the public interest.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. Allowing ADUs will provide one of many affordable housing options within Medical Lake. ADUs provide an affordable solution for aging in place, supporting family, and gaining income to help make the primary home more affordable. The affects of allowing ADUs is not expected to be detrimental to the City due to their small scale and the expectation that, due to the cost of

constructing the unit and the desire of individual households, there will be only a few applications per year. **For these reasons, the criterion is met.**

G. The proposed amendment(s) will not result in adverse impacts to public infrastructure, wetlands, lakes, businesses, or residents.

Findings: The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. Due to the small scale and the likelihood of only a few applications submitted per year, the City will have time to adjust infrastructure plans and fees as needed. ADUs will be subject to critical area and shoreline regulations, protecting wetlands and lakes. They will provide additional housing opportunities for residents and more residents will benefit local businesses. **For these reasons, the criterion is met.**

CONCLUSION

The proposal adds accessory dwelling units as an allowed housing type on properties that have a detached single-family dwelling. In addition to aligning with the Comprehensive Plan, the State of Washington is mandating that ADUs be allowed as a form of affordable housing. The proposal is consistent with all other adopted City plans, will provide a benefit to the City, and is not expected to have any detrimental impacts. All of the applicable approval criteria have been met, therefore, the proposal should be approved.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

1. Recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the City Council.
2. Recommend approval of modified amendments to the City Council.
3. Request City Staff to address concerns and return with modified language.

EXHIBITS

- A. SEPA Checklist – March 2, 2026
- B. SEPA DNS – March 2, 2026