



To: City Council
From: Elisa Rodriguez, City Planner
TOPIC: Periodic Update: MLMC amendments regarding Zoning

Requested Action:

Provide feedback and guidance on the proposed Zoning language for amendments to the Medical Lake Municipal Code (MLMC).

Key Points:

It is proposed to create five new zoning districts with the associated allowed uses and development regulations in Title 19 – Land Use and Development. These will replace the ten existing zoning districts in Title 17 – Zoning, when the Official Zoning Map is updated later this year. Significant differences include allowing more housing types, including townhouses and cottage housing, and reducing the minimum lot size in all but the low-density residential zone. In addition, it is proposed that the Variance and Conditional Use chapters of Title 17 are replaced with updated chapters in Title 19.

HB 1220 changed the Growth Management act mandate that jurisdictions provide for affordable housing rather than encourage affordable housing. We must provide for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households. The proposed language expands the housing types allowed in more zones, therefore providing more opportunity for housing at every income level.

ESSB 5509 made it mandatory to allow childcare centers in every zone without a special review. Footnote 6 in the Use Table addresses this issue.

As with all amendments to the code, we aspire to create clear and concise language that can be understood by the public and implemented by staff.

Background Discussion:

These amendments contain the heart of what zoning is meant to do. It prescribes what uses are allowed and where those uses are allowed. It also limits the size of buildings by mandating minimum setbacks, building coverage limits, and height limits. A presentation will demonstrate the differences between the existing code and the proposed language.

Public Involvement:

A public hearing was started at the Planning Commission meeting on February 26, 2026 and has been continued to the March 26, 2026 meeting. In addition, language is provided on the City website for review and comment by the public.

Next Steps:

It is expected that the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the proposed language at the March 26, 2026 meeting and a public hearing will be held at City Council on April 7, 2026.