

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA



City of Lake Stevens Vision Statement

We are a thriving community that promotes a vibrant economy, preserves natural beauty, and supports an exceptional quality of life for all.

August 4, 2025 - 6:00 PM
HYBRID - In-Person at the Mill or Remote Via Zoom
Join Zoom Meeting: [ZOOM LINK](#)
or call in at: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 87161634084

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Guest Business**
4. **Action Items**
 - A. Approve Minutes of June 23, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting
5. **Public Hearing**
6. **Discussion Items**
 - A. Proposed Revisions to the Lake Stevens Municipal Code Process Code
 - B. Proposed Revisions to the Lake Stevens Municipal Code Design Guidelines
7. **Commissioner Report**
8. **Planning Director's Report**
9. **Adjourn**

Amber
Brokenshire,
Senior Planner
and Christi
Schmidt,
Planning
Manager

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND

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PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 8/4/2025

Subject: Approve Minutes of June 23, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Contact Person/Department: , Community Development

Budget Impact:

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 6-23-25 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES



HYBRID/REMOTE AND IN PERSON AT THE MILL

June 23, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM by Chair Janice Huxford

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Janice Huxford, Vice-Chair Jennifer Davis, Commissioner Bruce Morton, Commissioner Mike Duerr, Council Liaison Ryan Donoghue (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners Connor Davis, Nathan Packard and Murika Matz were absent. Commissioner Duerr moved to excuse the absences, and Commissioner Morton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Manager Christi Schmidt, Administrative Assistant Dawn Erickson

OTHERS PRESENT: No additional attendees

Chair Huxford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: As noted above.

Guest business: None.

Approval of Minutes: The meeting minutes of June 2, 2025, were approved as amended, after several Commissioners pointed out a spelling error of the word fentanyl. Commissioner Morton made the motion, and Commissioner Duerr seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion Items: Planning Manager Schmidt provided an update on the Streets and Parking Code Amendment Process, reviewing the Planning Commission's discussions to date. She noted that [SB 5184](#) passed on 4/17/25, which limits the amount of parking local governments can require for specific residential and commercial uses, noting several exceptions (See section 2 in the link). The deadline for the City to implement these changes is 7/27/2028. The city can submit an empirical study, prepared by a credentialed transportation or land use planning expert, to Commerce demonstrating that parking limitations would negatively impact safety under the proposed requirements.

The city intends to take a hybrid approach, assess and modify parking standards as needed, similar to the subarea plans, and apply for relief from the state. Staff will discuss with our current consultant and

reallocate the remaining budget to prepare the empirical study, update the traffic impact methodology from December 2012, and revise the traffic impact fee program developer's workbook.

Planning Manager Schmidt also discussed the updated Public Engagement process and the Public Engagement Guide (included in the agenda packet). The city intends to use this process across departments for consistency. The process aligns with the city's vision and strategic plan. She noted that the list of stakeholders is a draft, and the templates are to be expanded. She then requested feedback from the Commissioners.

Regarding SB 5184

- Commissioner Duerr stated that one parking space per household will not be sufficient.
- Chair Huxford emphasized that with the city's growth pattern, the requirements would be incompatible with the Lake Stevens community.
- Commissioner Morton talked about the potential for this legislation leading to fewer people owning cars.

Regarding the Public Engagement Plan

- Commissioner Morton acknowledged that this will be a living document and will be updated frequently, but had no other comments.
- Commissioner Duerr thought that inclusion of maps showing the area(s) under discussion would be helpful, and that the branding and templates would help residents easily recognize them.
- Vice-Chair Jennifer Davis suggested menu options to include "No action", an explanation for the proposed change and consequences of no action, and links to pertinent legislation or City Council documents during public engagement. She suggested that public meetings be started with a statement of the meeting's purpose, limitations, etc. and that perhaps the city could offer some opportunities for residents to meet with elected officials for a conversation since the public meetings don't really provide for anything but comment.
- Chair Huxford asked staff to ensure communication clarity to mitigate misunderstandings. She also suggested the city seek out organized groups of varying ethnicities directly.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Duerr reminded everyone of the 6/26 Open House for the 116th/117th Streets project. Chair Huxford commented on some of the fees discussed at the recent council meeting that were removed after discussion, reminding Commissioners that their work is not isolated to Planning Commission.

Director's Report

No Director's report.

Adjourn: Motion by Commissioner Duerr, with a second by Commissioner Morton, to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully,

Dawn Erickson, Administrative Assistant

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 8/4/2025

Subject: Proposed Revisions to the Lake Stevens Municipal Code Process Code

Contact Person/Department: Amber Brokenshire, Senior Planner and Christi Schmidt, Planning Manager , Community Development

Budget Impact:

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

No action is required. Staff will provide an update on potential revisions to the Lake Stevens Municipal Code (LSMC) and Design Guidelines. These changes aim to provide clear and objective language, ensure compliance with recent Growth Management Act (GMA) amendments, and implement the 2024 Comprehensive Plan.

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

At its [October 4, 2023 meeting](#), the Planning Commission was introduced to several bills passed during the 2023 Washington State legislative session. Staff noted the city had already been planning revisions to modernize and standardize language in the Lake Stevens Municipal Code (LSMC) Chapters 14.16A and 14.16B as part of a "Process Code Update." This project, included in the 2023 Long Range Planning Work Program, has continued into 2024 and 2025.

At their [December 10, 2024 meeting](#), the City Council approved an [interim ordinance](#) to revise [LSMC 14.16A.230](#) (Time Frames for Review) to comply with the first of these bills, [Senate Bill \(SB\) 5290](#). A permanent ordinance must be adopted by December 10, 2025, allowing final language to be incorporated into the broader Process Code Update.

Ensuring Clear and Objective Language throughout LSMC
[House Bill \(HB\) 1293](#), also passed in 2023, amended [RCW 36.70B.160](#) and added a

new section to the Growth Management Act ([RCW 36.70A.630](#)). HB 1293 requires local jurisdictions to adopt only clear and objective development regulations (standards or guidelines) related to exterior design of new development.

Staff introduced potential LSMC revisions to address HB 1293 at the Planning Commission's [May 7, 2025 meeting](#). [Initial updates](#) targeted [LSMC 14.16C.050](#) (Design Review) and related chapters. However, staff emphasized the need for more substantial changes to the [Design Guidelines](#) referenced in the code, as they contain detailed standards beyond those in LSMC 14.16C.050.

Aided by artificial intelligence tools, staff reviewed the Design Guidelines to identify subjective language. This effort led to an expanded scope for the Process Code Update: reviewing all LSMC Title 14 (Land Use Code) to adopt consistent, clear, and objective language and reduce ambiguity.

This review process also identified Comprehensive Plan implementation items that will be folded into the Process Code Update. These include:

- Removing all references to the Planned Business District (PBD), which was eliminated in the 2024 Concurrent Rezones.
- Revising references to the General Industrial and Light Industrial zoning districts to reflect their consolidation into a single "Industrial" zoning district as part of the 2024 Concurrent Rezones, most notably within the Permissible Uses (Chapter 14.40) and Density and Dimensional Regulations (Chapter 14.48) chapters. Per the adopted policy guidance for the industrial zones, the city is allowing all the uses listed in both zoning districts until the LS Industrial Plan is completed. After that, a comprehensive update will be conducted to address the limited number of uses that previously had different review processes. This approach ensures that the industrial zones are managed effectively while the plan.

Staff are using a matrix to show changes. This format received positive feedback from the Planning Commission and City Council, as used during the Code Clean-Up project, completed in February 2024. The matrix shows potential changes, with separate sheets/tabs for:

1. the LSMC and
2. the Lake Stevens Design Guidelines (Attachment 1).

The matrix includes several categories, including those intended to Remove Subjectivity, Comply with Recent GMA Changes and Delete/Revise Obsolete Sections.

At the Planning Commission's August 4 meeting, staff will present proposed changes to the LSMC and Design Guidelines and solicit feedback.

Key proposed changes include:

Referencing the Design Guidelines by name or as amended in LSMC 14.6C.050(b) for clarity.

- Removing public design review meetings for Type I applications. These projects do not require public meetings LSMC 14.16C.050(c)(3), and their design review will rely on objective standards. Site plan reviews will also become Type I permits, as they follow prescriptive standards in LSMC 14.16C. 105 and are not discretionary. Public notice will still be required for Type II and higher applications.
- Standardizing use regulations for specific uses (e.g., Heavy Industrial, Junkyards/Tow Yards, Soil Processing) in the new Industrial zoning district, replacing previously different review processes under the former General and Light Industrial zones. A broader industrial visioning process is anticipated in 2026.

Other items and updates

Staff are currently working on separate standalone code amendments, which will be reviewed later in summer and fall:

- Streets and Sidewalk/Parking/Concurrency/Traffic Impact Mitigation Fees (introduced at the February 19, 2025 meeting and discussed at subsequent meetings)
- Critical Areas Ordinance (introduced February 19, 2025) and
- STEP Housing (introduced March 5, 2025, most recently discussed on June 2, 2025)

The Sidewalk/Parking/Concurrency/Traffic Impact Mitigation Fees updates will be split into three separate ordinances. The Concurrency and Traffic Impact updates will move forward first, followed by streets. Parking updates may be deferred to 2026. These code amendments will undergo the same review process to ensure consistent use of clear and objective code language across Title 14 and related LSMC chapters/sections.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Spreadsheet of Potential Changes to LSMC Sections and Design Guidelines

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Matrix of Potential Changes for August 4 PC - LSMC
2. Matrix of Potential Changes for August 4 PC - Design Guidelines

Code Amendment Master Matrix to Comply with Recent GMA Changes and Implement Comprehensive Plan

Number	Section and Topic(s)	Summary/Rationale
Category 1: Remove Subjectivity (Should, May, When Possible, etc.)		
1	14.16A, Administration and Procedures	1. In 14.16A.180(f) and 14.16A.220(d)(5), change "should" to "shall". 2. In 14.16A.050(a) and (c), 14.16A.250(f)(5), 14.16A.265(d) and 14.16A.360(b)(1), change "may" to "shall". 3. In 14.16A.260(b), language related to public meetings will be updated to reflect changes in state law
	14.16B, Types of Land Use Review	To come
	14.16C, Land Use Actions, Permits and Determinations	1. In 14.16C.060(e), change all five instances of "should" to "shall". 2. In 14.16C.075(g) and 14.16C.078(c)(3), change "may" to "shall".
	14.16C.050, Design Review	1. Remove sections with subjective language such as subsection (a)(6) that do not contribute to the provision of clear and objective standards. In general, section has primarily clear and objective standards, with the design guidelines needing more revisions.
	14.32, Nonconformities	1. Remove term "may be" from multiple sections in Chapter 14.32, so that it reads more directly as "Except as may be provided for elsewhere in these regulations".
	14.36.020(e), Commercial Districts	1. Provide more clear and objective language on intent of Business District - "This district should be located in <u>is intended for</u> areas with direct access to highways and arterials..."
	14.38, Subarea Plans	1. Replace "should" language to provide more clear and objective language, such as "Principal uses are the preferred uses of the zoning district, while secondary uses are also allowed uses, but should <u>shall</u> be subordinate in a mixed use configuration...."
	14.46 (Innovative Housing and Infill), through 14.124 (Deferred Collection of Impact Fees)	Make universal changes to ensure that the term "may" is associated with something that is permissible, "should" is related to something optional/recommended, while "shall" applies to something that is required or prohibited.

Code Amendment Master Matrix to Comply with Recent GMA Changes and Implement Comprehensive Plan

Number	Section and Topic(s)	Summary/Rationale
Category 2: Add/Update Language to Clarify Intent or Comply with Recent GMA Updates		
	14.04, General Provisions	1. Update 14.04.100 (Computation of Time) to cross-reference LSMC 14.16A.230 (currently subject to interim ordinance), which notes that permit processing timeline requirements are based on calendar days and not business days (the language currently excludes weekends and holidays).
	14.08, Definitions	1. Add new definition for design review: <i>An associated land use determination integrated into the permit review process by which projects are reviewed for compliance with city design standards and guidelines, which must be clear and objective when related to the exterior design of new development.</i>
	14.16C.050, Design Review	1. Update definition of design review in subsection (a) to highlight clear and objective nature of the design standards/regulations. 2. Include new language in subsection (c) that notes that design review shall occur concurrently with associated applications, unless specifically requested by the applicant. 3. Clarify in subsection (c) that no more than one public meeting related to design review can occur (if requested by member of public following notice of application); SEE QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER DESIGN REVIEW PUBLIC MEETING SHOULD STILL BE REQUIRED.
	14.36.010, Residential Districts Established	1. Update description of zoning districts to note allowance for middle housing, ADUs, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing in residential zoning districts, with cross-references to Infill Housing code (14.46) and STEP housing regulations.
Category 3: Delete/Revise Obsolete Sections, Language and Terms		
	14.04.014(5), Purpose and Intent. 14.68.124(b), Incentive Provisions for Exceptional Efforts	Remove references to Design Review Board, which no longer exists.
	14.36.020, 14.40.090, 14.48, and 14.44.090 (Eliminate References to Planned Business District)	Remove 14.44.090 (Planned Business District supplemental regulations) and references to PBD in 14.36 (including Table 14.36-I), 14.40, 14.48 and other sections, as it was removed and properties rezoned to other zoning districts as part of 2024 Concurrent Rezones.
	3.70, 14.36.030, 14.40, 14.44, 14.48, 14.60, 14.72 and 14.76 (Eliminate References to General Industrial and Light Industrial districts)	Update 14.36.030 and Table 14.36-I to consolidate General Industrial and Light Industrial into one "Industrial" zoning district (per 2024 Concurrent Rezones) and make universal changes to other sections. Determine which uses that previously required a CUP or ACUP in Light Industrial should require the same in the consolidated Industrial zoning district.

Code Amendment Master Matrix			
Design Guidelines (2019)			
Number	Timing of Amendment	Code Section and Topic(s)	Summary/Rationale
Category 1: Remove Subjectivity (Should, When Possible, etc.)			
1		I.D Alternative Methods (p2)	No clear procedural or measurable compliance checklist that an applicant or planning could use to objectively verify conformance without interpretation.
2		II.A.3 Setbacks(p4)	3.a.ii Change "should" to "shall"; or implement codified setback guidance for corner lots in commerical districts. "Incorporate pedestrian amenities within frontage"
3		II.A.4 Site Landscaping(p4)	Change or remove "are encouraged to" and "may"; enforce landscaping typology requirements per zoning designation
4		II.B.1 Structure (p5)	Change "should include" to "must include"
5		II.C.2-5 Plazas, Courtyards, & Seating Areas (p6)	Replace "should" and "may" language to provide more clear and objective language, such as "Pedestrian spaces must be a minimum of...", and "Plaza or courtyards shall include public seating..."
5		II.D.2.a Lighting - Site Lighting (p7)	Replace "may" with "shall"
6		II.E.1.b.ii Crosswalks & Intersection Treatment (p8)	Reword sentence: "When the feature is not paved, integrate special landscaping with planters with perennials and/or annuals, rock walls, boulders, water features, and/or accent lighting with standard planted materials.
6		II.F.1.b Pedestrian pathways (p9)	Remove should: "Clearly define pedestrian connections in a combination..."
7		III.A Primary Orientation (p14)	Remove and replace subjective "should" language with clear guidelines such as "Ensure storefronts, windows, merchandise, and other aspects of business activity are visible to people travelling..." and "Buildings, landscaping... must be the predominate site features rather than parking lots."
8		III.B.1.b Entrances (p15)	Remove "should" and replace with "Further enhance principle building entrances with a change in material, color, or texture."
		III.B.3.b.ii Facade Details (p16)	Replace "should" language to provide more clear and objective language
		III.C.1 Massing (p18)	a.i Replace "should" and "where possible" language to provide more clear and objective language, "use natural earth tone colors and emphasize materials in their natural form where circumstances permit"

Code Amendment Master Matrix			
Design Guidelines (2019)			
Number	Timing of Amendment	Code Section and Topic(s)	Summary/Rationale
		III.D.1.c Design Concept (p19)	Replace subjective sentence with objective language "Use architectural design for commercial and mixed-use buildings to minimize corporate architecture."
		III.D.2.a.i Building Materials (p20)	Replace "should" and "predominatly" language to provide more clear and objective language, "More than 50% of the building facades must be composed of durable materials such as..."
		III.D.3.a-b Windows (p.20)	Replace "consider" with "install" or "construct".
		III.E.1.a Signs - Creativity and Quality Design (p22)	Remove "should" and "should be"; refer back to sign code where applicable and if necessary.
		III.E.3.a.i Pedestrian Oriented and Wall Signs (p24)	Change "should" to "shall" to provide more objective language
		IV.A.3.a.i-v Outdoor Spaces (p27)	Change "should" to "are to"; "Orient open spaces to recived sunlight, where circumstances permit"; "Provide rooftop outdoor spaces on taller mixed-use structures, where circumstances permit"
Category 2: Add/Update Definitions to Clarify Intent or Meet State Law			
Category 3: Delete Obsolete Language and Terms			
		I. C. Explanation of Design Guidelines - Structure of Design Guidelines	Remove the following sentence: "The guidelines use imperative words to describe the implementation of design goals. The terms "shall" or "must" indicate that the requirement is mandatory; while, the terms "should" or "may" signify that there is flexibility in application. Regardless of which term is used, applicants must address the design goal in their project design.

Code Amendment Master Matrix			
Design Guidelines (2019)			
Number	Timing of Amendment	Code Section and Topic(s)	Summary/Rationale
		I.D. Alternative amethods to achieve Design Compatibility	Consider revising so as not to be subjective: "The City may consider alternative methods to achieve design compatibility, provided the applicant or project designer can demonstrate the following:..."
Category 4:			

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 8/4/2025

Subject: Proposed Revisions to the Lake Stevens Municipal Code Design Guidelines

Contact Person/Department: , Community Development

Budget Impact:

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

None