



Hood River County Community Development

Planning, Building Codes, Code Compliance, Economic Development & GIS

601 State Street, Hood River OR 97031

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IMPORTANT NOTICE THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR PROPERTY

THIS LETTER IS TO NOTIFY YOU THAT HOOD RIVER COUNTY IS PROPOSING CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO ITS ZONING ORDINANCE THAT MAY AFFECT THE PERMISSIBLE USES OF YOUR PROPERTY, AND OTHER PROPERTIES IN THE AFFECTED ZONE, AND MAY CHANGE THE VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY.

The Hood River County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners will hold a series of public meetings over the next few months to consider various amendments to Article 75 of the County Zoning Ordinance affecting property located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

The proposed amendments under consideration were adopted by the Columbia River Gorge Commission on October 13, 2020. Adoption of these amendments is required of Hood River County per Section 7(b) of the National Scenic Area Act to ensure consistency between the Hood River County Zoning Ordinance and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan. Because the changes are mandatory, the County is prevented from adopting guidelines that are less restrictive than or in conflict with the amended Management Plan.

The first hearing to consider these amendments will be held before the County Planning Commission on **Wednesday, September 22, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.** At the conclusion of this initial public hearing, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners, who will then consider the amendments during a work session on **Monday, October 18, 2021 at 5:30pm** and a public hearing on **Monday, November 15, 2021 at 6pm**. All public meetings are scheduled to be held in-person in the Board of County Commissioner's conference room (*1st floor*) of the County Business Administration Building, 601 State Street, Hood River. Meetings will also be made available via Zoom for remote attendance, although those wanting to testify must either attend in-person or provide written testimony in advance of the meeting, as discussed below.

Once the County's review process has concluded, the ordinance will then be forwarded back to the Columbia River Gorge Commission, and then to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for final concurrence. Once final approval has been granted, the amendments will go into effect.

While the ordinance revisions include many updates, there are several Hood River County would like you to be made aware of, including the following:

- Changing the definition of "existing use or structure" to require that they not only be lawfully established, but also in continuous use to qualify.
- Allowing fruit and produce stands to sell a broader range of agricultural products, including up to 25 percent of incidental farm products, such as jams and jellies.
- Prohibiting certain variances from setbacks and buffers within the General Management Area (GMA) for certain building additions.
- Merging cottage industries into the existing home occupation allowance.
- Adding new guidelines for owner-occupied "overnight accommodations" limited to 90 room nights per year in the Rural Residential (G-RR5 and G-RR10) zone.
- Adding new size limitations on signs.
- Adding new standards to allow renewable energy facilities/systems, such as solar, thermal, and wind, that are accessory to an allowable primary use.
- Eliminating cluster developments from all zones.

- Requiring proof of sufficient water availability in agricultural zones prior to allowing new cultivation.
- Changing the requirements for establishing a primary farm operator dwelling in the Large-Scale Agricultural and SMA Agricultural zones to include an \$80,000 gross income requirement.
- Establishing new standards for roads not in conjunction with farm and forest use/practices in farm and forest zones.
- Expanding winery and wine tasting room provisions to allow for cideries and cider tasting rooms.
- Eliminating an allowance for establishing a dwelling in the Large Woodland (G-F-2) Zone.
- Requiring that temporary hardship dwellings on property zoned Commercial Forest Land (G-F-1) and Large Woodland (G-F-2) be connected with a dwelling that has not been discontinued.
- Removing life estates from the G-F-1 and G-F-2 zones.
- Exempting buildings that are 1,500 square feet or less from the compatibility guidelines for scenic resource protection.
- Requiring that the expansion of existing development be compatible with the scale of nearby buildings.
- Prohibiting variances for new and modified buildings that would or already protrude above the skyline as seen from visible key viewing areas.
- Requiring additional vegetative screening after five years if approved vegetation is insufficient.
- Requiring applicants to pay for required evaluations of significance and mitigation plans for cultural resources that are discovered during construction.
- Requiring a cultural reconnaissance survey for proposed uses within 100 feet of a high probability area.
- Requiring that development achieve a “no loss” of wetland acreage and function instead of a “no net loss.”
- Expanding the stream buffer from 100 to 200 feet along the Hood River.
- Precluding the removal of Oregon white oak trees unless no practicable alternatives exist.
- Requiring mass transit facilities for Recreation Intensity Class 3 day-use sites.

To review all proposed changes, a draft “redline” version is available for review or purchase (\$0.25/page) at the County Community Development Department (601 State Street, Hood River). The draft is also available for review on the County website (www.co.hood-river.or.us – click *Departments; Community Development; Planning Commission*, and then scroll down and click on the link “NSA Code Amendment”). For additional information or questions, please contact Eric Walker, Community Development Director, at (541) 387-6840 or by e-mail at: eric.walker@co.hood-river.or.us.

Additionally, if you are unable to attend the above reference public meetings and have comments that you would like the Planning Commission and/or Board of Commissioners to consider, please submit them to the County Community Development Department at least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing. Oral and written testimony can also be provided the night of the hearing (*except for the October 18th work session*), although at least 10 copies of any written comments should be provided. Please note that all comments received will be made part of the record and need not be submitted more than once, although they may be supplemented during subsequent meetings as necessary.

To find out more information about accessing the meetings virtually, please visit the following websites closer to the hearing dates:

September 22nd Planning Commission Meeting: (www.co.hood-river.or.us – click *Departments; Community Development; Planning Commission*).

October 18th and November 15th Board of Commissioner Meetings: (www.co.hood-river.or.us – click *Government; Board of Commissioners; Meeting Registration*).

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| <p>NOTICE TO MORTGAGEE, LIENHOLDER, VENDOR OR SELLER: IF YOU RECEIVE THIS NOTICE, IT MUST BE PROMPTLY FORWARDED TO THE PURCHASER. [NOTICE SENT: AUGUST 11, 2021]</p> |
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