

Carla McLane Consulting, LLC
170 Van Buren Drive
Umatilla, Oregon 97882
541-314-3139
mclane@eoni.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Echo City Council
cc. Dave Slaght, City Manager
From: Carla McLane, Contract Planner
Date: August 7, 2025
RE: August 14, 2025, City Council Public Hearing

This memorandum is provided in response to the comments from the July 21 City Council Public Hearing where seven comments were received in opposition and two presented neutral comment.

Opposed

Those who testified in opposition at the July 21 meeting focused on the golf course and canal zoning, concern that the city would adopt a HOA (Home Owners Association), concerns about notice requirements, comments concerning changes to the Comprehensive Plan, a suggestion that the Council “vote no,” and questions about the grant the supported the update.

Zoning: Response to the zoning of the golf course change in zoning was provided in the last memorandum and is restated here:

Change in the zoning of the Golf Course to Residential: As stated in the memorandum provided for the July 8 City Council Public Hearing, “no functional change to the golf course is suggested or recommended. In fact, the actions proposed both within the Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, and Zoning Map protect the current golf course and are put forth to create a future opportunity, when the golf course expands, to do so to allow residential use along the fairways of the expanded golf course.” When Chapter 2.1 Residential District is reviewed Golf Courses and their associated uses are allowed as a Conditional Use providing a mechanism for review of any proposal through a public hearings process.

In addition to the information provided previously and above it should also be noted that several commenters have stated that no other golf course in Oregon is zoned for residential purposes. That is not accurate with the closest example in Umatilla, a city also in Umatilla County and about a half hour from Echo.

A commentator also suggests that the zoning should just be left alone. That would be contrary to the discussion of the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) and does not reflect the proposed map in more instances that the commentator calls out. The proposed Zoning Map collapses the residential zoning from at least four residential zoning types to one. The objective of the Zoning Map amendment in conjunction with the proposed Development Code is to simplify how residential development is accomplished. The opposition to the change in zoning of the

properties between the canals is less clear and appears to be rooted in a desire to retain the Open Space designation regardless of the desire of the affected landowners. The following was included in the memorandum provided prior to the July 8 Public Hearing:

Open Space: This comment presented a concern that open space was being lost. The open space that is currently mapped as such does not fit the common definition of open space as none of it is accessible to the public nor does it have a natural feature, key components of most open space definitions. All the land that is currently zoned as Open Space in the City of Echo is in private ownership and would not be accessible to the public. Even the two properties that are proposed to be retained as Open Space are, to some extent, problematic should the public perceive them to be accessible when they are not based on ownership.

If the City of Echo desires to create open space opportunities, then a program should be developed that would initially identify what the objectives would be, move to identifying appropriate land, move to an acquisition effort, and conclude with development of the Open Space. Once owned by the City of Echo and developed appropriately it could be designated as an open space and developed into parks, trails, or other space that would be accessible to the public.

Home Owners Association: When developers create new residential subdivisions that may have private common space that needs to be maintained or if development standards that are beyond what a city's development code might provide for a Home Owner's Association is often created and Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions, or CCRs, are drafted and recorded with the Subdivision. Local jurisdictions cannot enforce these provisions as they are not adopted as local law; they are an agreement between the residents in that neighborhood. A city's development code should not be compared to a neighborhood's CCRs as they seek to accomplish different results in different ways.

Notice Provisions: Comment was raised concerning a perceived lack of notice. As stated previously, the City of Echo published notice of the hearings process in the East Oregonian prior to the Planning Commission public hearing and identified the two initial public hearings. At the conclusion of the first City Council public hearing notice was preserved by stating clearly the time, date, and place of the next public hearing. That has occurred twice for both the July 21 and August 14 public hearings. Mailed notice was provided to adjacent landowners of proposed changes in zoning. City staff have created a webpage where the proposed documents and much of the work of the PAC have been posted for access by the citizens and other interested parties. Any errors in notice have been cured as those parties have attended a public hearing and provided comment.

Comprehensive Plan: A commenter states that they do not believe that the Comprehensive Plan needs updated, sharing, "I believe there is very little that needs changing." A review of the redline of the Comprehensive Plan would indicate that the proposed changes focus on providing more detail about each of the Goals and the factors in Echo that would be affected. This additional detail is intended to provide a stronger basis for the Findings and Policies that provide the framework for the regulations that are proposed in the Development Code. The focus of these comments is on Goal 1 Citizen Involvements and 5 Natural Resources, Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas. In both instances the added text provides background information and outlines the status of facts about those topics. In both instances the current Comprehensive Plan provides no context for these Goals.

Vote No: The assertion from a letter submitted by E. Hampton suggests that the proposal is a redo and not an update. Staff would suggest that is not the case. The Comprehensive Plan has additional text that, as outlined above, seeks to provide clarity and a framework that regulation can be built from. For the Development Code proposal, it covers the same topics and requires much the same as the current Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances but is presented in a more modern format that is consistent with current Oregon Revised Statute or Administrative Rule related to land divisions and notice requirements. As to public involvement the Mayor appointed a Public Advisory Committee, or PAC, at the beginning of this process who participated in the development of the draft documents representing the citizens of Echo.

Grant Questions: Questions continue to be posed concerning the grant and whether the Council was aware of the grant, the requirements, and if they approved the grant. The answer to those questions are yes. Prior to submitting the grant, the Council approved a letter that was included with the grant application. At the time the grant was awarded there was another discussion with the council about the amount of funding and requirements. A third opportunity was when the consultant presented to the council about initiating the project and the need to appoint a Public Advisory Committee.

The following concerning the grant was included in a previous memorandum:

Grant Compliance: At this point the grant has been closed and is being reviewed by DLCD for reimbursement. Throughout the process the DLCD Eastern Region Representative attended most of the PAC meetings and regularly participated in the discussion. At no point were concerns raised about how the grant was being implemented, and she was aware of the time slippage for some of the grant deliverables. Much of the delay focused on a request by two PAC members for consideration of a 'no rules' zone that would not comply with the requirements in state statutes that communities adopt Comprehensive Plans and Development Codes. Compliance with the grant is a matter for the granting agency.

Neutral

Neutral comments came in the form of a letter from a PAC member and oral comments concerning the grant. The grant issues are generally addressed above.

Marie Rose implores the Council to consider both community and environmental impact as they deliberate towards a decision.

August 14 Public Hearing:

Staff are not suggesting an agenda or outline for the City Council discussion on August 14. At this point none of the proposed documents have been amended as staff and the planning consultant would prefer clear directions on what the City Council would suggest be changed prior to investing time in that endeavor.