



Walla Walla County Community Development Department

www.co.walla-walla.wa.us



From the Director's Desk by Tom Glover, AICP

Happy New Year!

As we typically do each January we now take a look back at the past 12 months and compile statistics that summarize the activity over the past year. While not all our statistics are in yet, we do see that in 2017 we issued 463 Building Permits. Of those, 44 were for new single-family home construction. And, of those 463 permits issued, 49 were for residential additions/remodeling jobs, and another 48 were issued for pole buildings. In all, the total valuation of projects approved by this department in 2017 is a little over \$30 million. That's a lot of investment in our county!

In other news, the County has begun its update of its Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations (includes zoning code). To begin, the County sponsored two open house meeting events: the first in Burbank, and the second at the Walla Walla Regional Airport. Both events each drew about 30 residents of the County, including a number of folks new to this process! There will be a second set of open house meetings to be held in the same locations at some time in spring. The deadline for completing the update is June 30, 2018.

In addition to the comprehensive plan update, the County is also reviewing the applications received during the 2018 application period. In all, 15 applications have been received (23 including SEPA review). Included are five applications to amend the urban growth areas of the cities of College Place and Walla Walla. The first workshop with the Planning Commission was held on January 3rd. A public hearing regarding a recommendation for establishing the preliminary docket (of amendments to be reviewed for a final docket) will be scheduled for February 7th.

On Monday, January 22nd the public is invited to join us at the celebration event for the Blue Mountain Region Trails Plan. This event begins at 5:30 p.m., at the Community Building at the County Fairgrounds. There will be pizza!

We welcome the new year, and the new opportunities that will come with it. As always, if you have any questions please contact us. Our main phone line is: (509) 524-2610. We can also receive inquiries by e-mail at: commdev@co.walla-walla.wa.us

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Code Compliance - Zoning & Chapter 8.24 Codes

In Walla Walla County there are almost 30 different zoning districts. Examples are Residential (R), Commercial (C), Agricultural (A), Rural Activity Centers (RAC), mixed use zones and many others. How a property is zoned determines which codes apply when a Compliance Officer investigates a complaint. In the Walla Walla County Code (WWCC) Chapter 8.24 – “Debris and Excess Vegetation” describes the most commonly violated codes. Chapter 8.24 is split into two sections - A & B.

For zoning designations where the minimum lot area is *greater than one acre*, the applicable codes are 8.24 A. That means: *no more than two cubic yards of waste, rubbish and trash, no outside storage of appliances, tires and other unused items or equipment, no more than five cubic yards of building materials, no more than 6 inoperable vehicles, and no weeds or brush that present a sight hazard to vehicles operating on the road right-of-way, or that could be a fire hazard.*

For zoning designations where the minimum lot area is *less than one acre*, the applicable codes are 8.24 B. That means: *no more than one cubic yard of waste, rubbish and trash, no outside storage of appliances, tires and other unused items or equipment, no more than five cubic yards of building materials, no more than 1 inoperable vehicle, and no weeds or brush over 12”.*

However, for RACs, it can be either 8.24 A or B based on the property size. If you do not know the zoning of your property, or have any other code questions please call code compliance at 524-2616 or follow this link: <http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/departments/comdev/CodeCompliance.shtml>.

Ron's Road Report on Winter Driving by Ron Bull

This winter has already exposed us to great variety of driving conditions: smooth ice, rough ice, melting ice, spotty ice, snow over ice, freezing rain, slush, frozen slush, frozen fog and white out. Sometimes I drive through all this in one day. Every winter, I enjoy the challenge of going from one inspection to the next through the beauty of our winter wonderland. (When not shrouded in fog).

After the first few weeks drivers get better at handling winter travel, but mistakes happen. I have noticed that some people drive faster than I do. (These drivers are reckless and foolhardy.) Some people drive slower than I do. (These drivers are cowardly and timid.) After all I am a published road expert and an expert driver. I always maintain the correct stopping distance and look ahead for obstacles, hazards, stranded motorists and road kill. The other day, headed out to the North end of our county, a person behind me thought that I was timid. He ended up on the side of the road with his vehicle turned askew. He then got back on Lyon's Ferry Road and followed me for 45 minutes. Now *this* is an intelligent driver.

I had a new experience last week. Never have I had such difficulty reaching my appointed rounds. Trees over the roadway and downed power lines. My phone kept ringing all day with contractors waiting for me to inspect. The county was a crossword puzzle with too many blacked out spaces. Everybody was inspected by the end of the day and we were all ready to start the new year with a freshly trimmed road system. I would like to thank all our road crews, emergency workers, and power company linemen. They were all working hard so that we could be warm and watch our football games. So, remember, if you see a white county truck on the side of the road askew, know that I will be following you the rest of the day. *** On a side note: Dead coyote road kill next to my house in the ditch. Not only good for 100 points, but a safer life for the Bull puppies.*

“Baby It’s Cold Outside” - Winter Construction

Building a house during the winter months can have its advantages. For example, because builders have fewer construction projects compared to the warmer months, you'll likely receive more attentive service from the general contractor and from subcontractors such as drywall specialists, painters and plumbers. Along with this definite advantage, though, consider the distinct disadvantages of wintertime home construction. It is easier to keep snow out of a structure than rain, but neither is ideal construction weather.

Plowing Through the Snow

Depending on your climate, a winter homebuilding project can be derailed by site access problems. After a significant snowfall, you can face plowing and shoveling expenses, so the construction crew can access the building site. If you're building near a steep, notoriously slick road, your crews will find it difficult to safely travel to the site after just a light snow. Large building supplies trucks, concrete trucks, and pumps may find the wintry conditions too challenging to reach the building site.

Job Site Challenges

On a cold-weather construction site, contractors will race to complete structural framing and roof construction work before snow or freezing rain impacts the interior space. Workers must also complete window and door installation more quickly for the same reason. Inside, crews often need temporary kerosene-fueled heaters to stay warm while they complete interior tasks such as plumbing and electrical work and to avoid materials and piping from freezing. Your roofing contractor will also find it harder to install shingles in cold weather. The shingles turn brittle and become harder to handle, and they often do not seal well, which requires hand tabbing them down, increasing cost.

The Process Continues

You'll likely face a longer completion time for your winter homebuilding project. Your crews will need to bundle up in layers to fight the cold, causing them to move more slowly. When you're building in our climate where snow and ice are common (welcome to Walla Walla), your construction crews can experience weather-related delays or even cancellations of an entire day's work. Even if the weather cooperates, winter days are shorter, giving the crews less daily work time and resulting in a drawn-out timeline.

The Dollars Add Up

Your wintertime homebuilding project will often cost more than a similar project your contractor undertakes in warmer weather. During the winter months, your general contractor may charge a premium for sending crews and equipment out in the cold. For cold-weather foundation construction, crews must often use ground heaters and blankets to keep the ground warm enough for excavation and concrete work. When the ground freezes we will not allow concrete to be poured until the ground is thawed. Concrete contractors frequently use a cold-weather materials mix that may also affect your overall building costs.

by Todd Blevins CBCO, Building Official/Fire Marshal



Floodplain Development By Don Sims

With winter and cold temperatures on our mind it is important to remember that flood events can occur year-round. Walla Walla County's rivers and creeks are prone to rise during periods of rainstorms or frozen rain when frozen ground conditions exist. Flooding can also be caused by spring time runoff or when summer thunderstorms occur. Even areas not near rivers and creeks can see flooding, all flash floods can occur without warning, storm water can back up when storm water facilities are not maintained, heavy rain events can cause serious damage anywhere. The threat of flooding speaks to the need to be conscious of our floodplains and understand basic techniques to mitigate development within them.

Floodplain regulations are intended to limit development or protect against flood damage within the mapped area of the floodplain. Flood damage prevention is achieved through either elevating new construction above the Base Flood Elevation (or the computed elevation to which floodwater is anticipated to rise during the flood event with a 1% annual chance of occurring), or, alternatively for non-residential buildings, installing flood vents to allow flood water to flow through a wall and prevent hydrostatic pressure buildup to destroy walls or foundations. Walla Walla County's flood damage prevention requirements are included in [Chapter 18.12 of the Walla Walla County Code](#).



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Inspection Hours 7 AM – 4 PM (M – F)
Office Hours: 8 AM – 4 PM (M, T, Th & F)
& 8 AM – 3:30 PM (W)

NOW OPEN DURING THE LUNCH HOUR