

Opposition to Proposed Critical Areas Ordinance

This letter comes in opposition to the proposed Walla Walla Critical areas ordinance, that will, if approved, will increase properties that have waterways from a 35-foot to 100-foot buffer zone. This proposed buffer zone would infringe on property owners' rights and freedom to what we can or cannot do on our own property.

Serenity Point Counseling Services, LLC, purchased our property in March 2020 with assistance from Washington Department of Commerce via Senate Bill 6248 with the specific goal of expanding behavioral health services in the city and county of Walla Walla.

Our property, 410 S Wilbur Ave., has a portion of Garrison Creek that runs through it. Half of the property is used for our behavioral health services, and the other half is a vacant lot. In 2022, to continue our expansion, the owners of Serenity Point began working with the City of Walla Walla and the Department of Commerce to divide our property in half with the goal of developing sixteen (16) affordable housing units.

Through the City of Walla Walla pre-application process, engineering and architectural services Serenity Point has invested \$44,914.50 into our project. As a requirement by the City of Walla Walla, to authorize the dividing of our property line running North to South, Serenity Point was required to construct an east to west public sidewalk along the fenced northern perimeter of our property. With permits, a Bond, construction of the sidewalk and replacing our fence Serenity Point invested another \$87,238.76. Finally, after the property division, Serenity Point paid \$85,350 to the Department of Commerce plus filing fees to release all interest for the vacant lot portion of the property to Serenity Point. In total Serenity Point has invested \$217,503.26 in our goal to create these 16 units.

The property division was finalized on August 24, 2026. The following week Serenity Point Ownership was notified of the proposed critical areas ordinance and were encouraged to schedule another pre-application meeting with City of Walla Walla officials.

At this meeting we were informed that in order keep our project vested under the current ordinances that we would be required to amend our current short plat that will require additional engineering services, an updated SEPA report and as of late last week City officials decided that we would also need to provide a Critical Areas report. All that needed to be completed by and presented by September 15, 2026, to keep our project vested under the current ordinance.

Because of the short turnaround time, the indecisiveness of city requirements for the amended short plat and capital turn around, Serenity Point was unable to meet the September 15 time frame so as a result a change in the proposed ordinance will have a significant and dramatic impact with a reduction of the developmental area of our property and four years of planning,

preparing and investment on our project that would bring much needed affordable housing to our community.

We present this historic overview as an example and emphasize how this proposal to change the current ordinance will impact on us and other property owners that share in the beauty of our property and water ways, if implemented.

In conclusion, we request our City Council to recognize how these proposed critical areas ordinance will infringe on our rights and freedoms and to oppose this change and protect us, the property owners.

Submitted With Respect, on this 21st day of September 2026

Patrick C. Flores, Managing Member
Serenity Point Counseling Services, LLC