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## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

For more information, refer to the Snohomish Municipal Code 14.15, in addition to RCW 36.70A.470(2) and 36.70A.130

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### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's guide for growth and development. It is a document that contains a future land use map, and goals and policies that provide guidance to the City as we grow and change to meet the demands of a growing region. Each year the City updates its Comprehensive Plan to meet changing conditions and invites the public to participate in this process.

### WHO CAN REQUEST A COMP PLAN AMENDMENT?

Any individual or organization may suggest amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or Development Code which are not specific to any site, such as text amendments or area-wide map amendments. For site-specific Comprehensive Plan amendments, a person with ownership interest in at least a portion of the site may initiate amendments such as a change of land use designation (rezone).

### HOW OFTEN IS THE COMP PLAN UPDATED?

The City's Comprehensive Plan is updated once per year. The City Planner docket complete applications received by March 31<sup>st</sup> in accordance with RCW 36.70A.470(2). Incomplete applications, or applications received after March 31<sup>st</sup> must wait until the next year's update to be processed.

### WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR COMP PLAN AMENDMENTS?

Approval criteria for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code include the following:

- It must be internally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, or Development Code, depending upon the nature of the amendment
- It must be consistent with the Growth Management Act and the State Environmental Policy Act
- It must be in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare of Snohomish residents

### HOW DO I BEGIN?

Early discussion with staff is encouraged, to help you determine the applicability of your project, and to assist you in making a complete submittal.

### WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

All Comprehensive Plan amendments proposed in any year are processed together. The typical amendment process is as follows:

- The application shall be submitted through the [SSPP](#). Within 28 days of the initial submittal, the City Planner issues a determination of completeness, or a letter of incomplete application.
- All applications determined complete by March 31<sup>st</sup> are included in the current-year Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle. A Notice of Application is issued for all current-year applications, including site posting and 300-foot mailed notification for site-specific applications.
- Following staff review of each eligible application, a docket review will be scheduled with the City Council. The City Council will determine which applications will be considered in the current year.
- After the City Council has established the docket, a SEPA threshold determination will be issued for all proposed amendments.
- The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the docketed applications and make a recommendation on each application to the City Council.
- The City Council will hold a public hearing and render a final decision, by ordinance, on each docket application.
- The process typically takes from nine to twelve months through the effective date of the ordinance.



## HOW DOES THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS?

Washington State law requires public participation in Comprehensive Plan amendments, under RCW 36.70A.140. This includes a “broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, opportunities for written comments, public meetings after effective notice, provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments” (1995 c 347 § 107).

The following public notice requirements apply:

- If a Determination of Non-significance (DNS) is issued, the notice shall state that the City Planner will reconsider the DNS if timely comments are received.
- Public notice is also sent to jurisdictional agencies listed in WAC 197-11-340(2). If a Draft EIS has been prepared, the notice shall state that comments on the DEIS will be accepted until, and at the hearing.
- The City Planner may publicize a legislative proposal more broadly than states herein, in order to gather more public input.
- Minor errors in amendment procedures, such as unintended inaccuracies in any public notice, shall not invalidate an amendment proceeding.

## WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION?

Complete applications are docketed by the City Council. The City Planner makes recommendations to the Planning Commission, which makes recommendations to the City Council on each docketed application. Following a public hearing, the City Council will make the final decision, as adopted by ordinance. Council may revise amendments as necessary; changes considered at the public hearing are processed in accordance with public participation requirements of RCW 36.70A.035.

## DOES THE STATE NEED TO APPROVE MY PROPOSAL?

Washington State law requires that proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or Development Code are reviewed by the Department of Commerce 60 days prior to final adoption, under RCW 36.70A.106.

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING?

Public hearings are scheduled 15-30 days after public notice of the threshold determination is posted. They are held in the George Gilbertson Board Room at 1601 Avenue D, Snohomish School Administration Building.

The following regulations apply to public hearings, per the Snohomish Municipal Code:

- There may be more than one public hearing associated with your proposal.
- If directed by the City Council, the Planning Commission may hold the public hearing at a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council.
- The City Council may conduct its own public hearing, in addition to, or in lieu of, any public hearing conducted by the Planning Commission.
- In the case of site-specific amendments to the Development Code’s Land Use Designation Map, the only public hearing shall be the one conducted by the Hearing Examiner (SMC 14.50).

## WHAT IF MY PROPOSAL IS DENIED?

Amendments of the Comprehensive Plan or Development Code may be appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, in accordance with RCW 36.70A.290.

Appeals entail filing a petition that includes a detailed statement of issues presented for resolution by the board, and must be filed within 60 days after publication of the City’s decision.

**NOTE: This information should not be used as a substitute for City codes and regulations. You should review all the details of your project with the Planning and Development Services Department at 116 Union Avenue (360-568-3115).**