



What is an Amendment?

The purpose of an amendment application is to change or adjust the City's approach to land use, development, and other factors contributing to the general health, safety and welfare of the citizens.

This application may be used to make amendments to the land use plan map or text of the Comprehensive Plan, text of the Spokane Municipal Code, site-specific or area-wide rezone, establishment of overlay zones, and annexations.

These applications are received all year long but are processed once a year under an annual amendment cycle. The procedure is contained in Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) 17G.020.

Application procedures:

Step 1 – Pre-application Form & Conference:

Applicants must submit a pre-application form and the pre-application fee in order to schedule a pre-application conference. A pre-application conference is required in order to give the applicant and staff an opportunity to explore options for addressing the applicant's desired change. These may be scheduled anytime by calling the Current Planning Section of Planning Services at (509) 625-6300.

Step 2 – Complete Application Components:

Counter Complete application submittal must have all required components, including the application checklist. The \$500 pre-application fee will be credited to the full application fee.

Step 3 – Deadline for Consideration:

Applications for amendments will be accepted anytime after the pre-application conference, but must be submitted no later than October 31 if the applicant is seeking application certification by November 30. All applications that are certified as a "complete application" by November 30 will be considered concurrently during the upcoming amendment cycle. Consideration of a proposal may be delayed if a large volume of requests is received or a proposal requires significant analysis. Please call your assigned planner to set up an appointment for application submittal. Applications turned in without an appointment will not be accepted.

Step 4 – Application Certification, Docketing:

Within 28 days of receiving an amendment application, planning staff will review it for completeness and adequacy, either certifying it as a "complete application" or notifying the applicant in writing as to which specific

elements are missing or incomplete. Once staff certifies the application as complete, it is then docketed for future consideration by the Plan Commission and City Council.

Step 5 – Full Review, SEPA:

Full SEPA review and in-depth staff analysis begins December 1 for those proposals certified complete by November 30. Priority of proposal review is based on the applicant's timely compliance with notice requirements and provisions of requested studies. Based on findings from the SEPA review and staff analysis, the plan commission may require the applicant to conduct additional studies. If required studies are not completed sufficiently in advance of the end of the comment period to allow for adequate staff and public review, consideration of those applications will be postponed until the next applicable amendment cycle.

Step 6 - Notice of Application/SEPA:

Staff provides Notice of Application to the applicant by mid-December. Applicants must complete all notice requirements by January 10. This is a combined notice, also announcing that the proposal will be reviewed under SEPA and comments will be accepted on environmental issues and any documents related to the proposal.

- Text changes to the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations require legal notice in the newspaper and notice in the Official Gazette.
- Map changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map or area-wide rezones require legal notice in the newspaper and notice in the Official Gazette, as well as posting and individual notice. Requirements for individual notice apply to all potentially affected sites.

Step 7 – Public Comment Period

The public comment period initiated by the notice of application may last up to 60 days, depending on the complexity and number of applications. During this time period each applicant shall present their proposal to each neighborhood council that their project is located in. Plan Commission consideration of each amendment proposal will be conducted at public workshops held during the public comment period.

Step 8 – SEPA Threshold Determination:

All applications are required to be reviewed under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). This review is for the analysis of the proposal's effect on the natural and built environment. The analysis of SEPA, when required, will be done on the cumulative impacts of the

amendment applications. Additional studies may be required for these proposals prior to the issuance of a threshold determination. If the required studies are not completed sufficiently in advance of the end of the public comment period to allow for adequate staff and public review, consideration of the application will be postponed until the next applicable amendment cycle. Within 10 days of the end of the public comment period, staff will make a threshold determination. If a Determination of Significance (DS) is made, those applications will be deferred for further consideration until the next applicable review cycle in order to allow adequate time for generating and processing the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Step 9 - Notice of SEPA & Public Hearing:

The combined notice of SEPA determination and notice of Plan Commission hearing must be published within 17 days of the end of the public comment period, and 14 days prior to the Plan Commission’s hearing on the amendment proposals.

Step 10 - Staff Report:

Once the SEPA appeal period ends, the staff prepares its final report, which addresses both SEPA and the merits of the amendment proposal. Copies of the report are mailed to the applicant and made available to any interested person for the cost of reproduction.

Step 11 – Plan Commission Public Hearing:

The Plan Commission’s public hearing on all amendment applications is conducted after the SEPA appeal period has expired or within 31 days of the end of the public comment period.

Step 12 – Plan Commission Recommendation:

The Plan Commission bases its recommendation on the review guidelines and required decision criteria, public input, conclusions from any required studies, the staff report, and findings from the SEPA analysis. The recommendations of approval or denial are forwarded to the City Council within 30 days of the public hearing. The Plan Commission’s recommendation may take the form of an approval, an approval with conditions, or denial.

Step 13 – City Council Decision:

The City Council’s decision takes into account the Plan Commission’s recommendations along with annual budget considerations. Corresponding rezones will be adopted concurrently with land use plan map amendments. If policy language changes have map implications, changes to the land use plan map and zoning map will be made accordingly for all affected sites upon adoption of the new policy language. Denied amendments have to wait one year before resubmitting, unless the proposal is substantially modified. All amendments are adopted by ordinance, pursuant to a public hearing and effective 30 days after the Mayor signs the ordinance.

Appeal:

Amendments adopted by ordinance may be appealed to the Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board within 60 days of the passage of the amendment ordinance, and to Superior Court within 21 days of the passage of the ordinance.

Amendment Exceptions:

The following are exceptions to the annual amendment cycle and may be processed at any time:

- Initial adoption of sub area plans resulting from a neighborhood planning process or annexation
- Adoption or amendment of a Shoreline Master Program
- Amendment of the Capital Facilities Program
- Emergency amendment
- Changes to resolve an appeal with the Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board or court
- Changes to address any recent state or federal legislation
- New development regulations that are consistent with and necessary in order to implement the Comprehensive Plan
- Technical corrections
- Area-wide or site-specific rezones that implement the Comprehensive Plan and land use plan map

For more information contact:

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