

Neighborhood Training: Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

February 13, 2020

City of Spokane
Neighborhood & Planning Services
Melissa Wittstruck Assistant Planner II



Basic Training

- What are Comprehensive Plan amendments?
- What is the process?
- How are citizens involved?
- When and how are comments and testimony given?

Current amendment applications are not included in the training

- **If you are unable to click on any hyperlink in the presentation, try right-click and choose “open hyperlink”**



Shaping Spokane

Comprehensive Plan
for the City of Spokane

Washington cities and counties that are planning under the requirements of the Washington Growth Management Act have comprehensive plans. These policy documents are the community's long range vision for its future growth and development.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

- RCW allows once per year amendment process.
- Cumulative impacts of proposed changes must be considered.
- SEPA Review must be completed.



The screenshot shows the Washington State Legislature website. The header features the text "WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE" in gold, with a small image of the state capitol building on the left and a portrait of George Washington on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with the following items: "Legislature Home", "House of Representatives", "Senate", "Find Your District", and "Laws & Agency Rules". The main content area displays the breadcrumb "RCWs > Title 36 > Chapter 36.70a > Section 36.70a.130". Below this is a navigation bar with "36.70A.120 << 36.70a.130 >> 36.70A.131". The main heading is "RCW 36.70a.130" and the sub-heading is "Comprehensive plans—Review procedures and schedules—Amendments."



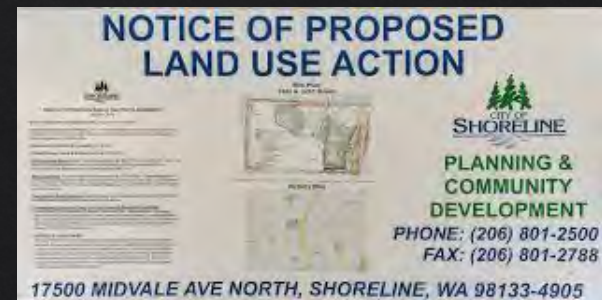
Basic Training

Q. Why is Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) amendment training valuable to all citizens and neighborhood councils?

A. Because the Comp Plan lays the foundation for how and where current and future growth and development occurs.

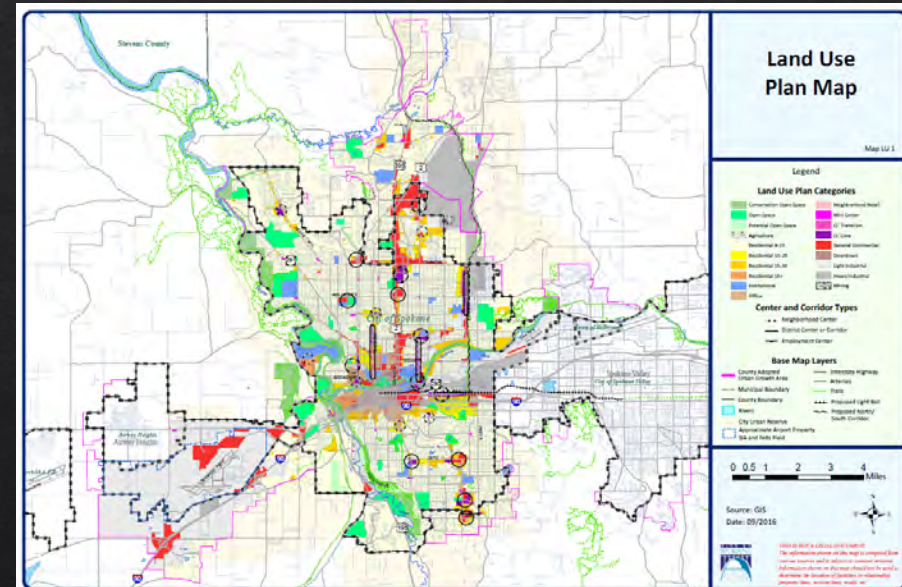
Citizens participate in creating and maintaining this roadmap over time. Amendments are one way the Comp Plan changes.

By the time you see signs like these in your neighborhood, the development is in a permit process and it's much more difficult to make a change.



Comp Plan Annual Amendments

Historically, most amendment proposals are to the land use chapter



Shaping Spokane Comprehensive Plan

City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan Amendments Since the Adoption of the Updated Plan in May of 2001

Adoption Date	Effective Date	Ordinance #	Nature of Amendments
6-9-03	7-18-03	C-33240	Amending the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Chapter to add text for two new land use categories, “Center and Corridor Core” (CC Core), and “Center and Corridor Transition” (CC Transition).
6-9-03	7-18-03	C-33241	Amending the Spokane Zoning Code Initial Land Use Code for Centers and Corridors (SMC 11.19.1930 – 11.19.19315) to add text changes for one new zoning category, Type 4(CC4): Mixed Use Transition Zone.
6-9-03	7-18-03	C-33242	Land Use Plan Map amendment to include land use changes for the Hillyard Business Corridor.

Annual Amendment Work Program

- Anyone can apply to amend the Comprehensive Plan.
- Amendments can be to text (policy) or maps in the plan.
- Application review is comprehensive.
- [SMC 17G.020](#) amended in 2017 to include “early threshold review,” aka “docketing.” This review is not on the merits, but on criteria for addition to the work program.
- Ad hoc committee of Plan Commission and City Council members makes recommendation to City Council setting the amendments that are added to the Annual Amendment Comprehensive Plan Work Program.
- City Council adopts Annual Amendment Comprehensive Plan Work Program by Resolution

SMC 17G.020.026, Threshold Review Decision Criteria

The City Council may add a proposed amendment to the Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program if 17G.020.026 criteria have been met (please refer to handout for criteria)

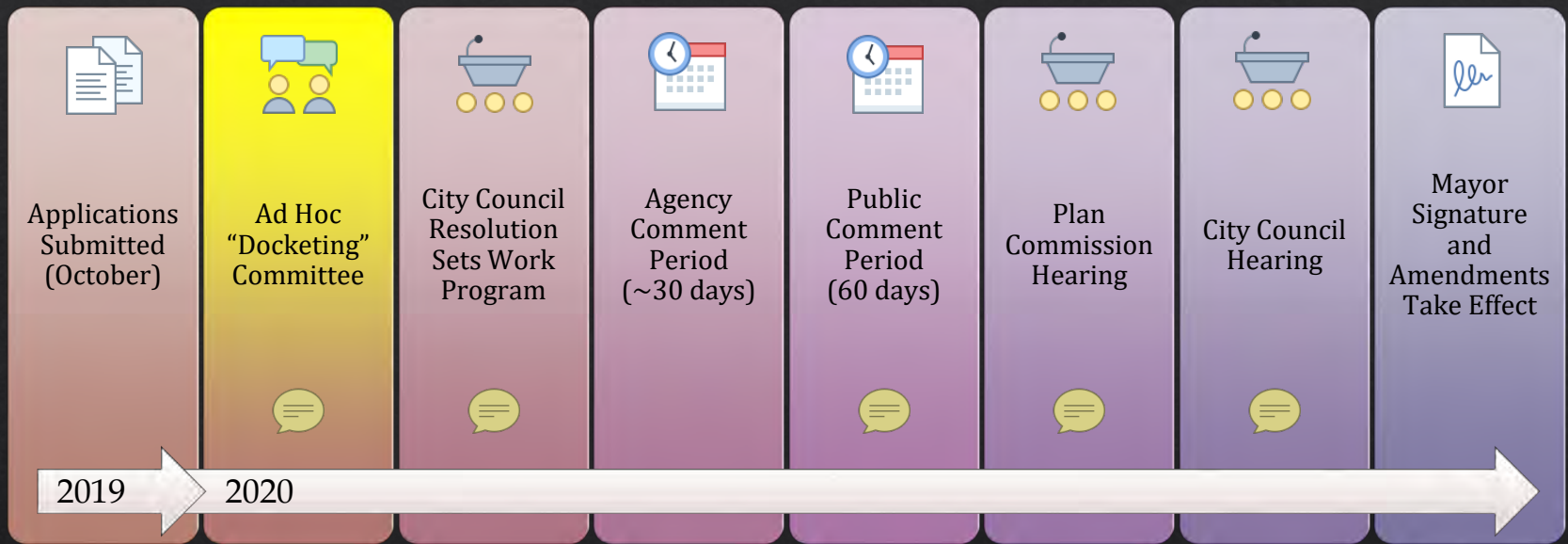
When City Council approves the amendment applications Work Program, staff begins comprehensive review.




Thresholds to Consider (SMC 17G.020.026)

- A. Appropriately addressed through the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Not already addressed by and ongoing work program approved by the City Council or by a neighborhood or subarea planning process.
- C. Can be reasonably reviewed within the resources and time frame of the annual program.
- D. Any expansion of geographic scope must consider shared characteristics with nearby, similarly-situated properties and limited to include only those properties with those characteristics.
- E. Proposed amendment is consistent with current general policies in the Comprehensive Plan for site-specific proposals.
 - ◆ Also considers consistency with CWPPs, GMA, and other State and Federal law.
- F. The proposed amendment is not the same as or substantially similar to a proposal that was not accepted for consideration in the previous year.
- G. The proposed amendment has been directed by State law or by the decision of a court or administrative agency with authority.

Annual Amendment Process



 = Opportunity for Public Comment (Written/Oral)

Milestones in the Process:

- Counter complete – typically in December
- **Threshold Review (aka Docketing) – in process**
- Agency & Departmental Review - 2019/2020 will be a 14 day internal & external review period.
- Notice of Application & Public Comment Period (60 Days)
- Plan Commission substantive workshops during 60-day period
- SEPA Determination & Staff Report – before the end of Plan Commission hearing
- Plan Commission Public Hearing
- City Council Public Hearing

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

- ◆ City of Spokane takes applications yearly
- ◆ May be text or map amendments
- ◆ Reviewed concurrently

- ◆ Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) 17G.020 outlines the amendment procedures & decision criteria
- ◆ Effectively two parts: Section 17G.020.010 - .026 cover amendment context. Sections 17G.020.030 - .080 cover the mechanics.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Guiding Principles SMC 17G.020.010

All actions taken during the annual process are legislative (City Council) actions

Guiding Principles of the annual process:

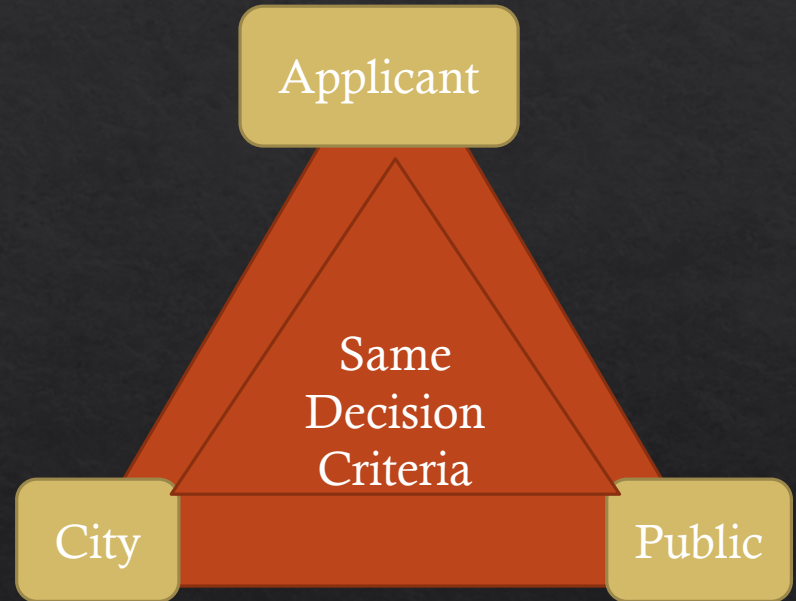
1. Keep the Plan alive and responsive to the community
2. Provide for simultaneous review of proposals to all for cumulative impact analysis of all applications on City-wide basis and in conjunction with budget decisions.
3. Make map adjustments based on foundation in policy language; apply consistently city-wide
4. Honor the community's long-term investment in the comprehensive plan through public participation and neighborhood planning by not making changes lightly.
5. Encourage development that will enable whole community to prosper and reinforce our sense of place and feeling of community; ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable manner.
6. Proposed changes must result in a net benefit to the general public.¹⁴

Amendment Criteria

SMC Section 17G.020.030

Criteria Include:

1. *Regulatory Changes, GMA ,*
2. *Financing, Funding Shortfall,*
3. *Internal Consistency,*
4. *Regional Consistency,*
5. *Cumulative Effect, SEPA,*
6. *Adequate Public Facilities, UGA,*
7. *Demonstration of Need*



Criteria SMC 17G.020.030

Regulatory Changes

- ◇ Amendments to comprehensive plans must be consistent with any recent state or federal legislative actions or changes to state or federal regulations, or new environmental regulations.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

- ◇ The change must be consistent with the goals and purposes of the stated Growth Management Act RCW 36.70A
 - ◇ 13 goals that speak to urban growth, reducing sprawl, efficient transportation, availability of affordable housing, among others. A 14th goal incorporates the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020.

Criteria SMC 17G.020.030

Financing

- ◆ GMA requires comprehensive plans to be supported by financing commitments. Infrastructure implications of approved comprehensive plan amendments must be reflected in the relevant six-year capital improvement plan(s) approved in the same budget cycle.

Funding Shortfall

- ◆ If funding shortfalls suggest the need to scale back on land use objectives and/or service level standards, those decisions must be made with public input as part of the amendment process and capital facilities program



Criteria SMC 17G.020.030

Internal Consistency

- ◇ The requirement refers to the comprehensive plan and all of its supporting documents (including but not limited to) such as development regulations, capital facilities programs, critical area regulations and any neighborhood planning documents adopted after 2001.

Regional Consistency

- ◇ All changes must be consistent with countywide planning policies (CWPP), comprehensive plans of neighboring jurisdictions, applicable capital facility plans, special district plans, regional transportation improvement plan, and official population growth forecasts.

Criteria SMC 17G.020.030

- Cumulative Effect
- All amendments must be considered concurrently in order to evaluate their cumulative effect on the comprehensive plan text and map, development regulations, capital facilities program, neighborhood planning documents, adopted environmental policies and other relevant implementation measures.
- Land Use Impacts
 - Applications should be reviewed for cumulative land use impacts. If adverse environmental impacts are identified mitigation requirements may be imposed as a part of the approval action.
- Grouping
 - Proposals for area-wide rezones or site specific land use plan map amendments may be evaluated by geographic sector or land use type to facilitate cumulative assessment.

Criteria SMC 17G.020.030 State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

SEPA must be completed on all amendment proposals after public comment and before end of PC hearing

- Determination of Significance (DS) If a DS is made regarding any proposal that application will be deferred for further consideration until the next applicable review cycle to allow adequate time to generate and process an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Adequate Public Facilities

- The amendment must not adversely affect the City's ability to provide the full range of urban public facilities and services (as described in Comprehensive Plan CFU 2.1, and CFU 2.2) citywide at the planned level of service, or consume public resources otherwise needed to support comprehensive plan implementation strategies.



What's Next?

- **Threshold Review underway with City Council (aka Docketing), *current step (probably early March)***
- Agency & Departmental Review - When Agencies and Interested City Department information requests are satisfied, then
- Notice of Application & Public Comment Period (60 Days)
- Plan Commission substantive workshops during 60-day period
- SEPA Determination & Staff Report - SEPA Review is underway through out the public comment period
- Plan Commission Public Hearing
- City Council Public Hearing



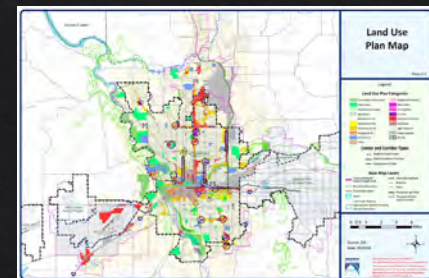
Commenting It's a Public Record

READ and provide comments on the amendment proposal and on the **SEPA checklist/supplement comment period**.

Provide comments **throughout the process**; to Planning, Plan Commission, and City Council. Watch for comment period and hearing notices. Ensure that the comment becomes part of the public record and gets to everyone by **always including Planner/Planning is on the email or letter**.

Commenting

- Facts, not opinions.** Studies would be one source for supporting comments. Decision-makers must have concrete information to consider.
- Comprehensive plan designation, goals, objectives, and policies for the property and area.
- Other planning documents for the area, such as a neighborhood plan (after 2001).
- If the application is for a map amendment, look up the zoning category in SMC 17C and become familiar with the permitted uses. Look at 17C for what is permitted. The applicant may or may not say what they intend to develop



Commenting



- A comprehensive plan map amendment application is *not* the development project itself. It is a request to make a future project possible by applying a different land use designation and zoning category.
- A policy amendment asks the community to consider correction or new guidance to better achieve the community vision; often of importance citywide.

References & Links

Shaping Spokane Comprehensive Plan


- ◆ Spokane Municipal Code – SMC 17A Administration, 17C Land Use Standards, 17E.050, and 17G.020.
- ◆ 2019/2020 proposed comprehensive plan amendments- Includes Planning Dept contacts.
- ◆ MapSpokane - Find information on parcels, such as current zoning.
- ◆ City of Spokane Building & Developer Services - Impact fee information.
- ◆ WA Dept of Commerce videos - Short educational videos on planning topics.
***April 16 Short Course in Local Planning, City of Spokane Valley*
- ◆ SEPA – Citizen Guidance (SMC 17E.050 Environmental standards)
- ◆ Municipal Research & Services Center - Planning articles.
- ◆ Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board - Handbook, cases, and other links.

How do Neighborhoods stay involved?

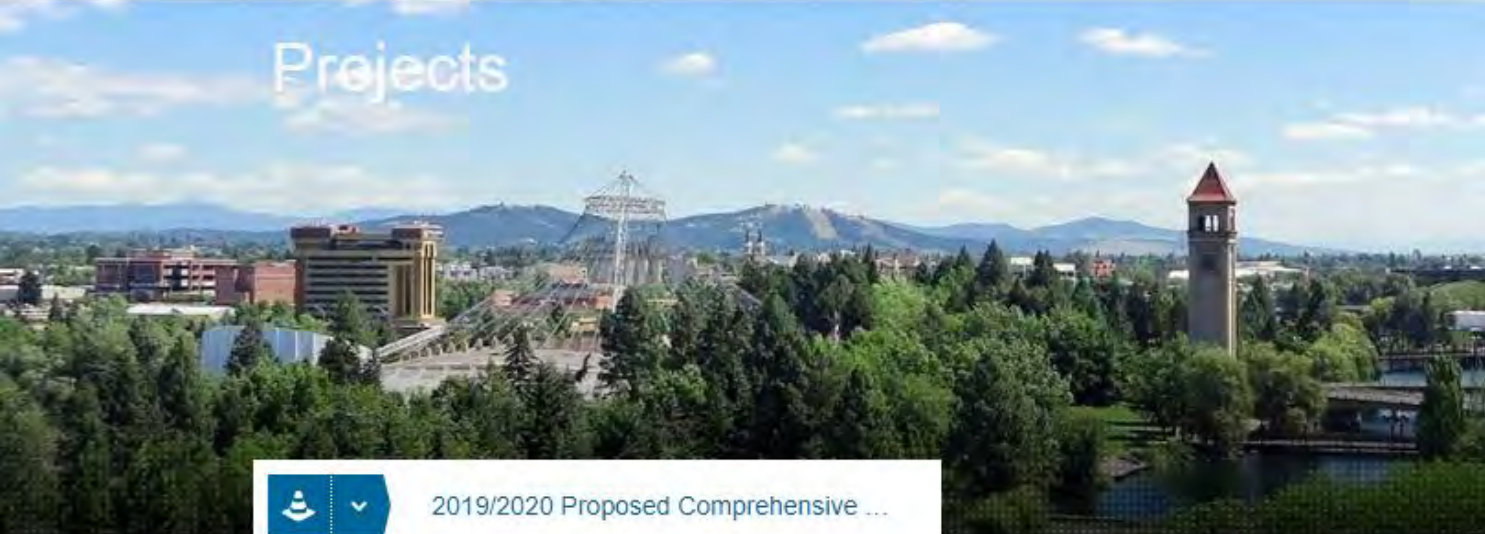
- Add your name (via email) to Planning's "interested persons" list for the application(s) that you are interested in.
- Attend the Plan Commission workshops when they occur for the application that you are interested in.
- Read the Spokane Municipal Code SMC 17G.020 if you'd like to learn more about the Decision Criteria and processing.
- Read up on the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Read neighborhood planning documents developed since Comprehensive Plan adoption – All these plans are available on Shaping Spokane as an Appendix.
- Written comment is most useful when it is factual, with support, and addresses the Decision Criteria or items discussed in the SEPA Checklist.


Project Page

my.spokanecity.org/projects/2019-2020-proposed-comprehensive-plan-amendments/

 spokanecity ▾

Projects



 2019/2020 Proposed Comprehensive ...

2019/2020 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments

[2019/2020 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments](https://my.spokanecity.org/projects/2019-2020-proposed-comprehensive-plan-amendments/)

Kevin Freibott kfreibott@spokanecity.org

Basic Training Review and Questions!

- ◇ What is a Comprehensive Plan amendment?
- ◇ What is the process?
- ◇ How are citizens involved?
- ◇ Providing comment

Current applications were not included in the training. Please keep questions focused on the topics covered in the training.

Thank You

Training Contact:

Melissa Wittstruck mwittstruck@spokanecity.org
509-625-6087

2019-2020 Annual Comprehensive Plan
Amendment questions or comments:

Kevin Freibott kfreibott@spokanecity.org
625-6184