

BRIEFING PAPER
City of Spokane
Planning & Economic Development
April 18, 2016

Subject

An ordinance to suspend the acceptance of annual site-specific and text amendment applications to the City's Comprehensive Plan for the 2016/2017 cycle until completion of the City's Comprehensive Plan 2017 Periodic Update.

Background

Annually, the city allows citizens, property owners, and city departments to request amendments to the maps or text of the comprehensive plan. The yearly deadline is October 31, and the processing for these applications occurs during the next year. For example, the city is currently reviewing three requests for amendment to the land use plan map. These applications were all made by October 31, 2015 and are being reviewed during 2016 and are commonly known as the 2015/2016 amendments. This annual review generally is completed in November or December of each year. The Comprehensive Plan may be updated only once a year, subject to certain exceptions, including emergencies.

Additionally, the City is required under RCW 36.70A.130 to take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations by June 30, 2017 to ensure the plan and regulations comply with the requirements of GMA - this is known as the "2017 Update". Work for this update is currently underway and must be completed by June 30, 2017. Because of the once per year limitation mentioned above, as a practical matter, the 2017 Update will foreclose other amendments in 2017, including site-specific map amendments requested by private applicants.

This proposed ordinance establishes that the 2016/2017 cycle will be "suspended" in lieu of the 2017 Periodic Update and clarifies that the city will not process applications to amend the comprehensive plan until the 2017-18 cycle which commences on October 31, 2017. These applications will then become part of the 2017/2018 amendment cycle. If any pending applications in the 2015/2016 cycle are unable to be completed during 2016, they will be suspended and resume consideration during the 2017/2018 amendment cycle.

Impact

Amendments to the land use plan map and subsequent city zoning are non-project in nature, but any projects that are contingent on a comprehensive plan amendment will be delayed by an additional year. Comprehensive plan amendments are not required by state law to be undertaken yearly. These yearly amendments require significant resources from the Planning Department as well as substantial investment of time on the part of the Plan Commissioners and the City Council.

Action

Planning Director recommends approval of this ordinance.

Funding

No funding impacts to the city.