

City of Seattle
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION

Use this application to propose an amendment to the goals, policies, Future Land Use Map, appendices, or other components of the adopted City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

Applications are due to the Seattle City Council (sent electronically to: compplan@seattle.gov) no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 15th for consideration in the next annual review cycle. Any proposals received after May 15th will be considered in the review process for the following year. *(Please Print or Type)*

Applicant: Chris Leman

Date: 5/15/20

Email: cleman@oo.net

Street Address: 2370 Yale Avenue East

City: Seattle

State: WA

Zip: 98102-3310

Phone: 206-322-5463

Contact person (if not the applicant): none

Name of general area, location, or site that would be affected by this proposed amendment (attach additional sheets if necessary):

Seattle as a whole

If the application is approved for further consideration by the City Council, the applicant may be required to submit a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist.

Acceptance of this application does not guarantee final approval.

Applicant Signature:



Date: 5/15/20

REQUIRED QUESTIONNAIRE: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

1. *Provide a detailed description of the proposed amendment and a clear statement of what the proposed amendment is intended to accomplish. Include the name(s) of the Comprehensive Plan Element(s) (Land Use, Transportation, etc.) maps, goals, and/or policies you propose to amend.*

In the Land Use section of the Citywide Planning element, amend the following Land Use Policies as follows:

- Revision of existing LU 5.6: “Establish setbacks in residential areas ~~as needed~~ to allow for the preservation or planting of large trees; for adequate light, air, and ground-level open space; to help provide privacy; to promote public health and urban wildlife; for compatibility with the existing development pattern; and to separate residential uses from more intensive uses.
 - Revision of existing LU 5.7: “Employ development standards in residential zones that address the use of the ground level of new development sites to fit with existing patterns of landscaping, especially front yards in single-family residential areas, yard areas in every multifamily lot, and to encourage permeable surfaces and vegetation.”
 - Revision of existing LU 5.8: “Establish tree and landscaping requirements that preserve and enhance the City’s physical and aesthetic character and recognize the value of trees and landscaping in addressing public health, urban wildlife, stormwater management, pollution reduction, heat island mitigation, and other issues.”
2. *For amendments to goals and policies only: Describe how the issue is currently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Why is a change needed?*

From its adoption in 1994 until the 2016 amendments repealed them, the Comp Plan contained Land Use policies that provided for yard setbacks and trees in all residential areas, including multifamily areas. Unfortunately, the 2016 amendments eliminated most of the protections for yard setbacks and trees in multifamily areas, while retaining them for single family areas. The impact of these changes was to further the ongoing loss of trees and other landscaping in multifamily areas and a consequent reduction in the levels of public health and livability in these multifamily areas. The proposed amendments in Land Use policies 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8 are needed to restore protections for trees, public health, and livability in multifamily areas.

3. *Describe why the proposed change meets the criteria adopted in Resolution 31807 which sets criteria for Council to consider an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.*

This amendment fully meets all of the criteria of Res. 31807. It is consistent with the Growth Management Act, with state and local law, and with countywide and multicounty policies; it cannot be addressed through regulations, budgets, programs, or neighborhood planning; it meets the four elements of practicality; and it is likely to make a material difference in a future City regulatory or funding decision.

4. *What other options are there for meeting the goal or objectives of the amendment? Why is a Comprehensive Plan amendment needed to meet the goals or objectives?*

From its first adoption in 1994 until its revision in 2016, the Comp Plan included specific policies and goals to encourage setbacks and trees in multifamily residential areas. The proposed policy amendments are needed in order to restore to the Comp Plan its role in providing for trees, livability, and the resulting positive public and psychological health in multifamily areas.

Adopting this policy amendment into the Comp Plan provides unique and irreplaceable stability to the City and to the public because the Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A) provides for a local Comprehensive Plan certain enforceable procedural protections that are present in no other City legislation. The Comp Plan by state law can be amended only once a year, and then only under statutory and regulatory process requirements.

5. *What do you anticipate will be the impacts of the proposed amendment, including impacts to the geographic area affected? Why will the proposed change result in a net benefit to the community? Please include any data, research, or analysis that supports the proposed amendments.*

The proposed policy amendments will restore to the Comp Plan its role of providing for trees, livability, and the resulting public health in multifamily areas. In doing so, it will restore the Comp Plan to its rightful place of guiding these decisions. The result will be to show that the City cares as much about the quality of life in multifamily areas as it does in single family areas. The amendments will produce better land use decisions, and greater public trust and faith in these decisions.

A wide range of scientific research persuasively shows that trees, landscaping, urban wildlife and open space and light around residences promote psychological and physical health and happiness. If the City wishes to attract people to live in multifamily areas and is sincere in promises of livability and health, how can it fail to provide these people the shade, beauty, noise insulation, clean air, songbirds, and other enjoyments that trees bring? How can children raised without trees nearby be expected to understand and appreciate nature and the City's claims to being concerned about the environment and global climate?

6. *How does the proposed amendment support the existing goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan? If the proposal would change existing goals and policies or add new goals and policies to the Comprehensive Plan, describe how the proposed amendment is consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A>), the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 (<http://www.psrc.org/growth/vision2040/>), and the King County Countywide Planning Policies (<http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/CPPs.aspx>).*

The proposed policy amendments give meaning to the Comprehensive Plan as a document that provides not just for housing density, but for public health, ecology, and quality of life. The amendments are completely consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act, the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies. In fact, these amendments will give reality to aspirations for livability and quality of life that are stated in these documents as well as in the Comp Plan itself.

7. *Is there public support for this proposed amendment? If the amendment would change the Future Land Use Map or a Neighborhood Plan, please list any meetings that you have held with the community about the amendment. If the amendment would have a citywide impact, please list any organizations that you have discussed the amendment with. Notes: You may attach letters of support for the amendment. The City will provide public notice and opportunity for public comment, and environmental review for all applications.*

Growth will not be sustained for long if those most affected by it--in urban villages and urban centers--believe (as increasing numbers do) that public officials aren't serious about balancing growth with livability and that these officials are more solicitous of the wishes of developers than of the welfare of their own constituents. It was a step backward in this trust relationship that the 2016 amendments removed the excellent policy guidance promoting trees, landscaping, urban wildlife and open space and light around multifamily residences. Reinstating the previous balance and trust into today's Comprehensive Plan is not only widely supported by the public; it is the only way to avert a worsening backlash against growth and a loss of faith in officialdom.

8. *Has the proposed amendment been considered before by the Council? If so, when was it considered and what was the outcome? If the amendment has been previously rejected, please explain either:*

- *How the proposal has changed since it was last rejected, or*
- *Changed circumstances since the proposal was last considered that support reconsideration of the proposal*

The proposed amendment was presented in the 2019 annual amendment cycle, but we have not found evidence of substantive analysis or discussion in any consideration by City Councilmembers or by staff in the City Council, Planning Commission, or Executive branch. Meanwhile, the March 2019 passage of the Mandatory Housing Affordability upzones has further accelerated the pace of development in multifamily zoned areas, removing vast numbers of large trees which are not being replaced on site or nearby because the current minimum setbacks and "yards" are too small to support them.

It is urgent to restore some balance in favor of keeping or replacing large trees on multifamily zoned land by adopting these Comprehensive Plan amendments to favor meaningful setbacks. Landowners and architects will thus be empowered to design into their projects existing or new large trees for the health and welfare of the growing population that the City wishes to attract to these areas.

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