

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

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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.) you propose to amend.*

This amendment would restore to today's Comprehensive Plan the original section L61 that was in the first Comprehensive Plan as adopted in 1994. The City originally committed, and with this reinstatement would recommit, to do the following in urban centers and urban villages (slightly shortened here, and with underlining to show what is proposed):

1. Monitor development activity annually to identify situations where the rate of growth is different from that anticipated by growth targets, either because: (a) it is occurring too rapidly and may be disruptive; or (b) there is insufficient growth to achieve planned conditions in designated villages.
2. Initiate a special review procedure which should include a review process with the affected community that shall consider the following, or other appropriate actions, if a determination is made that action is needed to address the rate of growth:
 - a. Provide resources to ensure rapid completion or revision of a neighborhood plan to better address how growth is to be attracted or discouraged;
 - b. Propose rezone actions or changes to development standards to reduce development activity, or, depending on the circumstances, increase development opportunities;
 - c. Make commitments for specific public improvements to mitigate the impacts of added growth or as incentives to attract desired growth; and/or
 - d. Establish annual development targets to more closely monitor the rate of growth in the affected area.

[Note on source: The City Council passed Seattle's original Comprehensive Plan on July 25, 1994 as Ordinance #117221. The only on-line version of the ordinance is a PDF scan: http://clerk.seattle.gov/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_117221.pdf (scanned; not searchable). Within the document, Section L-61 can be found on the original pages 29-30, or pages 35-36 as assigned by the PDF format.]

2. *For amendments to goals and policies only: Describe how the issue is currently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Why is a change needed?*

Reinstating section L-61 from the original Comprehensive Plan is urgently needed now because its repeal in the late 1990s--done by the Mayor and City Council of that era without meaningful notice to or consultation with the public--upset the promised balance between growth and livability that was at the heart of the Comprehensive Plan and made the urban centers and villages approach widely acceptable.

The neighborhoods that accepted their designation in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan as urban villages and urban centers did so based on the Mayor and City Council's commitment that, via neighborhood planning, they could take or leave their urban village or urban center classification. All accepted to remain as urban villages or urban centers, in significant part on the City's commitment that while growth would come, it was to be at no more than a level

consistent with livability; that growth would bring public investments in amenities; and that growth expectations for some urban villages would be scaled back and others increased if growth turned out to be poorly distributed across Seattle and if, because of an oversupply or undersupply of growth in one neighborhood or another, livability were under threat.

The most important part of the promise made to the urban villages by the 1994 Comprehensive Plan ordinance was its section L-61 which established a strong process whereby areas that had met their growth targets could count on City officials to pause further growth to ensure that sufficient amenities were mitigating the impacts felt so far. If further growth in a particular urban village or urban center proved not acceptable or sustainable, that neighborhood could count on City officials to call a halt to further growth there and to direct it elsewhere.

Unfortunately, in one of the baldest “bait and switch” maneuvers in Seattle history, the then Mayor and City Council within years gutted section L-61, leaving the urban villages with unbalanced growth and little faith that livability would be more than a slogan. In an Orwellian reversal of meaning, the “urban village strategy” increasingly became a way to deny to urban villages and urban centers the balancing protections for village-like livability that they were promised by the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and especially by its now-lost section L-61.

3. *Describe why the proposed change meets the criteria adopted in Resolution 31402 which sets criteria for Council to consider an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.*

Section L-61 was a promise crucial to widespread support for the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, and the quiet repeal of section L-61 was a broken promise of biblical proportions. Reinstating section L-61 is essential to save the Comprehensive Plan from being just a growth program and from the division that stems from it being recognized as such by the public. Attempts outside the Comprehensive Plan to balance growth with livability and to reassure the public that its concerns are heard have not worked and will not work. Only by reinstating section L-61 in the Comp Plan can the Mayor and City Council restore the balance and trust under which the urban centers and urban villages were originally established.

Of course, section L-61 was once in the Comprehensive Plan, and to be there it was fully vetted by the Law Department. So, section L-61 is available to be quickly reinstated after being so unwisely and unfairly removed.

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?*

The Comp Plan is the only proper place for this policy, as it related to the implementation of the Comp Plan itself. Addressing this issue in any way other than amending the Comp Plan is therefore impossible. The proposed policy amendment is needed in order to restore to the Comp Plan the balance and trust that accompanied the original adoption of the Comp Plan in 1994.

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.

Amending the Comprehensive Plan as proposed here--not adding something new, but restoring the values and the checks and balances that inspired the Plan's original 1994 adoption--will ensure that growth is made livable and acceptable for those who live or work in the urban villages and urban centers. Producing more balanced and sustainable development via section L-61 will increase the public's buy-in for growth. By thus reversing the backlash against growth, the proposed amendment will make growth truly sustainable.

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 amendment gives meaning to the Comprehensive Plan as a document that brings both growth and livability to the urban centers and urban villages. The Comprehensive Plan's statements of vision, goals, objectives, and policies continue to speak about livability and public involvement, but too often only in words not actions—and words that are contradicted on the ground by rapacious growth, by government's deafness to public concerns, and by the lack of current tools to balance growth with livability. Restoring the balance and assurance of the section L-61 process will redeem the current Comp Plan's best claims to livability and democracy and will rescue them from empty irrelevance.

The proposed amendment is completely consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act, the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies, as well as with the many commitments to livability found in Seattle's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) and Mandatory Housing Affordability program (MHA).

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 in their promises to balance growth with livability and that these officials are more solicitous of the wishes of developers than of the welfare of their own constituents. The public yearns for the true, open, and voluntary compromise struck by the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and by the promise in section L-61 of fair treatment that was so unjustly snatched back within a few years of the Plan's first adoption. 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 changes since it was last rejected, or*
- Changed circumstances since the proposal was last considered that support reconsideration of the proposal*

This amendment was submitted in 2017 and 2019 but not docketed for study. We have not found any evidence of consideration in which City Councilmembers and staff, members of the Executive Branch, or the Planning Commission actually analyzed and discussed the amendment proposal.

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