



PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Planning Division

210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

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Date Received (Stamp)

Initials

Application #

APPLICATION

**Requesting the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department
to initiate a Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Plan or
Land Use Regulatory Code/Text**

Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan is the City's official statement concerning future growth and development. It sets forth goals, policies, and strategies for the health, welfare, and quality of life of Bellingham's residents. The adopted comprehensive plan contains several components or elements, including the neighborhood plans. The Growth Management Act and subsequent amendments limit changes to comprehensive plans to once a year. As an element of the comprehensive plan, the neighborhood plans are also subject to this limitation.

This application should be used to submit proposed changes or revisions to Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Plan or Land Use Regulatory Code / Text. The Planning and Community Development Director will review and initiate all proposed amendments that meet the three criteria specified in this application and follow the required December 1 deadline for submittal of an amendment.

A. CONTACT INFORMATION

Neighborhood _____

Applicant (contact person) _____

- Individual**
- Group / Organization**
- Neighborhood Association**

Address _____

City / State / Zip Code _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Fax _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

C. AMENDMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The City Council and Planning Commission considers Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan Amendments annually pursuant to the Bellingham Municipal Code Chapter 20.20.000 Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan Amendments. BMC Chapter 20.19 lists the rezone procedure and BMC Chapter 20.22 specifies the process for amendments to development regulations. If the proposed amendment is initiated by the Director, the Planning and Community Development Department will prepare a staff report and recommendations based on the applicable code and state law criteria.

D. DIRECTOR'S CRITERIA

For the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department to initiate an amendment to the comprehensive plan, neighborhood plan and/or regulatory code / text, the applicant must demonstrate that the amendment meets the following criteria.

1. CONSISTENCY WITH BELLINGHAM'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposal must be consistent with Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan. The adopted Plan is now the foundation for our community's development activities and amendments to Neighborhood Plans and the Development Code must be consistent with this document. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan itself, shall only be supported if the proposed amendment is minor in nature, would not require additional environmental review and would not affect more than one plan element. For example, a proposal to close an arterial street in a neighborhood would not be consistent with the Plan, would require additional review and would affect more than one plan element.

2. ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSING GROWTH

The proposal must be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's expected number of new housing units "to be accommodated" (see Table 14, LU-16C of the Comprehensive Plan, New Housing Units Accommodated by Neighborhood for details) For example, if a neighborhood were to propose a "downzone" (a reduction in permitted density) which would result in a significant reduction in the number of housing units that might be accommodated, that proposal would not be supported. If, however, the proposal also included some new element to compensate for the lost density, such as permitting "carriage housing" (also called accessory dwelling units or granny flats which are built over a garage) to accommodate the additional density, such a proposal would be acceptable.

3. BROAD-BASED NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT

The proposal should have generally strong support within the neighborhood, following an inclusive process. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires a balance of many competing and often conflicting interests. The ideal indicator of broad-based support would be when everyone (owners, renters, developers) agrees about a course of action. The least desirable situation would be when all of the stakeholders oppose an idea for different reasons. While it is very difficult to objectively identify a clear standard of neighborhood involvement and support, a general principle is that the greater the support from the neighborhood, the higher the probability for my initiation of the proposal.

E. QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

The following questions provide a structure for developing an effective amendment to Bellingham’s Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Plan and Development Code. Address each question and submit your written responses to the City Planning and Community Development Department by December 1. The Director will review your proposal to determine if it meets the criteria specified in this application. If your proposal meets the criteria, the Director will initiate it for consideration in the Comprehensive Plan/Neighborhood Plan process for the following year. There is no guarantee that the City Council will approve your amendment.

1. Identify the issue related to your neighborhood plan, a regulation or the comprehensive plan that you wish to address by this proposal. Write a description of this issue.
2. Draft a proposed amendment that would address a solution to this issue.
3. Explain how it meets the Director’s criteria for initiation of the amendment by answering the following questions:

A. What Comprehensive Plan goals and policies support the proposed amendment?

B. Would the proposed amendment reduce the number of housing units that could be accommodated?

If so, what other amendments do you propose that would compensate for this reduction by providing an opportunity for an equivalent increase in housing units?

C. What methods have you used to determine whether those affected by the amendment would support it? Include copies of notices, surveys, mailing lists and/or other information used.

D. Who is in favor of the proposal? Submit copies of letters, surveys or other documentation of support.

E. Who is opposed to the proposal, and what are their issues?

F. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

___ Signed Application

___ Completed Questionnaire with attachments and supporting documents

___ Parcel(s) Map identifying the area that would be affected by the proposed amendment (if applicable)

___ Letter(s) of support from affected property owners and/or neighborhood groups

___ Proof that the owner(s) of affected property has been notified of application (if applicant is not property owner)

___ A list of all attachments included with application

G. SUBMITTAL OF APPLICATION

Submit all documents to the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department no later than 5:00 p.m., December 1, for consideration the following year.

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