

## COMPREHENSIVE / NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

The Growth Management Act (GMA) allows amendments to the Comprehensive Plan only once a year, with certain exceptions. Bellingham's Neighborhood Plans are a component of our Comprehensive Plan and are therefore subject to the once a year amendment limitation. The GMA also requires Neighborhood Plan amendments to be consistent with, and implement the Comprehensive Plan.

### Types of Comprehensive /Neighborhood Plan Amendments

**Site Specific:** Property owners or their authorized representatives may apply for a proposed amendment to Comprehensive Plan / Neighborhood Plan land use designations relating to a specific site. Site specific proposals must be filed concurrently with an application for rezone.

**Non-Site Specific:** Anyone may apply for other types of amendments that involve non-site specific Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan provisions.

### Process Steps

Comprehensive and Neighborhood Plan amendments are considered under a two part process. The first part of the process establishes the list of comprehensive / neighborhood plan amendments ("the docket") that will be considered in the annual amendment process. The second part of the process is a final review and decision on applications that were approved for inclusion in the annual docket.

**1. Docket Application.** Applications are due by **April 1** of each year for review during the following year. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. An application consists of the following materials:

- Docket Application Form.
- Fee payment calculated at 10% of the total Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan amendment fee.\* The fee is not refunded if the proposal is not docketed. The fee is calculated as follows:

**(a) Site specific Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan amendments:**

\$1,594 base fee + \$255 notice fee + \$213 per acre over first acre (\$12,750 max.) x 0.1 = fee due at docket application. Final fees will be calculated at the time the application is submitted.

OR

**(b) Non-site specific Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan amendments:**

\$1,594 base fee + \$255 notice fee x 0.1 = \$185 due at docket application.

\*Recognized Neighborhood Associations are exempt from this fee.

**2. Establishment of the Annual Docket.** Applications for the annual review docket shall be determined by the City Council Committee of the Whole based upon meeting the docketing criteria outlined in Bellingham Municipal Code 20.20.030.

**3. Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan Amendment Application.** Applicants for proposals that have been included in the annual docket must submit a Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan Amendment application **within 45 days of the City Council docket decision or a date approved by the Planning and Community Development Director** in order to continue to final review. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. If a complete application is not submitted by the deadline the proposal may be removed from the docket.

**Submittal Requirements.**

**A. Site specific proposals must complete the following:**

- Pre-application conference with City staff. The purpose of the conference is to obtain guidance on the proposal. A waiver from the staff conference may be requested. *See Pre-Application Meeting Information and Application and waiver forms.*
- Neighborhood meeting. *See Neighborhood Meeting Instructions form.*
- Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan Amendment Application form.
- SEPA Checklist, including Part D for Non-Project Actions.
- Submit Rezone Application form.
- Attach a map (8.5" x 11") identifying the property included in the proposed amendment and showing parcels and streets located within and adjacent to the site.
- Payment of fees calculated as:

Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan amendment fee balance:

\$1,594 + \$255 notice fee + \$213 per acre over the 1st acre (\$12,750 max.) x 0.9  
+ Rezone fee: \$1,594 + \$308 notice fee + \$213 per acre over first acre  
+ SEPA Checklist fee: \$266

= TOTAL FEE (Final fees will be calculated at the time the application is submitted.)

**B. Non-Site Specific Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan amendments must submit the following:**

- Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan Amendment Application Form.
- A completed SEPA Checklist including Part D for Non-Project Actions.
- Payment of fees:\*

Comprehensive / Neighborhood Plan amendment fee balance:

\$1,594 + \$ 255 notice fee - \$185 docket fee = \$1,664  
+ SEPA Checklist fee: \$266

= \$1,930 TOTAL FEE

\*Recognized Neighborhood Associations are exempt from these fees when authorized by the City Council at the time of docketing.

**4. Final Review.** Applications the City Council approves to be included in the annual docket will then receive further consideration through a Type VI process as described in Bellingham Municipal Code 21.10.150 and includes:

- Noticed public hearing and recommendation to the City Council by the Planning Commission.
- Noticed public hearing and decision by the City Council.

**Criteria**

Questions in the application form are designed to help applicants address the factors and criteria the City will use in deciding whether a proposed amendment should be approved. The specific factors and criteria are listed in Bellingham Municipal Code 20.20.040.