



May 13, 2020

Guidelines for Submitting Applications for 2021 Amendments to the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan

The Pierce County's Comprehensive Plan is a local policy document that directs where and how future residential, commercial and industrial growth will occur. This long-range planning document contains goals and policies, which are intended to guide future land use, community services and facilities, parks and recreation, critical areas such as wetlands, steep slopes and rural lands, and economic development for the County. An amendment to the Plan is a process by which the County modifies land use designation and growth policies. This is a process involving Pierce County Council, County staff, local land use advisory commissions (LUACs), and the Planning Commission. Any interested person, organization, agency, business, or tribe may submit requests to the County for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Application Period and Fees

Pierce County Council considers comprehensive plan amendment applications every two years. Applications for amendments will be accepted from July 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020 through the PALS online permitting system. Unfortunately, any applications received after 4:00 p.m., July 31, 2020 will be returned to the applicant. Once an application has been deemed complete by the County, the applicant will be notified to submit payment of a non-refundable fee of \$500 within 3 business days.

An additional \$2,500 non-refundable fee will be due within 10 business days after the application of the proposed amendment is initiated by County Council.

A fee is required for each Comprehensive Plan amendment whether a request to initiate an amendment is made to the County Executive or County Council. If an applicant fails to pay the required fee, staff will be unable to proceed with the review of an application(s), and this will result in the expiration and cancellation of an application(s). An application fee will not be required for a companion application.

Types of Amendments

There are four types of Comprehensive Plan amendments:

- Text
- Community Plan
- Area-Wide Map
- UGA/PAA

In some cases, proposed policy changes may require two types of applications to make parallel changes. For instance, a Community Plan amendment may also require a Text amendment when the Comprehensive Plan policies are more restrictive than what is proposed through the Community Plan amendment. If you have questions as to whether this applies to what you are proposing, please contact Jessica Nappi at Jessica.Nappi@piercecounitywa.gov or the Long Range Planning division of Planning and Public Works at (253) 798-3736 and we will assist in this determination.

Text Amendment is:

A change to the policies and goals of any element of the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, except for the Capital Facilities Element and community plans.

Community Plan Amendment is:

A change to the text, goals, policies of an adopted community plan. Changes to land use designations in a community plan is an Area-Wide Map Amendment.

Community Plans not eligible for amendments:

Per Pierce County Code 19C.10.050, applications will not be accepted in the following community plan areas as they are currently under an update process (please refer to the [Community Plan update webpage](#)):

- Frederickson Community Plan
- Mid-County Community Plan
- Parkland-Spanaway-Midland Communities Plan
- South Hill Community Plan

Area-Wide Map Amendment* is:

A change to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations Map must include separate properties under various ownerships. Successful Area-Wide Map amendments result in rezoning property.

Single parcel or single ownership amendments may be accepted only if correcting technical errors, or for applications involving Master Planned Communities, Master Planned Resorts, and Employment Based Planned Communities.

Applications for Area-Wide Map amendments requesting redesignation of existing Employment Center (EC) parcels to another designation must include either:

- a companion Area-Wide amendment application proposing to redesignate other parcels to Employment Center that results in a no net loss of EC properties. The companion application must propose redesignation of an equivalent acreage of other urban parcels that are currently designated or zoned for non-residential use and are not being used for uses permitted in the Employment Center zone; or
- the application represents that the property was inappropriately designated EC. In this case, the application must show the property is unlikely developable for industrial uses due to:
 - adjacent incompatible uses;
 - the extent of critical areas; or
 - insufficient size or improper location for industrial use.

(See Pierce County Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-56.3.3)

UGA/PAA Amendment* is:

A change or revision to the Urban Growth Area (UGA) or Potential Annexation Area (PAA) of any city or town within Pierce County. An amendment to the UGA that results in changes to a property's land use designation from rural to urban or vice versa must include a new land use designation for the area under consideration. Any application for a UGA amendment that increases the residential or employment capacity of an urban growth area must include a companion application for reducing the urban growth area in another location to ensure that the amount of residential land capacity is not increased (see Countywide Planning Policy AT-2 2.3). The establishment of a PAA allows for the annexation of the area by the associated city or town.

Applications for a UGA expansion that result in a net gain of population or employment capacity will need a companion amendment or capacity credits from the Urban Growth Area Capacity Bank. If you are proposing to use capacity credits, it must be authorized by the Pierce County Regional Council. (See Countywide Planning Policy AT-2 2.5)

*Pierce County Transfer of Development Rights program: If an amendment results in a change from the current land use designation on a property to a designation that allows a higher residential density, applicants for development permits will be required to purchase development rights through the Pierce County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. This is a requirement even if the future development of the property does not include residential development. The purchase of these development rights is required for both residential or non-residential building permits. For more information about the TDR program and how to determine the TDR credits may be necessary, please visit the website at: www.piercecountywa.gov/3268/TDRPDR.

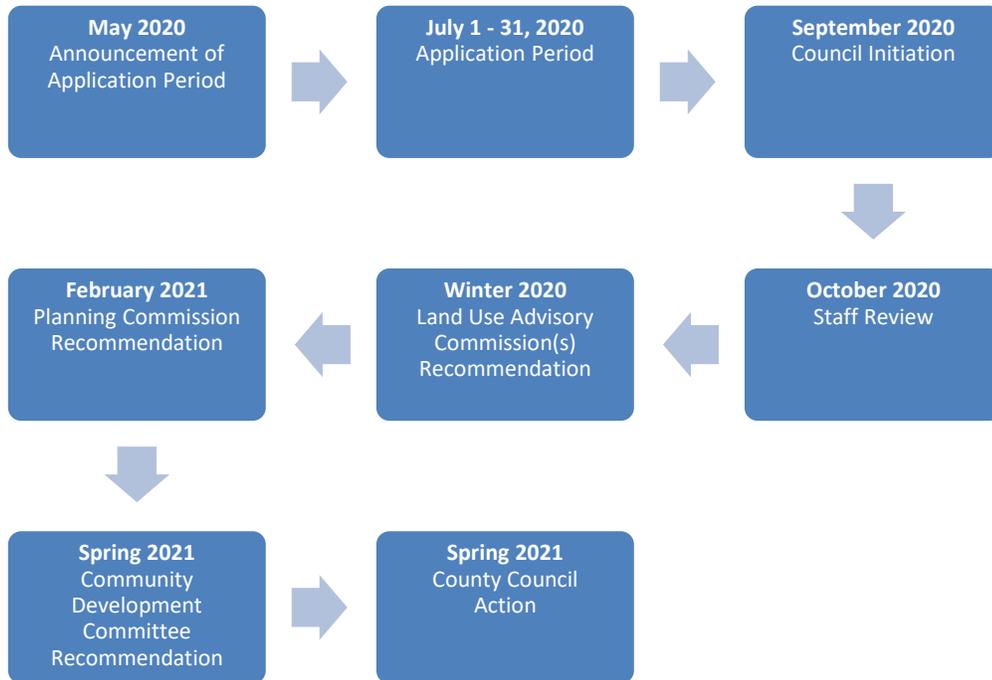
*Notification Requirements: All application submittals for Map and Urban Growth Area amendments must include an affidavit documenting that taxpayers or property owners for all parcels included in the amendment request have been notified of the application by mail prior to submittal for initiation by the Council. A copy of the notification letter and mailing list must be attached to the affidavit and application.

Procedures

All proposed amendments will be considered in accordance with established procedures in Pierce County Code Chapter 19C.10. To propose a comprehensive plan amendment, an individual must submit an application form, provide the required materials, and pay the application fee. The procedures are generally as follows:

1. Application Period – Applications must be submitted through the [PALS Online Permits](#) between July 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020. Payment of a non-refundable fee of \$500 is required within 3 business days of application being deemed complete by County staff.
2. Initiation – Upon closure of the application period, the County Council reviews all complete applications and conducts a public hearing to determine which applications to initiate. Initiation indicates that the amendment will continue through the review process; it does not signify approval of the amendment. The County Council will decide which applications will continue through the process by September 30, 2020. If the County Council initiates the amendment, the remaining \$2,500 fee is required within 10 working days of the initiation.
3. Staff Review – The Planning and Public Works (PPW) department reviews, evaluates, and provides its recommendation through written reports to the Planning Commission.
4. Land Use Advisory Commission(s) – The land use advisory commissions (LUACs) reviews and make recommendations to the Planning Commission on initiated Community Plan amendments, Area-Wide Map amendments, Text amendments, and Urban Growth Area amendments affecting their respective community. Members of the public have an opportunity to provide written or oral comments to a LUAC.
5. Planning Commission – The Planning Commission will complete its review and evaluation of all initiated applications, hold a public hearing, and make a formal recommendation to the County Council by February 15, 2021.
6. Community Development Committee – The Community Development Committee (CDC) will review and evaluate the Planning Commission's recommendations, hold a public hearing, and make a formal recommendation to the County Council.
7. County Council – The Pierce County Council will hold a public hearing and consider the recommendations from the CDC on initiated amendments in order to make the final decision to approve, deny, or modify the proposed comprehensive plan amendments. Approved comprehensive plan amendments will become effective on a date designated by the County Council.
8. Any changes to the Development Regulations or Zoning Atlas for consistency with the adopted plan amendments will follow.

Projected Comprehensive Plan Amendment Timeline



Contact

If you have any questions about the process or application forms, please contact Jessica Nappi at Jessica.Nappi@piercecountywa.gov or the Long Range Planning division of Planning and Public Works at (253) 798-3736. A pre-application meeting with County staff is strongly encouraged prior to submittal of an application.