

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** February 2, 2021

**TO:** Pierce County Planning Commission

**FROM:** Dan Cardwell, Supervisor, Long Range Planning

**BY:** Jessica M. Nappi, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning

**SUBJECT:** **2021 Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment – Application No. 939860**

The Planning Commission will review and consider proposed amendments to bring land use policies into consistency with the GMA goals and requirements to ensure land use compatibility through coordination with the military base commander (per RCW 36.70A.530).

Applicant: Pierce County Planning and Public Works

**NOTICE:** Notice of the Planning Commission public hearing was published in the News Tribune on January 15, 2021.

**SEPA:** SEPA will be conducted pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act, Pierce County Code Title 18D, and provisions of the Growth Management Act.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposal brings **GOAL LU-109.4** into consistency with the GMA goals and requirements to ensure land use compatibility through coordination with the military base commander (per RCW 36.70A.530).

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

### Land Use Element / Urban, Rural, and Resource / Military Land Designation and Compatibility

**GOAL LU-109** Recognize safety issues associated with training, artillery, and small-arms activities on Joint Base Lewis McChord.

~~**LU-109.4** Direct the following land uses away from property abutting the installation boundary:~~ A comprehensive plan, amendment to a plan, a development regulation, or amendment to a development regulation should not allow development in the vicinity of a military installation that is incompatible with the installation's ability to carry out its mission requirements.

~~**LU-109.4.1** High density residential;~~

~~**LU-109.4.1** Public buildings (such as schools, medical facilities, public meeting facilities, and churches); and~~

~~**LU-109.4.1** Cultural facilities.~~

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff supports the proposal as it would bring the identified policy in the Comprehensive Plan into consistency with state law ([RCW 36.70A.530](#)).

## IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

If the proposal is adopted, amendments to PCC 2.03 and PCC 19C.10.055G2 may be necessary to implement the policy in determining if an action is compatible with the adjacent military installation.

## IMPACT ANALYSIS

*Procedures for Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan*, [PCC 19C.10](#), require that the merits of all amendments to the Plan be evaluated based on the following ([PCC 19C.10.060 A](#)):

1. The effect upon the rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan.  
Not applicable.
2. The effect upon the County's capacity to provide adequate public facilities.  
Not applicable.
3. The effect upon the rate of population and employment growth.  
Not applicable.
4. Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable.  
The proposal would meet Plan objectives, including goals **LU-105**, **LU-106**, and **LU-109**.
5. The effect upon general land values or housing costs.  
Not applicable.
6. Whether capital improvements or expenditures, including transportation, are being made or completed as expected.  
Not applicable.
7. Whether the initiated amendment conforms to the requirements of the GMA, is internally consistent with the Plan and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies for Pierce County.  
The GMA ([RCW 36.70A.530](#)) cites the military's significant role in the economy and declares a state priority to prevent incompatible development near military installations. Incompatible development also poses health and safety concerns for neighboring community members and military personnel operating or training for active duty. Ongoing communication and collaborative planning are critical to understanding civilian-military interests in the landscape they share. The proposed amendment recognizes the need to fulfill GMA's goals and to enhance consistency with GMA requirements, while at the same time ensures compatibility between military operations and surrounding land uses.

The proposal is internally consistent with the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, including goals **LU-105**, **LU-106**, and **LU-109**.

The proposal is consistent with the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies, including **UGA-11** "The County...should develop planning provisions, including development regulations that encourage adjacent land uses that are compatible with military uses."

8. The effect upon critical areas and natural resource lands.  
Not applicable.
9. Consistency with locational criteria in the Comprehensive Plan and application requirements established by this Chapter.  
Not applicable.
10. The effect upon other considerations as deemed necessary by the Department.

Per RCW 36.70A.530, the County is required to provide notice to the commander of the military installation and allow for a sixty-day response period to indicate whether the proposed policy or regulation is compatible with its installation's operations.

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Pierce County to direct urban growth and density into the County's Urban Growth Area, a significant portion of which borders part of Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM).

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element **GOAL LU-109.4** states to "direct high-density residential, public buildings, and cultural facilities land uses away from property abutting the JBLM boundary." Since this policy was adopted, the GMA incorporated a more flexible procedure for ensuring land use compatibility through coordination with the military base commander (per [RCW 36.70A.530](#)). The proposal revises **GOAL LU-109.4** to be consistent with the language in state law.

### ***Applicable RCWs/Policies***

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA)

**RCW 36.70A.070:** The comprehensive plan of a county or city that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall consist of a map or maps, and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan. The plan shall be an internally consistent document and all elements shall be consistent with the future land use map. A comprehensive plan shall be adopted and amended with public participation as provided in RCW 36.70A.140.

**RCW 36.70A.530:** Land use development incompatible with military installation not allowed—Revision of comprehensive plans and development regulations.

(1) Military installations are of particular importance to the economic health of the state of Washington and it is a priority of the state to protect the land surrounding our military installations from incompatible development.

(3) A comprehensive plan, amendment to a plan, a development regulation or amendment to a development regulation, should not allow development in the vicinity of a military installation that is incompatible with the installation's ability to carry out its mission requirements. A city or county may find that an existing comprehensive plan or development regulations are compatible with the installation's ability to carry out its mission requirements.

(4) As part of the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(1) each county and city planning under RCW 36.70A.040 that has a federal military installation, other than a reserve center, that employs one hundred or more personnel and is operated by the United States department of defense within or adjacent to its border, shall notify the commander of the military installation of the county's or city's intent to amend its comprehensive plan or development regulations to address lands adjacent to military installations to ensure those lands are protected from incompatible development.

(5)(a) The notice provided under subsection (4) of this section shall request from the commander of the military installation a written recommendation and supporting facts relating to the use of land being considered in the adoption of a comprehensive plan or an amendment to a plan. The notice shall provide sixty days for a response from the commander. If the commander does not submit a response to such request within sixty days, the local government may presume that implementation of the proposed plan or amendment will not have any adverse effect on the operation of the installation.

(b) When a county or city intends to amend its development regulations to be consistent with the comprehensive plan elements addressed in (a) of this subsection, notice shall be provided to the commander of the military installation consistent with subsection (4) of this section. The notice shall request from the commander of the military installation a written recommendation and supporting facts relating to the use of land being considered in the amendment to the development regulations. The notice shall provide sixty days for a response from the commander to the requesting government. If the commander does not submit a response to such request within sixty days, the local government may presume that implementation of the proposed development regulation or amendment will not have any adverse effect on the operation of the installation.

## MULTICOUNTY PLANNING POLICIES (VISION 2050)

### **Development Patterns Policies / Collaborating to Preserve and Enhance Important Uses (page 98)**

**MPP-DP-49** Protect military lands from encroachment by incompatible uses and development on adjacent land.

## PIERCE COUNTY COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES (CPPs)

### **Urban Growth Areas (page 94)**

**UGA-11** The County and each municipality neighboring Joint Base Lewis-McChord should develop planning provisions, including development regulations that encourage adjacent land uses that are compatible with military uses.

## PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### **Land Use Element / Military Land Designation and Compatibility**

**GOAL LU-105** Recognize the unique character of land uses associated with military operations and support structures.

**GOAL LU-106** Provide the military installations with opportunities to participate in the review and development of land use programs, policies, and decisions that affect them.

**GOAL LU-109** Recognize safety issues associated with training, artillery, and small-arms activities on Joint Base Lewis-McChord.