



OP-ED

Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process Underway – Get Involved

Mayor Barb Tolbert

The Arlington Comprehensive Plan is a living document that expresses all of the community priorities and policies that guide the city's vision and what we want our city to become. Broad in scope, the Comprehensive Plan touches on issues ranging from what type of development should go where and road improvements to protection of our natural resources and critical areas and park space. And importantly, the Comprehensive Plan acts as our community vision over a long time period.

From time to time, the priorities that guide this vision change and our policies for how we plan to grow need to be changed as well. Arlington citizens, the City, or a local government agency with property within our city limits may propose amendments to the Comprehensive Plan at any time. Those amendment proposals may only be considered by the City at specific time periods through a process called docketing.

The docketing process is the process for receiving and evaluating the submitted proposals to amend the City's Comprehensive Plan, zoning map and development regulations. The intent of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), a state law adopted in 1990, is to concentrate growth into cities and stop urban sprawl. GMA requires cities like Arlington to maintain procedures for residents interested in suggesting changes to their GMA-based comprehensive plans, zoning maps, and development regulations. The GMA limits cities to amend their comprehensive plans to once per year with a few exceptions. The City of Arlington has posted the docketing procedures outlined in the City's Municipal Code on our website at <http://www.arlingtonwa.gov/288/Comprehensive-Plan-Amendments>.

While the City's Community and Economic Development Department accepts applications for these types of amendments year-round, staff can only review and evaluate them on an annual basis, during the small window allowed. In reviewing applications for amendments, the staff needs to consider the GMA and our own growth policies, not just public opinion. Once the applications are reviewed by City staff for compliance with the main requirements of the Growth Management Act and our own local policies, they are forwarded to the Planning Commission for their review. The Planning Commission forwards their recommendations to the City Council for final decisions.

The City Council makes the ultimate decision on all applications.

In 2019, the City received 11 applications for changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The

requested changes are:

- Rezone of Property at 3209 180th Street NE (City property adjacent to York Park) from Public/Semi-Public zoning to Residential High Density
- Annexation of the Old Town Stormwater Wetland property
- Inclusion of the City's Complete Streets Policy in the Comprehensive Plan
- Inclusion of the Arlington-Marysville Manufacturing Industrial Center (AMMIC) Subarea Plan in the Comprehensive Plan
- Amendment to Arlington Municipal Code 20.44 to update Unit Lot Subdivision regulations
- Inclusion of the Arlington Public Schools Capital Facilities Plan in the Comprehensive Plan
- Inclusion of the Lakewood School District Capital Facilities Plan in the Comprehensive Plan
- Rezone of three privately owned properties at 7103, 7115, and 7127 172nd St NE to high density residential (RHD) from low-moderate density residential(RLMD)
- Rezone of a privately owned property at 606 E. Highland Drive to high density residential (RHD) from medium density residential (RMD)
- Rezone of a privately owned property at 6927 204th Street NE to General Commercial with a Mixed Use overlay from General Industrial
- Rezone of a privately owned property at 6810 211th Place NE to Neighborhood Commercial from low-moderate density residential (RLMD).

Information on each of these applications is available on our website at <http://www.arlingtonwa.gov/596/2019-Comprehensive-Plan-Amendment-Docket>.

The public is invited and encouraged to participate in the entire process. Sign up to receive Planning Commission and City Council agendas to keep up to date on the processing and review of any applications and provide your input. Sign up is easy: go to www.arlingtonwa.gov and click on "Notify Me". Follow the easy instructions to sign up and click on the icon next to the item you would like to subscribe to.