

April 2, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee
From: Eric McConaghy, Council Central Staff
Subject: Resolution 31807: Revising the procedures and the criteria for consideration of proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

On April 4, the Planning, Land Use and Zoning Committee (PLUZ) will receive a briefing on Resolution 31807 ([RES 31807](#)). The proposed resolution would revise the annual Comprehensive Plan process and the docketing criteria for potential amendments. Additionally, RES 31807 forestalls the call for annual Comprehensive Plan amendments from the public for the 2018-2019 cycle to allow for resolution of policy and regulatory changes currently under consideration.

This memo: (1) provides background on the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process and (2) summarizes RES 31807.

Background on Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process

With a few limited exceptions, the City Council may amend the Comprehensive Plan once a year. Currently, [Resolution 31117](#) provides the framework for the annual process for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan. [Resolution 31402](#) sets out the criteria for including proposed amendments in an annual review cycle.

Generally, the process occurs in four steps. First, in the spring the Council issues a call for amendment proposals. Anyone can submit a proposal. Second, in the summer the Council reviews amendment applications and establishes by resolution a docket of the amendments the Council will consider. This is often referred to as the “docket setting” resolution. Third, that fall OPCD reviews the amendments and conducts environmental analysis, making a recommendation to the Council regarding which amendments should be made. Fourth, the following winter, the Council receives recommendations from the Seattle Planning Commission, considers the merits of proposed amendments, and acts on a bill amending the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2017, Council docketed amendments for consideration and possible adoption in 2018 by adopting [Resolution 31762](#).

Summary of RES 31807

RES 31807 makes three primary changes by: (1) modifying the schedule for reviewing annual amendments, (2) modifying docket-setting criteria, and (3) establishing a hiatus for public amendments for the 2018-2019 cycle.

The proposed RES 31807 would revise the process described in Resolution 31117 and revise the criteria set out in Resolution 31402, and would repeal both these resolutions. Repealing these resolutions

would consolidate of all procedures and criteria regarding proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as part of the annual docket into a single resolution.

Council staff collaborated with OPCD and Planning Commission staff on the revisions contained in RES 31807. Central Staff briefed the Planning Commission on the draft changes to the schedule and the docket-setting criteria at their regular meeting on March 22.

Schedule changes

RES 31807 would revise the annual schedule to provide (1) the Planning Commission and OPCD more time to review proposed amendments before making recommendations for docketing and (2) more time for analysis of docketed amendments leading to recommendations to Council for action.

The revisions also would remove the fixed due date for Council’s amendment proposals to recognize the Council’s prerogative in developing amendments throughout the cycle. While the notice of opportunity to propose amendments would happen two weeks later than previously, this would not limit anyone’s ability to propose amendments before the notice. The table below compares the existing and proposed schedule:

Event	Existing	Proposed
Notice of opportunity to propose amendments for current annual cycle	April 1	April 15
Deadline for amendment proposals	May 15	May 15
Council’s amendment proposals due	May 30	None stated
OPCD’s and Planning Commission’s recommendations due	June 20	July 15
Council adopts docket resolution	July 20	August 15
OPCD’s recommendations on docketed amendments due	November 20	December 31
Planning Commission’s recommendations on docketed amendments due	February 15	March 1
Council votes on amendments	March 31	March 31

In addition to the changes in schedule described above, the resolution would make minor technical clarifications to the Council’s annual Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle procedure.

Criteria changes

RES 31807 would make some changes to the criteria based on feedback from OPCD, the Planning Commission and the public voiced during previous cycles. The substantive changes to the criteria are meant to make the changed criteria easier to interpret and apply by: better describing alternate processes (B.5.); adding consideration of changed circumstances for previously-proposed amendments (D); specifying characteristics of outreach regarding proposed amendments (E); and defining when a proposed Future Land Use Map will or will not be considered (G).

Substantive changes are shown below in underline and strikethrough. Reordering and renumbering are not shown.

Docketing criteria proposed in RES 31807:

- A. The amendment is legal under state and local law.
- B. The amendment is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan because:
 - 1. It is consistent with the role of the Comprehensive Plan under the State Growth Management Act;
 - 2. It is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and with the multi-county policies contained in the Puget Sound Regional Council's regional growth strategy Vision 2040 strategy;
 - 3. Its intent cannot be accomplished by a change in regulations alone;
 - 4. It is not better addressed as a budgetary or programmatic decision; and
 - 5. ~~It is not better addressed through another process, such as neighborhood planning.~~ It is not better addressed through another process, such as activities identified in departmental work programs under way or expected soon, within which the suggested amendment can be considered alongside other related issues.
- C. It is practical to consider the amendment because:
 - 1. The timing of the amendment is appropriate and Council will have sufficient information to make an informed decision;
 - 2. City staff will be able to develop within the time available the text for the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, amendments to the Municipal Code, and to conduct sufficient analysis and public review; and
 - 3. The amendment is consistent with the overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan and well-established Comprehensive Plan policy, or the Mayor or Council wishes to consider changing the vision or established policy.; ~~and~~
 - 4. ~~The amendment has not been recently rejected by the City Council.~~
- D. If the amendment has previously been proposed, relevant circumstances have changed significantly so that there is sufficient cause for reconsidering the proposal.
- E. If the amendment would change a neighborhood plan, there is evidence that proponents of the amendment, or other persons, have effectively communicated the substance and purpose

of the amendment with those who could be affected by the amendment and there is documentation provided of community support for the amendment. it either is the result of a neighborhood review process or can be reviewed by such a process prior to final Council consideration of the amendment.

F. The amendment is likely to make a material difference in a future City regulatory or funding decision.

G. A proposal that would change the boundary of an urban center, urban village, or manufacturing/industrial center requires an amendment to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), regardless of the area's size. However, an amendment that proposes to change the FLUM is not necessary and will not be considered when it would affect an area that is less than a full block in size and is located adjacent to other land designated on the FLUM for a use that is the same as – or is compatible with – the proposed designation.

Hiatus for 2018-2019

In April of each year, the Council has called for Comprehensive Plan amendment proposals for potential docketing. Section 2 of RES 31807 would communicate that Council would take a hiatus from the annual cycle process for 2018-2019 in recognition of “the number, complexity, and interdependency of potential land use policy and proposed development regulation changes under active consideration at the time of the adoption of this resolution.” The same section states Council’s intent that the procedures and criteria established in this resolution be applied for the next annual amendment cycle initiated by the Council.

The resolution would not affect the ongoing work regarding amendments that Council docketed last year for possible adoption in 2018. Nor would the resolution preclude the adoption of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in 2019.

Next steps

At the April 4 PLUZ meeting, PLUZ will discuss revisions to the process and criteria and the hiatus for 2018-19. PLUZ may act on the resolution at the meeting. If PLUZ acts on RES 31807 during the April 4 meeting, then Full Council could vote on adoption of the resolution as soon as April 9

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director
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