



City of Tacoma

747 Market Street, Room 345,
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 591-5577

Comprehensive Plan & Land Use Regulatory Code Amendment Process

What is the Annual Amendment?

The Annual Amendment is the primary process through which the City considers changes, additions, and updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code. Periodic review and evaluation are important in order to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan and the implementing regulations maintain their effectiveness. The intent of the Annual Amendment is to review all of these changes simultaneously so that the cumulative effects can be considered.

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan is the City's official statement concerning its vision for future growth and development. It identifies goals, policies, and strategies for maintaining the health, welfare, and quality of life of Tacoma's residents. The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of numerous individual elements, addressing land use, housing, capital facilities, transportation, neighborhoods, downtown, cultural resources, recreation and open space, and the environment.



What is the Land Use Regulatory Code?

The Land Use Regulatory Code is one of the City's key tools for implementing the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. It governs what can be built, where it can be built, how it can be built, and what processes must be followed to obtain approval to build. It includes regulations on zoning, subdivisions, shorelines, environment, critical areas and historic preservation. For example, the City's zoning regulations specify the areas (zones) in which residential, commercial or industrial uses may take place. In each of these zones, development standards regulate such things as building setbacks, height limits, parking and landscaping.

Who may propose an amendment?

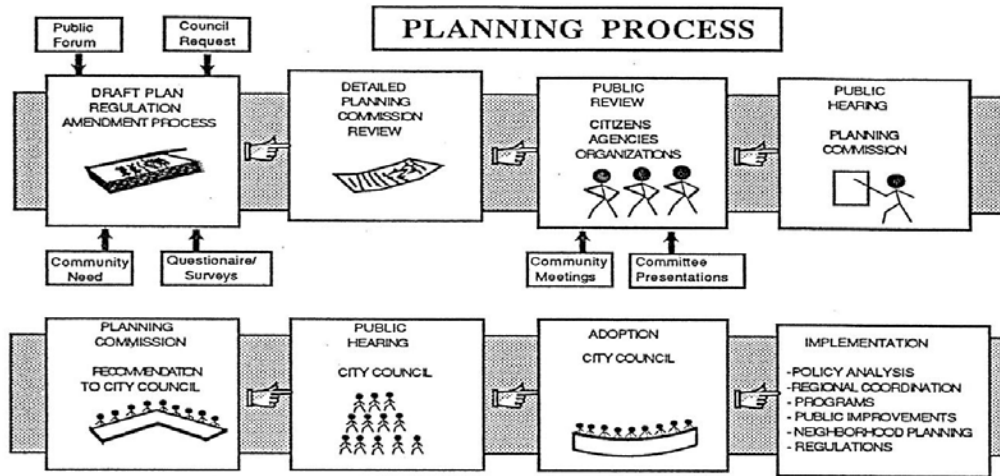
A proposed amendment may be submitted by any private individual, organization, corporation, partnership, or entity of any kind.

What is the application deadline and fee?

The deadline to submit applications for the 2015 Annual Amendment is **Friday, August 1, 2014, 5:00 p.m.** The Application fee is **\$1,400.**

What is the process for the Annual Amendment?

Pursuant to the Tacoma Municipal Code, Section 13.02.045 – *Adoption and Amendment Procedures*, and as illustrated in the diagram below, applications are submitted to the Planning and Development Services Department, and subsequently forwarded to the Planning Commission for their assessment. The Planning Commission decides which applications should move forward as part of that year’s Annual Amendment package. Those applications then receive detailed review and analysis by staff and the Planning Commission and input is solicited from stakeholders and the community. The Planning Commission holds a public hearing before making its final recommendations to the City Council. The City Council’s standing committees review the proposed amendments during and after the Planning Commission’s review process. The City Council then holds a public hearing before making a final decision on the applications.



What is the timeline for the Annual Amendment?

The tentative schedule for the 2015 Annual Amendment is:

August 1, 2014	Deadline to submit applications for 2015 Annual Amendment
August – September 2014	Planning Commission reviews applications for completeness and determines if proposed amendments meet requirements and are appropriate; the Commission may modify the scopes of the proposed amendments or suggest alternative proposals
September 2014 – February 2015	Staff and Planning Commission review each application, analyzing such factors as its consistency with existing plans and laws, its potential benefits and impacts, and whether there are feasible alternatives if appropriate and necessary.
September 2014 – May 2015	Staff conducts outreach efforts to solicit comments, feedback and suggestions from stakeholders, interested entities and the community
March 2015	Planning Commission conducts a public hearing
April – May 2015	Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council
February – May 2015	Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee and other pertinent City Council standing committees review the proposed amendments
May 2015	City Council conducts a study session and a public hearing
May 2015	Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee forwards “Recommendation for Adoption” to the City Council
June 2015	City Council considers adoption of amendments
August 1, 2015	Changes take effect

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Application Form
Completed and signed
- Required Questionnaire
Provide detailed responses to each of the applicable questions
- Application Fee
Make checks or money orders payable to the "City Treasurer"

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Required Questionnaire:

Demonstration that a change to the Comprehensive Plan or Regulatory Code is required and/or beneficial lies solely upon the applicant. The greater the degree of change proposed, the greater the burden of showing that the change is justified. An application will be considered incomplete unless all of the applicable questions are answered. Provide your answers in text and/or graphic form on separate sheets of paper. You may copy and paste or re-type the questions on your answer sheets; but if you prefer not to, please answer all questions separately and **reference the question number** in your answer. List and label all applicable attachments that are included with the application.

Submittal of Applications:

The complete application packet (including the application form, the questionnaire and support information, and application fee) must be received by the application deadline and may be submitted via US Mail (or delivery), Facsimile, or E-mail, as shown below. If fax or e-mail is used, please make sure the application fee is mailed or delivered to the mailing address.

Mail (or delivery):	City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services Department 747 Market Street, Room 345 Tacoma, WA 98402
Fax:	(253) 591-5433
E-mail:	planning@cityoftacoma.org

Application Deadline for the 2015 Annual Amendment:

The submittal deadline is **Friday, August 1, 2014, 5:00 p.m.** Applications received after the deadline will NOT be accepted. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a complete application and to check on the status of the request. The Planning Commission and staff reserve the right to request additional information as needed. Any modification to the application must be submitted prior to the deadline.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Types of Proposed Amendments:

There are five types of proposed amendments:

- **Comprehensive Plan Text Change**
A change or revision of the goals, policies, action strategies, standards, or narrative text of the Plan.
- **Regulatory Code Text Change**
A change or revision of development regulations or regulatory procedures placed on or involving development or land use activities within the City, including but not limited to zoning, subdivision, shoreline, environment, and critical areas.
- **Land Use Designation Change**
A legislative action to change the land use designation classification(s) in order to implement and/or maintain the consistency of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Area-wide Zoning Reclassification (or “Rezone”)**
A legislative action to change the zoning classification(s) on an area-wide basis in order to implement and/or maintain the consistency of the Comprehensive Plan. Area-wide zoning reclassifications, unlike site-specific zoning reclassifications, are generally of area-wide significance, usually involving many separate properties under various ownerships.
- **Interim Zoning or Moratorium**
Interim zoning is an immediate change in existing zoning classifications or regulations where new zoning classifications or regulations are temporarily imposed. A moratorium is the suspension of accepting or processing new applications for building, zoning, subdivision, or other types of development in order to preclude development from occurring for a specified period of time, usually while new or revised regulations are being considered.

What should be considered when proposing an amendment?

- **Is the request consistent with, or will it achieve consistency with, the Comprehensive Plan?**
All proposed amendments must address consistency with the Comprehensive Plan to be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council.
- **Why is the proposed amendment needed at this time?**
Applications must clearly articulate that the amendment is needed and warranted and meets the amendment criteria as established in the Tacoma Municipal Code, Section 13.02.045.F. Essentially, proposed amendments should conform to applicable legislative and policy requirements and should not adversely affect the public health, welfare and safety of Tacoma’s citizens.
- **Has this issue or area been addressed by the Planning Commission recently?**
If recent review of the area or subject has taken place, the request could be denied. The City generally avoids continual re-examination of the same issue; however, the Planning Commission retains the discretion to revisit any issue or area.
- **Would the request require a full-scale analysis for the Planning Commission?**
If a large-scale study is needed, the Planning Commission may delay the request to a subsequent amendment cycle, due to, among other considerations, workloads, the number of applications submitted, staffing levels, and budgeted resources.

Who may propose an amendment?

A proposed amendment may be submitted by any private individual, organization, corporation, partnership, or entity of any kind including any member(s) of the Tacoma City Council or the Tacoma Planning Commission or governmental Commission or Committee, the City Manager, any neighborhood or community council or other neighborhood or special purpose group, department or office, agency, or official of the City of Tacoma, or any other general or special purpose government.

Application Fee – Is it refundable? Who may be exempted?

The \$1,400 application fee is authorized by the City Council, per Resolution No. 38588, adopted on December 18, 2012. It is intended to help offset part of the cost for processing and analyzing the application. It is non-refundable. The fee does not apply to (1) applications submitted by City of Tacoma general government departments, but does apply to utilities; (2) submissions by Neighborhood Councils or recognized Business Districts if formal written approval is submitted to the City by the duly elected Board of Directors; or (3) community groups that are involved in a planning study with the Planning and Development Services Department.

Is technical assistance available?

Pre-application meetings are strongly recommended and can be scheduled with the Planning Services Division staff before submitting an application. Staff is also available to answer questions after you have filed an application. All modifications to your application should be submitted by the application deadline. Additionally, the following resources are available to help you assemble a complete application:

- **Comprehensive Plan**

Review Comprehensive Plan policies and relevant information on the Planning Services Division's web site at:

[Planning Services Division](#) (and click on "Comprehensive Plan")

- **Land Use Regulatory Code**

Review Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code of the Tacoma Municipal Code on the City's web site at:

[Tacoma Municipal Code](#)

- **Maps**

Information related to zoning, land use designation, or current land uses can be viewed on interactive maps on the City's *government made easy* (govME) web site at:

[govME](#)

- **Parcel Information**

Parcel and ownership data can be obtained from the Pierce County Assessor's Office or from their web site at:

[Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer](#)

Are applicants required to conduct community outreach?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to solicit feedback from as many interested/concerned parties as possible prior to submitting an application. Staff can provide contact information for specific community groups who may be interested in or concerned with your application (e.g., neighborhood councils, business districts and associations, and environmental groups). Encouraged outreach efforts may include but are not limited to:

- Contacting affected and abutting property owners, business owners, and/or renters;
- Speaking with representatives of affected and abutting neighborhood councils, neighborhood business district associations, and/or pertinent organizations;
- Attending and requesting to discuss your proposal at community meetings and functions held by neighborhood councils, neighborhood business districts, and/or local organizations; and
- Convening and facilitating your own community meetings.

Should applicants attend Planning Commission meetings?

The Planning Commission meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 4:00 p.m. in Room 16 of the Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street. All meetings are open to the public and applicants may attend. However, applicants will not have an opportunity to directly address the Planning Commission until the public hearing or unless requested by the Commission. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend and testify at all public hearings during the amendment process.

What are the criteria for analyzing proposed amendments?

Please refer to the following excerpt from the Tacoma Municipal Code, Section 13.02.045.F:

F. Analysis of proposed amendments. Upon completing the assessment and receiving an affirmative determination from the Planning Commission to move forward, the proposed amendment will be analyzed by the Department against the following criteria:

1. Whether the proposed amendment will benefit the City as a whole, will not adversely affect the City's public facilities and services, and bears a reasonable relationship to the public health, safety, and welfare; and
2. Whether the proposed amendment conforms to applicable provisions of State statutes, case law, regional policies, and the Comprehensive Plan.

The analysis should include, as appropriate, how the proposed amendment addresses inconsistencies or errors in the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations; responds to changing circumstances, such as growth and development patterns, needs and desires of the community, and the City's capacity to provide adequate services; and/or maintains or enhances compatibility with existing or planned land uses and the surrounding development pattern. In addition, the analysis should document, as appropriate and necessary, public outreach and public comments, analytical data and research, economic impacts, sustainability impacts, an environmental determination, and other pertinent background information.

For more information, please contact:

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Tacoma, WA 98402
Phone: (253) 591-5682
E-mail: lwung@cityoftacoma.org

REQUIRED QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Describe the proposed amendment. If submitting text changes to the Comprehensive Plan or Regulatory Code, provide the existing and the proposed language. If submitting changes to the Comprehensive Plan land use designation(s) or the zoning classification(s), provide the current and the proposed land use designations and/or zoning classifications for the affected/proposed area.
2. Why is the amendment needed and being proposed?
3. Please demonstrate how the proposal is consistent with the applicable policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and consistent with the criteria for amending the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations.
4. If the proposed amendment is associated with a geographic area, please provide a more detailed description, along with maps, if applicable, of the affected area and the surrounding areas, showing all parcels (with parcel numbers), ownership of each parcel, current land uses, site characteristics, and natural features.
5. If the proposed amendment is associated with a geographic area, please describe how it is compatible with the existing and planned land uses and development patterns of the adjacent neighborhood and explain how it may further enhance the adjacent neighborhood.
6. If the proposed amendment is associated with a geographic area, please describe the applicant's interest in the affected property. Describe any plans for future activity related to or connected with this site. If you are not the owners, submit proof that the property owners have been notified and are aware of the application.
7. Describe any community outreach you have conducted (i.e., when and how you contacted affected and abutting property owners and neighbors), and any community response received to the proposed amendment. Attach any letter(s) of support or written community response, if applicable.
8. Please provide any supplemental information, which may include, but is not limited to, completion of an environmental checklist, wetland delineation study, visual analysis, or other studies.