

**ClerkFiling Clerk - Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Neighborhood Plan Element's goal N-3 to make it clear that the City desires neighborhood plans throughout Seattle**

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**From:** "Chris Leman" <cleman@oo.net>  
**To:** "Comprehensive Plan process" <compplan@seattle.gov>  
**Date:** 2/25/2008 5:28 PM  
**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Neighborhood Plan Element's goal N-3 to make it clear that the City desires neighborhood plans throughout Seattle

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CITY OF SEATTLE  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION

Date: February 25, 2008  
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*Name of General Area/Location/Site which would be affected:* All of Seattle.

1. *Provide a detailed description and explanation of the proposed text amendment.*

In the Neighborhood Planning Element, goal NG-3 would be revised as follows. The [bracketed] words would be omitted, and the underlined words would be added:

**NG-3** Develop neighborhood plans for all areas of the city [expected to take significant amounts of growth]. Such a plan should reflect the neighborhood's history, character, current conditions, needs, values, vision and goals. While the highest priority areas will be those expected to take significant amounts of growth, the City wishes to make it possible for [Permit] other areas interested in developing neighborhood plans to undertake neighborhood planning. [In areas not expected to take significant amounts of growth encourage limited scopes of work that focus on specific issues or concerns, rather than multi-focused planning processes.]

Explanation: The proposed revision of goal NG-3 would make it clear that the City regards neighborhood planning as valuable even for those neighborhoods that are not expected to take significant amounts of growth; the wording change retains the sense that the City will regard as its highest priority to see that there are neighborhood plans in the neighborhoods that are expected to take significant amounts of growth. Also, the revision removes the inequality under which the other neighborhoods would be discouraged from having a multi-focused neighborhood plan.

2. *Describe how the issue is currently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. If the issue is not adequately addressed, describe the need for it.*

As quoted above, Goal NG-3 unfortunately puts the City on record as supporting the right to a multi-focused neighborhood plan only for those neighborhoods that are expected to take significant amounts of growth. For others that are not expected to take significant amounts of growth, the City will only "permit" (not encourage) them to have a plan, and it will discourage them from having a "broad, multi-focused" plan. This language must be changed to reflect a more balanced approach that welcomes neighborhood planning rather than makes it seem like something that is needed in one neighborhood but not in another.

As the City Neighborhood Council stated in its October 30, 2007 letter to the City Council and Mayor, "Growth is not the only rationale for having a neighborhood plan. The existing neighborhood plans emerged from the grass roots, and none of them are limited to land use and zoning. They cover important livability issues such as pedestrian safety, public safety, noise, parks and open space, arts, schools, cultural diversity, and the needs of youth, seniors and the disabled. Such concerns arise both inside and outside of urban villages, and in some

cases may be more pressing outside an urban village; for example, non-urban villages have a greater concentration of children than do urban villages."

Another problem with the current language is that it does not recognize that growth is occurring all over the city. With the departure of older residents and the return of young families, many of our single-family neighborhoods are growing fast. Changes in single-family zoning that define a household as many unrelated people living together, allow accessory dwelling units, etc. are causing still more growth in these zones. Whether growing or not, these neighborhoods are entitled to a neighborhood plan if they want one, and therefore the suggested language should be adopted.

*3. Why is the proposed change the best means for meeting the identified public need? What other options are there for meeting the identified public need?*

The quoted bias in the current Comprehensive Plan is a disservice to neighborhood planning and the benefits that it brings to any neighborhood. And there is no way to remediate this bias except to adopt amending language such as is proposed here.

*4. What do you anticipate will be the impacts caused by the change in text, including the geographic area affected and the issues presented? Why will the proposed change result in a net benefit to the community?*

If adopted, the proposed amendment will help encourage neighborhood plans throughout the City. And that will be a good thing, because neighborhood plans include and energize people to improve their area, aiding planning in ways that are beyond what City staff and consultants can achieve, and at considerably less cost to the City.

*5. How would the proposed change comply with the community vision statements, goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan? Include any data, research, or reasoning that supports the proposed amendments.*

This proposed amendment will bring the Neighborhood Planning Element of the Comprehensive Plan more into tune with itself. The rest of the element talks about the value of neighborhood planning, but the words that we propose to delete are jarringly inconsistent with this theme, and the words we propose to replace them with are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Neighborhood Planning Element. The Comprehensive Plan is not just about land use, it is about public safety, parks, youth, pedestrian safety, and other components of a sustainable, mutually supportive community. The literature of the planning profession hugely confirms the value of neighborhood planning for all neighborhoods, not just those that are expected to take considerably amounts of growth.

*6. Is there public support for this proposed text amendment?*

Yes. There are many neighborhoods that have already expressed a desire for a neighborhood plan, and many more that would do so if the Comprehensive Plan were more encouraging to them. In the October 30, 2007 letter quoted above, the City Neighborhood Council, without a dissenting vote, urged that neighborhoods not currently with a neighborhood plan should be allowed to develop one if they wish. The City Neighborhood Council has been consistent on this point for many years. On November 27, 1995, CNC adopted recommendations on neighborhood planning that included this one: "Recognize that every neighborhood has a right to plan, and that each neighborhood plan contributes to the common good."