

ClerkFiling Clerk - Proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment to add a sentence to the Neighborhood Plan Element's policy N-3 to establish the City's receptiveness to the grassroots model of neighborhood planning

From: "Chris Leman" <cleman@oo.net>
To: "Comp Plan process" <complan@seattle.gov>
Date: 2/25/2008 3:57 PM
Subject: Proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment to add a sentence to the Neighborhood Plan Element's policy N-3 to establish the City's receptiveness to the grassroots model of neighborhood planning

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: Throughout the city.

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

Revise Policy N-3 of the Neighborhood planning element by adding the underlined sentence:

N-3 Either community organizations or the City may initiate neighborhood plans with City support, to the extent provided in the City's annual budget. For those neighborhoods that wish to, the City is receptive to continuing the model of the 1990s under which it funds neighborhoods to conduct their neighborhood planning process under City contract and according to City guidelines.

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

The neighborhood plans that were developed in the late 1990s were done by grassroots volunteers under contract to the City, according to City guidelines (below called the "grassroots model"). This process achieved a remarkable degree of quality, cost-effectiveness and inclusiveness. Unfortunately, there is no explicit mention in the current Comprehensive Plan of the availability of this grassroots model. The proposed amendment is needed to correct this omission.

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?*

Although the grassroots model was most distinctive about the recent generation of neighborhood plans, and most fundamental to their success, the Comprehensive Plan is silent about this aspect. It is essential for the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the grassroots model; there is no other way to rectify this omission.

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?*

A benefit of this amendment will be to make it clear to the public that the City Council, Mayor, and executive branch are receptive to continuing the grassroots model, for those neighborhoods that wish to undertake it. As was the case with the recent generation of plans, any plans further conducted with the grassroots will be a major cost-savings to the City, and will have quality, detail, and responsiveness that are not possible if the same plan

were conducted by City staff and consultants.

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 amendment would be consistent with existing rhetoric in the Comprehensive Plan, but would establish with needed clarity a policy that is otherwise left unsaid. All of the evaluations that have been done of the recent neighborhood plans have found that the grassroots model was an important component in their success. Most recently, these include the 2007 City Auditor performance audit and article by Prof. Carmen Sirianni in the Fall 2007 [Journal of the American Planning Association](#).

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

There is strong public support for this amendment, especially in that it does not require a neighborhood to undertake the grassroots approach, but aims to help those who wish to do so. In three letters to the Mayor and City Council (June 27, 2007; August 10, 2007, and October 30, 2007), the City Neighborhood Council has, without a dissenting vote, supported continuation of the grassroots model for neighborhood planning, for those neighborhoods that wish to undertake it.