Memorandum

To: Planning Commission
From: Carol Helland, Deputy Planning Director
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Date: October 15, 2019
Subject: Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Docketing Process

Introduction

On July 24, 2019, the Planning Commission met and reviewed zoning code regulations that apply to annual amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, referred to as the docketing process. Concerns focused on the lack of clarity and understandability of current zoning code language and the lack of consistency and predictability in the annual docketing process. At the meeting, the Planning Commission expressed an interest in updating regulations found in RZC 21.76.070 (Land Use Actions and Decision Criteria) and asked staff to research potential code revisions. The Planning Commission provided the following guidance to ensure that proposed amendments improve implementation and predictability of the docketing process.

- Consider language that would allow Council to include non-emergency city-initiated amendments on an already-approved docket. There is an existing policy that allows Council to add city-initiated amendments for emergencies only.
- Consider revisiting the minimum threshold criteria to clarify terms including time, timely, consistent, concurrent.
- In developing the docket, consider city priorities, and staff capacity to complete proposed amendments within the docket year.
- Consolidate items for public hearing to strengthen efficiency.
- Redesign the process to include a predictable application period/schedule.
- Restructure the process to achieve a cumulative review of approved proposals.
- Reduce number of carryover items.
- Truly amend the comprehensive plan no more than once per year.

Timeline for Review.

Applications for the 2020 Docket were accepted this fall until September 30, 2019, the deadline for submission. The City received seven applications, including a proposed modification to a currently docketed item, from four different privately-initiated applicants. The applications will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and considered for a recommendation in early 2020. The close of the application period marks the beginning of the 2020 docketing cycle which will conclude with the adoption of the 2020 Docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments in March 2020 (tentatively). Related comprehensive plan amendments, consistent with the approved 2020 Docket, would follow later in 2020.
Staff recommends that amendments to RZC 21.76.070 be developed for adoption next year after the conclusion of the 2019-2020 docketing process but before applicants are invited to submit proposed amendments for the 2021 docketing process. Hence, new regulations would not go into effect until next year and will provide procedures and regulations for the review and adoption of the 2021 Docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments. The new timeline should align more closely with the biennial budget process and should be consistent every year going forward.

**Preparation for July 24 Study Session**

Please review the attached study sheet that provides the following information to assist in developing appropriate revisions to RZC 21.76.070.

- Current issues and concerns
- State regulatory context
- Local regulatory context
- Benchmark study of the following jurisdictions:
  - Bellevue
  - Kirkland
  - Issaquah
  - Sammamish

At the Planning Commission meeting on October 23, 2019, staff is requesting that the Planning Commission provide input on proposed revisions.

Attachment: Docketing Procedure Update | Study