City of Seattle
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION – 2011-2012

Use this application to propose a change in the policies, future land use map, appendices, or other components of the adopted City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan. Applications are due to the Seattle City Council no later than **5:00 p.m. on May 16th** for consideration in the next annual review cycle. Any proposals received after May 16th will be considered in the review process for the following year.

(Please Print or Type)

Date: 5-16-11

Applicant: Urban Forestry Commission (Matt Mega – chair), c/o Sandra Pinto de Bader, Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator, Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment

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Name of general area, location, or site that would be affected by this proposed change in text (attach additional sheets if necessary).

The proposed amendment has potential citywide impacts. The Seattle Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) would like to propose to update policies of the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan's Environmental Element to better reflect and be consistent with the City's Urban Forestry Management Plan and current canopy management approach. The affected sections are: C – Natural Systems Approach (E9.5), H – Seattle's Trees (E23 and E24).

Attachment A

If the application is approved for further consideration by the City Council, the applicant may be required to submit a Sate Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist.

Acceptance of this application does not guarantee final approval.

Applicant Signature:___ _____ Date:__5-16-11__

Attachment A

REQUIRED QUESTIONNAIRE: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

Please answer the following questions in text and attach them to the application. Supporting maps or graphics may be included. Please answer all questions separately and reference the question number in your answer. The Council will consider an application incomplete unless all the questions are answered. When proposing an amendment, you must show that a change to the Comprehensive Plan is required.

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed amendment and a clear statement of what the proposed amendment is intended to accomplish. Include the name(s) of the Comprehensive Plan Element(s) (Land Use, Transportation, etc) you propose to amend.

> a. If the amendment is to an existing Comprehensive Plan goal or policy, and you have specific language you would like to be considered, please show proposed amendments in "line in/line out" format with text to be added indicated by underlining, and text to be deleted indicated with ~~strikeouts~~.
>
> b. If the proposed amendment would also require a change to the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC), please indicate the SMC section(s) needing amendment. If you have specific language you would like to be considered, please show proposed edits to the SMC in "line in/line out" format as described above.
>
> c. If the amendment is to the Future Land Use Map, please provide a map that clearly outlines the area proposed to be changed.

The Seattle Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) would like to propose to update policies of the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan's Environmental Element. The following updates are suggested.

Environmental Element
C – Natural Systems Approach
E9.5
~~Strive to a~~Achieve no net loss of tree canopy coverage ~~starting in 2008,~~ and strive to increase tree canopy ~~coverage by 1 percent per year up~~ to ~~a total of~~ 40 percent, to reduce storm runoff, absorb air pollutants, reduce noise, stabilize soil, provide habitat, and mitigate the heat island effect of developed areas.

H – Seattle's Trees
E23
~~Strive to a~~Achieve no net loss of tree canopy coverage ~~starting in 2008,~~ and strive to increase tree canopy ~~coverage by 1 percent per year up~~ to ~~a total of~~ 40 percent, to reduce storm runoff,

Attachment A

absorb air pollutants, reduce noise, stabilize soil, provide habitat, and mitigate the heat island effect of developed areas.

The element includes multiple urban forest canopy goals without clarifying how they relate to each other and which takes precedence. The Urban Forestry Commission believes that by removing the "1 percent per year" from this policy statement, it would better reflect the City's intent to grow the canopy cover through incentives, outreach, and regulation as articulated in the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP). One percent per year is a quantitative measure of canopy that is not assessed annually and cannot be measured with that level of precision– one percent can easily be a margin of error in a citywide canopy assessment. Furthermore, it would require that the City commit resources to assess the canopy *every year* which would be cost prohibitive.

E24
Update the 2000 tree canopy inventory in the Urban Forest Management Plan at least every 10 years to measure progress toward the goal of increased canopy coverage.

The Commission believes that by adding "at least" to this policy statement, the policy is clarified and strengthened – one could read this as updating the canopy only every 10 years. This additional language opens the potential for more frequent canopy updates and gives City staff clearer direction on the intent of the policy.

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 proposed amendment clarifies the intent of the urban forest policies already contained in the Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

3. Describe why the proposed change meets the criteria adopted in Resolution 30662 for considering an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The criteria are listed at the end of this application form. Is a Comprehensive Plan amendment the best means for meeting the identified public need? What other options are there for meeting the identified public need?

The proposed amendment clarifies the intent of existing policies and is not regulatory, budgetary, or programmatic in nature.

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?

Tree canopy cover policies have citywide implications. The proposed amendment clarifies the policy intent thereby reducing confusion over the multiple goals as currently stated.

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

The UFC has held numerous meetings and has received several briefings on the issue of the urban forest management goals due to the confusion of including multiple goals.

6. Is there public support for this proposed text amendments (i.e. have you conducted community meetings, etc.)? Note: The City will provide a public participation process, public notice, and environmental review for all applications.

The UFC believes that the proposed amendment will strengthen the policy intent behind Seattle's work to increase its canopy cover and reduce potential confusion. The UFC welcomes a public participation process.

Criteria for Comprehensive Plan Amendment Selection (from Resolution 30662)

The following criteria will be used in determining which proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments will be given further consideration:

A. The amendment or policy is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan because:
- The amendment is not appropriate as a regulatory measure, and warrants a Comprehensive Plan amendment;
- The amendment is not better addressed as a budgetary or programmatic decision;
- The amendment is not better addressed through another planning process, such as neighborhood planning; or
- The Growth Management Act (GMA) mandates the amendment as part of the 10-year update.

B. The amendment is legal - the amendment meets existing state and local laws.

C. It is practical to consider the amendment because:
- The timing of the amendment is appropriate and Council will have sufficient information necessary to make an informed decision;
- City staff will be able to conduct sufficient analysis and to develop policy and any related development regulations within the available time frame;
- The proposed amendment is consistent with the overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan and well-established Comprehensive Plan policy, or the Mayor or Council is interested in significantly changing existing policy;
- The amendment has not been recently rejected; and
- If the proposed change is to neighborhood plan policies, there has been a neighborhood review process to develop the proposal, or a neighborhood review process can be conducted prior to final Council consideration of the amendment.