

**Clerk Filing Clerk - Proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Environment Element:
After goal EG-7, add a goal requiring a reduction in vehicle miles traveled in and through the city,
and a policy favoring highway projects that produce little or no such increase**

From: "Chris Leman" <cleman@oo.net>
To: "Comprehensive Plan process" <compplan@seattle.gov>, "Comp Plan process" <complan@seattle.gov>
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Subject: Proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Environment Element: After goal EG-7, add a goal requiring a reduction in vehicle miles traveled in and through the city, and a policy favoring highway projects that produce little or no such increase

CITY OF SEATTLE
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION

Date: February 25, 2008
 Applicant: Chris Leman
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Name of General Area/Location/Site which would be affected: Entire City, state, and globe

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

In the Environment element, after goal EG-7, add the following goal and policy:

Goal: To help realize goal EG-7 to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other climate-changing greenhouse gases, the annual per capita vehicle miles traveled in and through Seattle will be reduced by eighteen percent by 2020, thirty percent by 2035, and fifty percent by 2050.

Policy: As a first priority in meeting this goal, the City will support only those highway projects that produce little or no increase in vehicle miles traveled.

Explanation. Goal EG-7 of the Comprehensive Plan commits Seattle to reduce carbon dioxide and other climate-changing greenhouse gases 30 percent by 2024 and 80 percent by 2050. Unfortunately, the Comprehensive Plan does not present a realistic strategy for achieving these goals. Such a strategy must be rely on a significant reduction in motor vehicle miles traveled, because motor vehicles are the single greatest of Seattle's contributions to global warming, and their proportion of Seattle's contribution is increasing. The goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (eighteen percent by 2020, thirty percent by 2035, and fifty percent by 2050) identified in our proposal is exactly the same reduction as in House Bill 2815, which is now working its way through the Washington legislature.

Highways are Seattle's largest single contributors to vehicle miles traveled and thus to Seattle's production of greenhouse gases. Expanding highways in ways that substantially increase vehicle miles traveled will take us farther from the goal of reducing global warming. Therefore the City policy should prefer those highway projects that produce little or no increase in vehicle miles traveled.

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 outlined above, the Comprehensive Plan has excellent goals for reducing greenhouse gases, but needs the practical strategy of reducing vehicle miles traveled in any scenario for achieving this goal.

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?

There is no way to achieve Seattle's goals for reducing its production of greenhouse gases without reducing vehicle miles traveled. One could, of course, hope that most automobiles would operate without internal combustion, but this is not a realistic near-term hope, as was recognized in the state legislative debate on H.B. 2815.

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?

The proposed amendment will help turn around the current trend of increasing vehicles miles traveled that is Seattle's worst contribution to global warming. This result will benefit the globe as well as Seattle, plus it will produce greater trust that the City means what it says about wanting to reduce its carbon footprint.

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 new goal and policy would lend on-the-ground meaning to the fine rhetoric of the Comprehensive Plan's Environment element,, and it would reinforce the parts of the Transportation element that speak of not wanting to encourage more driving.

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

Just as the Governor and state legislature have agreed on a similar measure (H.B. 2815) in Olympia, people in Seattle will support this change. Any serious effort to address Seattle's contribution to global warming must come to grips with its high and growing level of motor vehicle miles traveled.