

## Policy on Public Requests for Amendments to the Land Development Regulations

Under State Statute, the Planning Commission is responsible for initiating amendments to the City's Land Development Regulations<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, equitable process for the consideration of requests from the public.

Amendments to the Land Development Regulations involve multiple steps, including research and evaluation by staff and the Planning Commission, the holding of warned public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council, and ultimately action by the City Council. In most cases, amendments are grouped together for consideration and action.

General procedure for review of requests for amendments:

1. Any person wishing to submit a request is strongly encouraged to first meet with staff of the Department of Planning & Zoning.
2. All requests for amendments to the Land Development Regulations (LDR) must be provided in writing, via the Department of Planning and Zoning, for it to be considered by the Planning Commission. Requests may include amendment language or may be a concept for consideration. Requests are encouraged to reference existing regulations where applicable.
3. Upon receipt of a request, staff shall inform the Planning Commission Chair or their appointee(s) and schedule the request for one of two annual public meetings. These meetings should occur at the first meetings in April and October. Requests for amendments must be received at least 30 days prior to the meeting to be considered for the meeting.
4. The Chair/appointees and staff will perform an initial screening of the request and will develop a recommendation for the Planning Commission's consideration.
5. At the public meeting, the Planning Commission shall consider each request and take one of the following actions:
  - a. Review the proposed amendment for possible inclusion of it in the warning for the next public hearing on amendments to the LDRs;
  - b. Table the request until:
    - i. Related issues are undertaken assessed by the Commission via studies or other amendments;
    - ii. The next discussion of the annual Planning Commission Work Plan; the proposed amendment may be considered for prioritization in a future annual work plan.
  - c. Decide not to pursue the requested amendment.

---

<sup>1</sup> 24 VSA 4441 describes this process, and the exceptions thereto.

6. In determining its course of action, the following will be used as guidelines:
  - a. Requests substantively related to an active or planned review of the Land Development Regulations should generally be heard commensurate with that process;
  - b. Requests unrelated to an ongoing LDR review or amendment should be considered for their timeliness and in relation to existing work plans of the Commission.
  - c. Relationship to the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. The Commission should consider the extent to which the request advances stated goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. To the greatest extent possible, staff and the Commission should identify the related goals. Staff should also identify for consideration any goals which would be obstructed or contradicted in the use of a proposed amendment.
  - d. Relationship to the adopted Planning Commission Work Plan for the applicable fiscal year. In utilizing this, the Commission should consider and discuss the anticipated time commitment for the amendment, determine whether such time exists in the work plan, and whether consideration of the amendment results in a delay of a project already included within the work plan.
7. Upon determination by the Planning Commission that an item will be considered for a more thorough review, staff will prepare a brief report on the request for the amendment. The report will include a short analysis of the requested amendment's consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan, its relationship to the Commission's work plan, various options and depths of solutions for consideration where applicable, and the anticipated Commission and staff time involved in undertaking any potential additional research on the topic.