



CITY OF BLAINE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Planning Commission Study Session Report

2023 Community Development Services Legislative Work Program

To: City of Blaine Planning Commission

From: Stacy Clauson

Date: December 1, 2022

Re: Establishing 2023 Work Program

Recommendation

Review and discuss the 2023 Planning Work Program (PWP) and make a recommendation to the City Council for adoption.

Background

The Planning Work Program (PWP) guides the Community Development Services' legislative work over the year on long-range planning projects that will help shape the future of the City of Blaine. The PWP lists all long range legislative initiatives which will involve Planning Commission and City Council review. Broadly, these are comprised of two types of initiatives: 1) Comprehensive Plan Amendments; and 2) Zoning Text Amendments.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A.130, authorizes the City Council to take action once per year to amend the Comprehensive Plan (with limited exceptions). RCW 36.70A.130(2)(b) requires all proposal be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of the various proposals can be ascertained. These elements of the law apply to the adoption of Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Pursuant to Blaine Municipal Code (BMC) 16.04.070(A), the City Council shall review amendments proposed to be included in the docket and determine which items shall be initiated for public review and final determination. Subsection (D) requires that the Council initiate any amendments by resolution; proposals may be included, excluded, or deferred from the annual docket. BMC 16.04.050(A) authorizes the City Council to add citizen-initiated petitions to the current year's docket, provided the application is submitted by the last business day in December. An additional mid-year application opportunity is provided prior to the last business days in June, at which point the Department will update the City Council on any additional applications received.

Zoning Text Amendments

Blaine Municipal Code (BMC) Chapter 17.04 establishes the process for amendments to the Zoning Code. Unlike Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map amendment changes, these items can be considered at any time during the year and may be initiated by the following mechanisms:

- Community Development Services Director placement of the proposed amendment(s) on the Planning Commission agenda;
- Planning Commission initiation of amendment by majority vote;
- City Council approval of a Resolution; and
- A citizen-initiated amendment, with submittal of an application and fees.

Current Planning Work Program

The adopted 2022 PWP is included as Attachment 1, with a column showing an estimate of project completion.

The 2023 Planning Work Program

In terms of crafting the 2023 PWP, staff will start by dropping completed tasks and pulling forward incomplete tasks and adjusting the timeframes. If there are any projects that the Commission recommends deleting or pushing out to future work program, those adjustments should be discussed. Attachment 2 presents a draft of the 2023 PWP – please note that we will not know whether there will be any citizen-initiated requests received that will need to be incorporated into this work program.

In terms of adding new items to the PWP, the following principles should be considered:

- Is the project already funded and underway?
- Is the project implementing adopted policies?
- Is the project needed to respond to legislative directives (e.g., state or federal mandates)?
- Is the overall PWP reasonably realistic within the constraints of the major projects discussed below?
- Does the project further the City Council’s adopted goals (summarized below)?
 - Green Practices
 - Housing
 - Community Health
 - Public Facilities and Utilities Maintenance
 - Communication and Transparency
 - Fiscal Responsibility

Major Projects:

This Work Program will devote significant time and resources to several large and important projects.

- [2045 Comprehensive Plan](#) – by June of 2025, the City will need to complete work on the State mandated 8-year Comprehensive Plan update. This is a major project that will need to begin this year.

Project scoping started in 2022 in terms of coordination with neighboring jurisdictions and agencies, project scheduling, and preliminary identification of key tasks and themes, as well as completion of the [Buildable Lands Report](#). For 2022, staff will continue this interagency coordination as well as begin to coordinate with the Council, Commission, and community to:

1. Review Existing County-wide Planning Policies;

2. Review and adopt reasonable measures¹, if required;
3. Initiate Countywide population and employment forecast and allocation to cities and unincorporated areas; and
4. Complete land capacity analysis methodology review.

Note that the bulk of the Planning Commission work on this project will involve study sessions on these items.

- Critical Area Regulation Update – This City is overdue in completing an update to its Critical Area Ordinance. Based on prior experience, a high percentage of staff and Commission resources will be focused on the project during 2023 and the PWP should reflect that time commitment.
- Legislative mandates stemming from the State Legislative Session – The Department will be closely monitoring the bills in this legislative session. It is anticipated that housing will be a key topic, with several bills addressing issues related to housing availability. We will update the Planning Commission if new bills are passed that require City action.

¹ The Washington State legislature amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1997 to include a “review and evaluation program,” also known as the buildable lands program (RCW 36.70A.215). The State legislature amended the GMA in 2017 to add Whatcom County to the list of counties required to undertake a review and evaluation program (ESSSB 5254). The State Department of Commerce issued "[Buildable Lands Guidelines](#)" in 2018. The review and evaluation program has two main purposes, which are summarized below:

- Determine whether a county and its cities are achieving urban densities within urban growth areas by comparing growth and development assumptions contained in the county and city comprehensive plans with actual growth and development that has occurred; and
- Identify reasonable measures, if necessary, to reduce the differences between growth and development assumptions contained in the county and city comprehensive plans with actual development patterns.

2022 Planning Work Program

Item	Applicant	Proposal	Notes	Schedule	Status
Work Program approved by City Council pursuant to Resolutions 1881-22 and 1882-22					
1	City	Periodic update of development regulations for critical areas	State mandated periodic update pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130.	2022 Q2 – 2023 Q3	Not Initiated – Past Scheduled Start
2	City	Amend Central Business District design standards and building height regulations	Response to communications with developers	2022 Q3 - 2023 Q1	Underway - Past Scheduled Completion
3	City	Amend Title 17 to include permit process improvements	Consistent with Action Item 1.B of Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Chapter	2022 Q3 – 2023 Q1	Underway
4	City	Amend Wireless Facility Regulations contained in BMC 17.106.030.	Required to respond to provisions contained in the Spectrum Act as well as subsequent Declaratory Rulings issued by the Federal Communications Commission interpreting the Spectrum Act.	2022 Q2 – 2022 Q3 Note: Delayed due to scheduling issues, coordination with Public Works	Not Initiated – Past Scheduled Start
5	East Harbor Hills LLC	Add Mobile/Manufactured Homes as a permitted use under the Residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) Standards contained in BMC 17.68.	East Harbor Hills, LLC is pursuing a development proposal on a parcel of property east of Harvey Road, and north of H Street, previously owned by the Martin family. Along with	2022 Q3 – 2022 Q4	Underway

			standard single-family and multi-family housing, the applicant has expressed desire to include a manufactured home park, and/or manufactured home subdivision as potential components of the project.		
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2023 Planning Work Program

Item	Applicant	Proposal	Notes	Schedule
Comprehensive Plan Amendments				
1	City	Amend Central Business District design standards and building height regulations	Zoning and land use map changes, if needed, to coincide with #2 under Zoning Text Amendments	2022 Q3 - 2023 Q4
2	City	Comprehensive Plan - Periodic Review Update	Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130, the City is required to conduct a periodic update of its comprehensive plan and development regulations. The City of Blaine update is due in June, 2025.	2023 Q1 - 2025 Q2
3	City	Housing Action Plan	The City received a \$75,000 grant from the Department of Commerce to address housing affordability through a housing action plan.	2023 Q1 - 2023 Q3
4	City	Utility Comprehensive Plans (Water, Power and Stormwater)	The Public Works Department is scheduled to initiate a number of utility plans in 2023, including for Water, Power and Stormwater.	2023 Q1 - 2023 Q4
5	City	Capital Facilities Update	The Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan will need to be updated to better align with the	2023 Q4

6	City	Zoning and Land Use Map Update	The City processed an annexation in 2022, and the corresponding maps to be updated to reflect this newly annexed area.	2023 Q4
Zoning Text Amendments				
1	City	Periodic update of development regulations for critical areas	State mandated periodic update pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130.	2023 Q1 – 2023 Q4
2	City	Amend Central Business District design standards and building height regulations	Response to communications with developers	2022 Q3 - 2023 Q4
3	City	Amend Title 17 to include permit process improvements	Consistent with Action Item 1.B of Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Chapter	2023 Q1 – 2023 Q2
4	City	Amend Wireless Facility Regulations contained in BMC 17.106.030.	Required to respond to provisions contained in the Spectrum Act as well as subsequent Declaratory Rulings issued by the Federal Communications Commission interpreting the Spectrum Act.	2023 Q3 – 2023 Q4 Note: Delayed due to scheduling issues, coordination with Public Works
5	East Harbor Hills LLC	Add Mobile/Manufactured Homes as a permitted use under the Residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) Standards contained in BMC 17.68.	East Harbor Hills, LLC is pursuing a development proposal on a parcel of property east of Harvey Road, and north of H Street, previously owned by the Martin family. Along with standard single-family and multi-family housing, the applicant has expressed desire to include a manufactured home park, and/or manufactured home subdivision as potential components of the project.	2022 Q3 – 2023 Q1

6	City	Development Standards Update	Amend Chapter 17, as necessary, related to update to the City's Engineering Development Standards Amend Chapter 17, as necessary, to incorporate any state legislative mandates.	2023 Q3 – 2023 Q4
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