

The information below will guide you through the comprehensive plan amendment process. This includes administrative review and waiver of adjacent community review. Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs) can now be submitted online through your Community Page. If you have any questions throughout this process, contact your [Sector Representative](#).

## WHEN TO AMEND YOUR PLAN

If your community changes any part of your adopted comprehensive plan, you must submit the comprehensive plan amendment to the Council for review. Communities amend their comprehensive plans for various reasons, such as:

- Changes resulting from neighborhood or small area planning activities
- Land use changes to allow a proposed development
- Proposed forecast changes or proposed MUSA changes in service or staging
- Text changes to revise a policy or land use category
- Routine updates to incorporate new information or update a public facilities element
- System statement updates with changes that impact the community

If you need assistance about whether a comprehensive plan amendment is needed or if you need assistance with the online submittal process, contact your Sector Representative.

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE AMENDING YOUR PLAN

Before submitting a comprehensive plan amendment to the Council for review, you must take complete the following steps:

- Receive a recommendation from the local planning body
- Receive authorization from local governing body to submit the amendment to the Metropolitan Council for review
- Complete the adjacent governmental units and affected school districts review
- When possible, contact your Sector Representative

### Adjacent Review Period

Your community must allow adjacent governments, affected special districts, and affected school districts up to 60 days to review the comprehensive plan amendment. This waiting period allows others to review and comment on the amendment before our review. If you receive written comments from all jurisdictions prior to the end of 60 days, you may submit your plan at that time.

### Adjacent Review Period Waiver

The Council may allow a shorter review and comment period for amendments or may waive the review and comment period if an amendment involves lands that are not contiguous to other local governmental units. This waiver must be approved prior to submittal to the Council for review. Contact your Sector Representative before completing your amendment.

For an amendment, a community may receive a waiver for the adjacent review and comment period if all of the following are met:

1. The amendment involves a site of 40 acres or less;
2. The amendment does not change the community's growth forecasts or the TAZ allocations; and
3. The amendment site is either:
  - More than one quarter (1/4) of a mile from an adjacent jurisdiction, or
  - Beyond the distance or area which the community's adopted ordinances require notice to adjacent or affected property owners, whichever distance is less.

A community may be eligible to waive the adjacent community review and comment period for a text change in your plan, whose cumulative impacts meet the criteria described above.

Remember, this waiver must be approved prior to submittal to the Council for review. Contact your [Sector Representative](#) for more information.

## CONTENT REQUIREMENTS FOR AN AMENDMENT

Submit the completed comprehensive plan amendment online on your Community Page. Include in your submittal the following information for each comprehensive plan amendment:

1. Color maps showing the following:
  - General location of proposed changes (scaled appropriately for the site)
  - Current planned land use and proposed planned land use
  - Current and proposed sewer staging changes
2. Staff report to planning commission or local governing body.
3. Other relevant information related to the amendment including:
  - Impacts the proposed changes may have on the regional transportation, wastewater, and regional parks systems.
  - Plans for managing stormwater generated from the site.
  - Changes to the projected water use.
  - Confirmation of an executed Orderly Annexation Agreement, annexation by ordinance, or boundary adjustment.
  - Impacts to parcels currently enrolled in the Agricultural Preserves program.
4. Comments from affected and adjacent jurisdictions review.
5. Copy of adopted and signed local resolution, authorizing the amendment to be submitted for review.

The following information provides additional guidance for amendment content requirements:

### Agricultural Preserves

If the amendment proposes a change in guiding land use of a parcel currently enrolled in the Agricultural Preserves Program, the parcel must expire out of the program before the land use guiding can be amended. Please contact your [Sector Representative](#) for additional information.

### Annexations

If the amendment is associated with an annexation, provide information in the submittal materials identifying either an existing Orderly Annexation Agreement (OAA) in the area, or in the absence of an OAA provide the resolution for the annexation by ordinance or boundary adjustment. The administrative law judge must approve the order of annexation for the amendment to be considered complete for review.

### Housing

Local governments must identify whether a residential land use change associated with an amendment impacts land expected to develop or redevelop in the 2021-2030 decade. The Council uses this information to refine its tracking of land guided for affordable housing and evaluate consistency with Housing policy. The Council's Housing policy requires local governments to meet their share of the region's affordable housing need by guiding enough land at densities sufficient to create opportunities for affordable housing. For more information, visit the "[Projected Housing Need](#)" section of the Housing page in the Council's Local Planning Handbook.

The following are examples of amendments that do not impact development in the 2021-2030 decade:

- An amendment responding to an environmental review where (re)development is not expected to begin until 2030.
- An amendment that changes the guiding land use of an area described or mapped in the local comprehensive plan as planned for development in 2030 or later.
- An amendment that is not in response to market interest or an active development proposal.

### Stormwater Management

If an amendment is associated with a development proposal, local governments are required to provide any stormwater management information available at the time of the amendment submittal. This information may be in draft or final form. For example, a submittal may include a final site plan and/or text describing where and how stormwater will be managed on site after development. Alternatively, a submittal may include preliminary stormwater management information based on a site plan concept that has yet to be finalized.

The Council requires stormwater management information to monitor how local governments incorporate local surface water management principles into site plans associated with amendments.

## Water Supply

Local governments may need to update and re-submit to the DNR their Local Water Supply Plan if the amendment results in a change in population forecasts, or other significant change, that requires expansion of the local water supply system. When possible, Council staff recommend coordinating between local planning and water supply staff about these changes and system impacts before submitting the amendment. Contact your Sector Representative if you have additional questions.

Local governments may consider including additional water supply information such as whether a project is located in a designated drinking water supply management area and any potential risks or vulnerabilities in that area. This information can be found on the Minnesota Department of Health's Source Water Protection Web Map Viewer.

## Wastewater

Amendments associated with development projects that plan to be served by the regional wastewater system need to include sufficient information to allow Council staff to identify the interceptor through which the site will be served. Council staff use this information to evaluate the potential system impacts of amendments, especially those that propose a change in the guiding land use.

Local governments can provide this information in text descriptions, site plans, or other maps included in the amendment materials; however, the Council may need additional context if there are multiple interceptors near the amendment site. For information on the location of interceptors, refer to the MCES Sanitary Sewer Meter Service Areas map under the Maps/Tables tab of your [Community Page](#), or use the "Existing Interceptors (Limited Attributes)" layer in the interactive mapping tool for your community under the same tab

## REVIEW TIMELINES

The timeline for review of a comprehensive plan amendment follows:

### Adjacent and affected jurisdictions review and comment

- 60 days prior to submitting amendment to the Council for review
- Satisfaction of this requirement is one of the criteria for determining whether an application is complete for review

### Council reviews for completeness

- 15 business days from date of receipt of amendment
- If the amendment is incomplete, the 15 business day review timeline will restart when supplemental information is submitted

### Council reviews for conformance, consistency, and compatibility

- 60 days from the date of submittal (upon determination by the Council that the amendment is complete for review)

### Administrative Reviews

- 60 business days from receipt of application
- During the 15 business day completeness review, we determine if the amendment is eligible for administrative review and typically the review is finalized within the first 15 business days.

### The Council may extend the review period

- An additional 60 days if needed
- Beyond 120 days if agreed to by the local government

## HOW TO SUBMIT THE AMENDMENT

After your local comprehensive plan is adopted, it is common for amendments to the plan to occur over time as a result of new development projects, completion of planning studies, changes in policy direction, or routine updates with new information.

### Online Submittal

We developed a registration and online submittal tool to receive comprehensive plan amendments and supplemental information for your amendments. This tool will make the submittal process easier, reduce the need for paper copies,

provide a simplified form, and eliminate delays in receiving your amendments and initiating review of your amendments. The online submittal requires a simple registration for users. Once registered and logged in, you can complete a short form online and upload your document for review as a [single searchable PDF](#). Check out the online submittal on your [Community Page](#) and read [How To Submit Online](#) for detailed instructions on [How to Register](#) and submit your amendment.

### Alternative Submittal By Mail

We still accept hard copies of amendments. If you prefer to print your amendment documents, you must also include an electronic copy (via email or CD). The electronic version must be a single PDF document of your entire amendment and supporting documents, and it must be a [searchable PDF](#) (not scanned image). Your hard copy must also include other materials with your amendment which includes the [Comprehensive Plan Amendment Submittal Form](#), color maps, comments from affected jurisdictions, the staff report for the amendment, a copy of your adopted and signed local resolution authorizing your plan to be submitted to us for review, and any other relevant information related to the amendment as detailed in the “Content Requirements for An Amendment” section. Mail this information to us at the address below:

Reviews Coordinator  
Metropolitan Council  
390 North Robert Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
[ReviewsCoordinator@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:ReviewsCoordinator@metc.state.mn.us)

## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF CERTAIN PLAN AMENDMENTS

The Metropolitan Council has adopted guidelines for administratively reviewing comprehensive plan amendments. Administrative reviews are evaluated by staff, do not require that the Council take action to authorize, and apply to comprehensive plan amendments, local water management plans, and water supply plan amendments. Amendments reviewed administratively must meet all the criteria outlined below. Administrative review typically occurs within 15 business days after receiving a complete comprehensive plan amendment submittal. Contact your [Sector Representative](#) before you submit your amendment.

### **For all eligible comprehensive plan amendments, local water management, and local water supply plan amendments:**

The community must show that it has addressed or is committed to addressing through a resolution, any outstanding issues with the most current adopted Comprehensive Plan update or other Council actions.

**Eligible Comprehensive Plan Amendments** must satisfy all of the following:

1. Meet the submittal requirements of the [Metropolitan Land Planning Act \(MLPA\)](#) for content and be determined to be complete for review by the Council.
2. Conform to the regional systems plans.
3. Are consistent with Council policies, including *Thrive MSP 2040* and housing policies.
4. Are consistent with local applicable controls, or the jurisdiction submits evidence that the local controls will be modified to be consistent with the proposed amendment.
5. Are consistent with the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) Implementation Guidelines if residential units are proposed.
6. Are compatible with the plans of affected and adjacent jurisdictions.
7. Proposes a changed forecast that falls within five percent of the Council’s current forecasts.
8. Propose a land use change resulting in an increase or decrease in development capacity of less than 250 housing units, determined by using the midpoint density to calculate the difference between proposed allowable units and current allowable units.
9. Propose a land use change affecting less than 80 acres unless the land use change supports enrollment in the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program.
10. Propose a land use change to guide land at no more than one unit per 40 acres to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program ([Minn. Stat. Ch. 473H](#)) if the land impacted is enrolled in the Program.
11. Does not have the potential for a cumulative impact.

*\*Please note, amendments meeting the criteria above may still be required to have full Council review if needed and as determined by Council staff.*

### How does the Council calculate the change in housing units?

If the amendment is associated with a development project, the Council calculates this change using the midpoint density of the current guiding land use and the planned density of the development project based on the units and acreage identified in the amendment.

If the amendment is not associated with a development project, the Council calculates this change using the midpoint density of the current and proposed guiding land uses.

If the net difference (increase or decrease) between the current allowable units and proposed allowable units is less than 100, then the amendment may be eligible for administrative review, given it meets the other 12 criteria listed in the Administrative Review Guidelines.

#### Example 1: Associated with a development

Acreage: 20 acres

Current Guiding Land Use: Medium Density Residential, 4-6 units/acre

Proposed Project: 170 unit multi-family development (8.5 units/acre)

$170 \text{ units} - [(4+6)/2]*20 = 170 - 100 = 70 \text{ units}$

**Eligible for administrative review**

#### Example 2: Not associated with a development

Acreage: 15 acres

Current Guiding Land Use: Low Density Residential, 2-4 units/acre

Proposed Guiding Land Use: High Density Residential, 8-12 units/acre

$[(12+8)/2]*15 - [(4+2)/2]*15 = 150 - 45 = 105 \text{ units}$

**Not eligible for administrative review**

#### Example 3: Involves a mixed use land use guiding

Acreage: 10 acres

Current Guiding Land Use: Medium Density Residential, 4-6 units/acre

Proposed Guiding Land Use: Mixed Use, 15-25 units/acre, 50% residential

$[(15+25)/2]*10*50\% - [(4+6)/2]*10 = 100 - 50 = 50 \text{ units}$

**Eligible for administrative review**

## LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN AMENDMENTS

Local **water management plans** that are submitted as comprehensive plan amendments may be reviewed administratively if they meeting all of the following conditions:

1. The plan conforms to Council policy plans and regional systems plans.
2. The plan does not present a substantial departure from regional plans or a substantial impact on regional systems.
3. The plan includes ordinances or refers to adopted ordinances as identified in the Council's *2040 Water Resources Policy Plan* (WRPP) to aid in plan implementation.
4. The plan includes all required elements of local water management plans as outlined in the 2040 WRPP.

Local **water supply plans** that are submitted as comprehensive plan amendments may be reviewed administratively if they meet all of the following conditions:

1. The plan is consistent with Council policy plans.
2. The plan is not proposing new wells in the Mt. Simon Hinckley aquifer.
3. The plan is not proposing interconnection with other communities as the main source of water for the community.
4. The plan is not proposing a residential gallons/capita/day of more than 100 gallons per capita day (gpcd).
5. The plan includes all required elements of a local water supply plan as outlined in the 2040 WRPP.
6. The community does not have any known significant contamination problems with their water supply source.

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