

**APPLICATION  
FOR TEXT AMENDMENT  
TO PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A Text Amendment is a proposed change or revision to the policies of the Comprehensive Plan text.

Applications will not be accepted in the following community plan areas as they are currently under an update process:

- Frederickson Community Plan
- Mid-County Community Plan
- Parkland-Spanaway-Midland Communities Plan
- South Hill Community Plan

Please refer to the [Community Plans update webpage](#).

**NOTE:** An application must be completed for all proposed amendments, whether initiated by the County Council, County Executive, or a city or town with jurisdiction in Pierce County. No application is considered officially initiated until: 1) the Executive forwards the application to the County Council for inclusion in the Council resolution initiating amendments; 2) a city or town forwards the application to the County Council for inclusion in the Council resolution initiating amendments; or 3) the County Council includes the application in the resolution initiating amendments. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the completed application and to check on the status of the request. If you want a city or town to initiate an amendment, you need to work directly with the city or town. See the handout [Guidelines for Submitting Applications for Amendments to the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan](#) for additional information.

The deadline to submit an application is 4:00 p.m., **July 31, 2020**. Complete all the blanks in this application form. A letter or report in lieu of this application will not be accepted. However, reports, photos or other materials may be submitted to support your application.

**A \$3,000.00 fee for each Comprehensive Plan amendment is required. Whether a request to initiate an amendment is made to the County Executive or County Council, a non-refundable submittal fee of \$500.00 is required at time of application. If the Council approves to initiate the amendment, the remaining \$2,500.00 fee shall be required within ten (10) working days after the amendment is initiated by the County Council. If an applicant fails to pay the required fee, staff will be unable to proceed with the review of an application(s), and this will result in the expiration and cancellation of an application(s).**

For additional information, contact Pierce County Planning and Public Works, Long Range Planning Division, by phone at (253) 798-3736 or by email at [Jessica.Nappi@piercecountywa.gov](mailto:Jessica.Nappi@piercecountywa.gov).

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**DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT:**

1. General description of proposal:

Cascade Water Alliance proposes new policies to protect water quality in the Lake Tapps Reservoir through cooperation and collaboration with Pierce County, implementation of the Lower White River Basin Plan's recommendations regarding the Lake Tapps Reservoir, and other measures. As explained below, these new policies are consistent with the County's previously-adopted goals and policies addressing water quality in general, and they will provide a framework for implementing those existing goals and policies and leveraging the County's and Cascade's efforts to protect water quality in the Lake Tapps Reservoir in particular.

2. Write text as it currently appears in the Comprehensive Plan (include element/chapter and Pierce County Code citation):

See Attachment A

3. Write proposed amendment (if new, indicate the proposed location by specifying the document, page number, and location on the page):

See Attachment A

4. Why is the text amendment needed and being proposed?

See Attachment A

Attach additional sheets if necessary.

**ATTACHMENT A - Cascade Water Alliance Proposed Text Amendment**

**2. Write text as it currently appears in the Comprehensive Plan (include element/chapter and Pierce County Code citation):**

**CHAPTER 7: ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT, page 7-4:**

GOAL ENV-5 Protect aquifers and surface waters to ensure that water quality and quantity are maintained or improved.

ENV-5.4 Manage and plan water resources on a watershed basis.

**CHAPTER 13: UTILITIES ELEMENT, page 13-16:**

GOAL U-32 Improve surface water and groundwater quality.

U-32.1 Address water quality in stormwater facility maintenance and capital improvement projects.<sup>1</sup>

**3. Write proposed amendment (if new, indicate the proposed location by specifying the document, page number, and location on the page):**

*Location of proposed new language is shown in underlining below*

**CHAPTER 7: ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT, page 7-4:**

GOAL ENV-5 Protect aquifers and surface waters to ensure that water quality and quantity are maintained or improved.

ENV-5.4 Manage and plan water resources on a watershed basis.

ENV-5.4.1 Lakes identified as a drinking water source should be protected through the development of a lake management plan to address identified impairments of the drinking water source.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Pierce County Code (PCC) 19A.10.020 (adopting the Comprehensive Plan and incorporating it into the PCC by reference).

ENV-5.4.1.1 Work with Cascade Water Alliance to (1) begin implementation of the Lower White River Basin Plan’s recommendations regarding the Lake Tapps Reservoir, starting with a pilot program targeting phosphorus in the Lake Tapps Reservoir; and (2) ensure that long-term support and funding for implementing the Plan’s recommendations are sufficient to be successful.

**CHAPTER 13: UTILITIES ELEMENT, page 13-16:**

GOAL U-32 Improve surface water and groundwater quality.

U-32.1 Address water quality in stormwater facility maintenance and capital improvement projects. Plan for and manage stormwater on a watershed basis, by basin or sub-basin, consistent with policies addressing water quality and coordination of regional stormwater management efforts, including Policies ENV-5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.1.1, 5.5 and U-36.

**4. Why is the text amendment needed and being proposed:**

Cascade Water Alliance (Cascade) is proposing this amendment to protect water quality in the Lake Tapps Reservoir. This amendment is fully consistent with existing goals and policies in the County’s Comprehensive Plan<sup>2</sup> and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)<sup>3</sup> intended to protect water quality generally, and it provides a more detailed framework to advance the implementation of those existing goals and policies to protect water quality in the Lake Tapps Reservoir specifically. By adopting this amendment, the County will continue to meet its obligation under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to take all necessary measures to protect water quality.<sup>4</sup>

Water quality in the Lake Tapps Reservoir is particularly important. It is a regional asset that provides recreational, environmental, and aesthetic benefits to the public, and Cascade plans to use it as a drinking water source. These unique qualities make the Lake Tapps Reservoir the obvious choice for a targeted effort by Pierce County, in partnership with Cascade, to address existing water quality problems and prevent future problems.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., GOAL ENV-5, Policy ENV-5.4; GOAL U-32, Policy U-32.1 (quoted above).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., CPP Env-4 (“The County, and each municipality in the County, shall consider the following regarding natural resources: . . . 4.8 emphasizing the *prevention* of air and water quality degradation”) (emphasis added); Env-20 (“The County, and each municipality in the County, should coordinate watershed/aquatic restoration planning and implementation activities within a watershed”); Env-23 (“The County, and each municipality in the County, should maintain or enhance water quality through control of runoff and best management practices to maintain natural aquatic communities and beneficial uses.”).

<sup>4</sup> *Whatcom Cty. v. Hirst*, 186 Wn. 2d 648, 688–93, 381 P.3d 1, 18–21 (2016).

Cascade is a municipal corporation comprised of five member cities and two special districts within King County: the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond and Tukwila and Sammamish Plateau Water and the Skyway Water and Sewer District. In 2009, Cascade purchased the Lake Tapps Reservoir from Puget Sound Energy. Cascade now owns and manages the lake as a future drinking water source, while continuing to accommodate the existing recreational uses of the lake. Cascade’s long-term capital plans include the completion of the Lake Tapps Reservoir drinking water system by the year 2045.

Cascade has already made substantial investments in its water quality program for the Lake Tapps Reservoir, including a water quality monitoring and sampling program to establish baseline water quality (approx. \$500,000); establishing the TappsWise program with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (approx. \$100,000 per year); and paying the United States Geological Survey for maintenance and monitoring of ten gauges in the White River (approx. \$300,000 per year). In addition, Cascade is in discussions with Pierce County Parks for the development of a regional trail on Cascade property that would connect the cities of Bonney Lake and Buckley. Cascade is proposing this amendment as a way of building on these investments and cementing its partnership with Pierce County to proactively address water quality and other issues affecting the Lake Tapps Reservoir.

This amendment is further supported by the detailed findings and recommendations regarding the Lake Tapps Reservoir in the Lower White River Basin Plan (LWRBP), which is incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan.<sup>5</sup> A key finding in the LWRBP is that, while water quality monitoring conducted in 2004–2006 found that water quality in the Lake Tapps Reservoir was “generally good,” “water quality could decline in the future.” In particular, the LWRBP found that “[l]ake eutrophication due to phosphorus enrichment is the primary concern for Lake Tapps,” and that “[e]utrophication could impair the recreation, aesthetic, and water supply uses of the lake.” The LWRBP went on to find that “[e]arly detection of adverse water quality could provide an opportunity for corrective measures to be implemented before the beneficial uses of the lake are compromised;” and that “[i]nformation on the likely causes of water quality degradation would help ensure that corrective measures are focused and effective.” The LWRBP therefore recommended that “[a] long-term monitoring program (described below and in Appendix J) should be implemented to track the lake’s water quality,” and that “[t]he long-term monitoring program should be designed to determine whether the lake’s trophic state is changing over time.”<sup>6</sup>

This amendment creates a framework for partnering with Cascade to implement these and other recommendations from the LWRBP. Because phosphorus is the primary concern in the Lake Tapps Reservoir, the amendment proposes to begin with a pilot program targeting phosphorus. Consistent

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<sup>5</sup> See Ordinance No. 2013-61 (incorporating White River Basin Plan into Storm Drainage and Surface Water Management Plan), available at: [https://online.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/council/iview/proposal.cfm?proposal\\_num=2013-61](https://online.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/council/iview/proposal.cfm?proposal_num=2013-61). See also PCC 19D.60.A.8 (incorporating LWRBP by reference into Comprehensive Plan); Utilities Element at 13-15 (citing LWRBP and eight other basin plans incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan). See also Exhibit C to Ordinance No. 2013-61 (Council findings supporting the adoption of the LWRBP), available at: <https://online.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/council/model/otDocDownload.cfm?id=1527243&fileName=2013-61%20final%20Exc.pdf> (2013 Findings).

<sup>6</sup> LWRBP, Vol. I, at 7-18 through 7-19. See also LWRBP, Vol. II, Appendices I-J.

with CPPs requiring the County to emphasize the proactive “prevention” of water quality degradation, this approach will allow the County to address phosphorus and other issues in the Lake Tapps Reservoir *now*, before they become a problem to which the County will be forced to react (at much greater cost, and likely with fewer options).

This amendment will benefit the people of Pierce County and Washington State by ensuring that the recreational, environmental, and aesthetic benefits associated with clean water in the Lake Tapps Reservoir will continue to flow to future generations. It will also benefit Cascade, its members, and their drinking water customers by proactively establishing and maintaining high standards for drinking water quality *now*, many years before the lake is being actively used to provide drinking water.

Finally, this amendment will benefit Pierce County by leveraging the County’s and Cascade’s investments in water quality in ways that will help the County meet its legal obligations under the GMA, the Clean Water Act, and the latest Phase I Municipal Stormwater Permit. The County Council has already adopted findings confirming that the LWRBP is consistent with the GMA and the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan; that the LWRBP “implements and is consistent and supportive of Pierce County’s Municipal Stormwater NPDES Permit”; and that the LWRBP is “consistent with the Endangered Species Act” (ESA) and “includes actions aimed at reducing Pierce County’s potential ESA liability.”<sup>7</sup>

In sum, by adopting this amendment, the Council will build upon and maximize the effectiveness of existing goals, policies, investments, and other efforts by Pierce County and Cascade to ensure clean water in the Lake Tapps Reservoir for future generations.

For these reasons, Cascade urges the Council to initiate and adopt this amendment.

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<sup>7</sup> See 2013 Findings, *supra*.