

Bullet List of Reasons for the Planning Commission to Review and Improve Kalama's Land Use Process

A well written land use approval process benefits the applicant, the public, and the jurisdiction. It can set clear expectations for what happens in the process, what is required to get through the review process, public notice procedures and clear opportunity for public review and comment, and the timing that it takes for a decision on an application.

It is difficult for a jurisdiction without a land use/ building review to condition development consistently and for that jurisdiction to identify the reviews and timing needed to process an application. SEPA provides some ability to condition a development, but only for environmental impacts. SEPA is not a tool for conditioning community standards or implementing the vision for a community and does not have a clear vesting standard.

Here are a few bullets on the benefits of having an adopted process:

- Land use review is limited to Conditional Use and SEPA in Kalama code. There is not a modification process for the CUP, which has recently created issues for the school district.
- This lack of process confuses applicants who must either informally negotiate preliminary plans with the city, or commit to building permit level design to get some basic answers on what is permissible.
 - A clear approval process allows staff to be prepared for applicant questions and allows the applicant and the public a clear opportunity to provide information and input.
 - Going straight to building/engineering review may not be efficient when there are modifications to the plan required by zoning or other land use codes. The applicant has already developed construction documents based on assumptions that may not be correct. A land use approval process that clearly outlines the required information for review provides the applicant better information before the design is finalized, and it provides the public an opportunity to comment on an application before construction documents are finalized.
- A land use approval process can provide better and more predictable coordination between agencies with jurisdiction and the city, resulting in a more predictable process for the applicant.
- A post decision modification or land use appeal process in Kalama code would allow better understanding and clear paths when a decision needs to be changed or when there is a disagreement on how a code is applied.
- Public notice through a development review provides clear opportunity for the public to comment on and review the application.
- The changing market in Kalama and the focus on economic development is resulting in more commercial/industrial applications, which do not currently have a clear approval path for land use.
- A land use approval process can give the city a clear authority to require public improvements and link them to the impacts they mitigate.
- Basic processes that need to be created include:
 - Site Plan Review or Design Review
 - Post-Decision Review for all land use review processes
 - Potentially a re-look at Title 16 (Subdivisions)
 - Establishing submittal requirements, timelines for approval, and review procedures
 - Potentially allow for different processes for fast paced projects where there are not a lot of unknowns while allowing a slower paced process for projects that are complicated or involve multiple agency review.