



**City of Monroe
Monroe 2044 Comprehensive Plan – Citywide Rezone
Staff Report**

A. GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

File Number(s):	CA2024-03
Project Summary:	The City of Monroe is proposing various amendments to the Monroe Municipal Code relating to the processing land use project permit applications as required by WA Senate Bill 5290 (SB 5290).
Applicant:	City of Monroe
Location:	Not applicable.
Public Hearing Date and Location:	Monday, August 11, 2025, at 7:00 PM, HYBRID MEETING In-person at 163 Village Court, Monroe, WA 98272, and via the Zoom Virtual Meeting Platform
Staff Contact:	Kate Tourtellot, Planning Manager City of Monroe 806 West Main Street Monroe, WA 98272 (360) 863-4618 ktourtellot@monroewa.gov

B. BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

In 2023, the WA Legislature passed Senate Bill 5290 that amended the local land use project permit review timelines established by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 36.70B Local Permitting. The bill include several other provisions including establishing grants, financial disincentives for jurisdictions that exceed the review timeframes, creates a list of additions recommended changes to the local review process, and establishing annual reporting requirements to the WA Department of Commerce. The intent of the bill is to streamline the local review process, especially for housing developments, and reducing the project permit review times for “Growth Management Act (GMA) fully planning jurisdictions.” These jurisdictions, including the City of Monroe, are required to comply with the GMA that requires the adoption of a 20 year long rang plan and associated development regulations to implement said plan.

RCW 36.70B Local Permitting established a 120-day review clock for most land use project permits in 2001. The 2023 amendments established three review clocks based on the review and requirement for public participation. The new review timeframes are: 65 days for administrative approval without public notice, 100 days for administrative approvals with public comment, and 170 days for projects that require a public hearing. The State also clarified that the reviews are based on calendar days instead of workdays for the in-house reviews. Items that did not change include the review timeframe beginning with the Notice of Complete Application and the “clock” can be stopped when additional information is required

to complete the review. The review times for short and long subdivisions did not change as established by Chapter 58.17 RCW. Additionally, legislative actions remain exempt from the review clocks and must follow the locally adopted procedures. Legislative actions include amendments to the comprehensive plan, development regulations (i.e., MMC Title 22), pre-annexation zoning, and annexations.

Staff worked with legal counsel to draft the proposed amendments and took the opportunity to address unfinished administrative review processes from the 2019 adoption of the Unified Development Regulations, MMC Title 22. Below are highlights to the proposed amendments:

- Establish the ability to refund a portion of application fees if the review time frame is exceeded and there is not a written mutual agreement between the applicant and City to exceed the review timeframe;
- Revise MMC Chapters 22.10 through 22.74 to reflect the City's updated permit classification system, refine submittal requirements where applicable, and ensure internal consistency; and
- Complete overhaul of MMC Chapter 22.84 Permit Processing to comply with SB 5290.

C. REVIEW PROCESS

1. Overview

MMC Table 22.84.060(B)(1): Project Permit Types, designates code amendments as Type IV project permits. Type IV permits require that the Planning Commission review the proposal and make a recommendation to the final decision authority, i.e., the Monroe City Council.

The City is proposing various amendments to the land use permit processes and application fees adopted in the Monroe Municipal Code. Following the adopted review process, the City worked through the Planning Commission to initiate and review the draft changes during regular meetings open to the public. The final draft amendments were posted on the City's "Code Amendments" webpage.

Following the close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission will review all materials, consider any public comments, and forward a recommendation to the City Council. According to MMC 22.84.030(D)(2), the Planning Commission shall make a written recommendation to the City Council regarding Type IV actions at the close of their final public hearing or at their next scheduled meeting.

The written recommendation to the City Council shall be one of the following:

- a. Recommendation for additional time and/or resources on the application;
- b. Recommendation of approval of the legislative action;
- c. Recommendation of approval of the legislative action with modifications; or
- d. Recommendation of denial of the legislative action.

No earlier than September 23, 2025, the City Council will hold a first reading to consider the Commission's recommendation. Per MMC Table 22.84.060(8)(2), Decision-Making and Appeal Authorities, the City Council is the City's final decision authority on the proposed code amendments. The decision may be appealed to the Growth Management Hearing Board per RCW 36.70A.290.

2. Review Criteria for Amendments to the Unified Development Regulations, MMC 22.72

Pursuant to MMC 22.72.040(E), Decision Criteria, an amendment to the Unified Development Regulations shall not be granted unless the applicant demonstrates that all the following criteria are met:

- A. The proposed amendment to the development regulations is consistent with the policies and provisions of the Monroe comprehensive plan;

Staff Comment: These proposed text amendments to the MMC are consistent with the Monroe 2044 Comprehensive Plan, including, but are not limited to the following policies:

- Land Use Policy 3.6.2 – Regularly review and assess the permitting process to optimize resource utilization and staff capacity, ensuring effectiveness and continuous improvement.
- Housing Policy 6.2.6 – Minimize housing productions costs by streamlining development standards and explore diverse infrastructure funding approaches...
- Implementation Table 11.1 – Continue Planning Process, Frequency of Updates: Zoning Code and map changes – As Needed.
- Implementation Table 11.1 - Continue Planning Process, Frequency of Updates: Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations – Every ten years for consistency with GMA and Countywide Planning Policies and growth targets.

- B. The amendment complies with all other applicable criteria and standards of the Monroe Municipal Code and is consistent with the purpose of this Title;

Staff Comment: The proposed amendments relating to permit processing are consistent with the applicable criteria of the MMC and purpose of the of MMC Chapter 22.72 that states the chapter establishes the procedures and requirements for amending Title 22, Unified Development Regulations (UDR), including text amendments. This proposal is being brought forward by city staff for compliance with changes to state law, Chapter 36.70B RCW.

These proposed amendments are also consistent with the general provisions of the UDR that states, “All land uses and development authorized by the UDR shall comply with other regulations and/or requirements of this title, the Monroe Municipal Code, and the laws or regulations of any other local, state or federal agency that has jurisdiction over land uses and development. Where a difference exists between this title and other regulations, the more restrictive requirements shall apply.” SB 5290 superseded the city’s local permitting processes on January 1, 2025, the proposed amendments will bring the City into compliance with State law.

- C. The subject property is suitable for development in conformance with the development regulations applicable under the proposed zoning district;

Staff Comment: Not applicable, the proposed amendments relate to permit processes.

- D. The proposed amendment advances the public interest of the community;

Staff Comment: The proposed amendments implement the City's Comprehensive Plan and provide consistency with State laws relating to local permitting processes. As stated above in the Background section of this report, one of the State's goals is to expedite the development of housing. Based on Monroe's 2044 Comprehensive Plan an additional 2,424 housing units are needed to support growth in Monroe through 2044.

- E. The amendment does not adversely affect public health, safety, or welfare; and

Staff Comment: The proposed amendments do not reduce public health, safety, welfare standards. The proposed amendments relate to the land use project permitting process. The City continues to require all development applications comply with City, State, and Federal regulations for public health, safety, and welfare.

- F. The amendment is warranted because of changed circumstances, error, or a demonstrated need for additional property in the proposed zoning district, when applicable.

Staff Comment: The proposed amendment to the MMC are necessary for compliance in changes to State law, Chapter 36.70B, relating to local permitting processes.

- G. In addition to those criteria in MMC 22.72.040(E)(1-6), amendments to the official Zoning Map (rezones) shall also meet all of the following criteria:

- a. The amendment is consistent with the future land use map set out in the Monroe comprehensive plan;
- b. The amendment is compatible with the uses and zoning of the adjacent properties;
- c. The proposed reclassification does not constitute a "spot" zone;
- d. Adequate public facilities and services are likely to be available to serve the development allowed by the proposed zone;
- e. The potential adverse environmental impacts of the types of development allowed by the proposed zone have been identified and can be mitigated taking into account all applicable regulations, or, the unmitigated impacts are acceptable; and
- f. The proposed reclassification is an extension of an existing zone, or a logical transition between zones.

Staff Comment: Not applicable, there are no proposed changes to the adopted Zoning Map with this application.

3. **Public Notification and Comments**

- a. **Notice of Application:** Type IV permits do not require a notice of application for non-project specific amendments per MMC 22.84.060(B). This is a non-project action limited to Municipal Code text amendments relating to the processing of land use project permits.
- b. **Department of Commerce:** The proposed amendments were transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce for state agency review, in accordance with RCW 36.70A.106, on July 11, 2025. The City's request for an expedited review was approved on July 23, 2025.
- c. **Notice of Public Hearing (Planning Commission):** Notice of Public Hearing for August 11, 2025, was provided in accordance with MMC 22.84.050(C) by

posting the notice at City Hall and the Monroe Library and publishing the notice in the Everett Daily Herald on August 1, 2025.

- d. **Notice of Public Hearing (City Council)**: The City Council public hearing has not been scheduled. Once a date is set, notice will be provided in accordance with MMC 22.84.050(C) by posting the notice at City Hall and the Monroe Library and publishing the notice at least 10 days prior to the hearing date.

4. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Review

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-800(19), this proposal to amend permit processes is exempt from SEPA review.

5. Public Hearing

A public hearing on this matter will be held in front of the Planning Commission on August 11, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue Station 31 and Zoom Online Meeting Platform.