



SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the [SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS \(part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [\[HELP\]](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:
City of La Center MDR-16 Density Code Update

2. Name of applicant:
City of La Center

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:
210 East 4th Street, La Center, WA 98629
(360) 263-7665
Contact: Jessica Nash, Permit Technician

4. Date checklist prepared:
July 24, 2023

5. Agency requesting checklist:
City of La Center

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

This is a non-project action for updates to the La Center Municipal (LCMC) Code Chapters 18.40.010, 18.130.080, 18.140.020, 18.140.030, and 18.300.130 pertaining to density in the Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential (MDR-16) zones. The schedule for the project is as follows:

- August 8, 2023: Planning Commission public hearing*
- August 23, 2023: City Council workshop*
- September 27, 2023: City Council public hearing*

Public hearing notices will be issued at least 14 days prior to the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Not applicable. This is a non-project SEPA checklist for an update to the City's code pertaining to density in the LDR-7.5 and MDR-16 zones.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

Environmental information prepared is limited to this SEPA checklist.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

Not applicable. This is a non-project action for a code update.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

The code update will require Planning Commission recommendation and City Council approval.

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe

certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)
The City of La Center is updating its code pertaining to density in the LDR-7.5 and MDR-16 zones with a particular focus on increasing the available density transfers from critical areas to developable portions of a site. The code update will primarily affect LCMC 18.140 (Medium Density Residential District), but provisions in other code chapters including LCMC 18.40 (Definitions), LCMC 18.130 (Low Density Residential District), and LCMC 18.300 (Critical areas) will also be affected. The purpose of this code update is to:

- *Preserve critical areas by allowing developers to transfer more density to buildable portions of the site in the LDR-7.5, MDR-16, Residential Professional (RP), and Mixed-Use (MX) zones.*
- *Amending definitions to “dwelling, attached”, “dwelling, detached”, “dwelling, duplex”, “dwelling, multiple family”, and “dwelling, single-family” to better distinguish between these types of housing.*
- *Amending the maximum net density allowed for multifamily developments from 14 to 16 units per net acre.*
- *Removing the 10-unit limitation for multifamily buildings.*
- *Amending the way density transfers are calculated in LCMC 18.300.130.*

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.
The code update will apply in the Low Density Residential (LDR-7.5), Medium Density Residential (MDR), Residential Professional (RP), and Mixed Use (MX) zones.

B. Environmental Elements [\[HELP\]](#)

Consistent with WAC 197-11-960, the lead agency (the City of La Center) has determined that completion of Section B is not necessary for this non-project action.

1. Earth [\[help\]](#)

a. General description of the site:

(circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

- e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.
- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.
- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

2. Air [\[help\]](#)

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.
- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

3. Water [\[help\]](#)

a. Surface Water: [\[help\]](#)

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.
- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.
- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.
- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.
- 5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

b. Ground Water: [\[help\]](#)

1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:

4. *Plants* [\[help\]](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

___deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

___evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

___shrubs

- ___ grass
- ___ pasture
- ___ crop or grain
- ___ Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- ___ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- ___ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- ___ other types of vegetation

- b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?
- c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.
- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:
- e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

5. Animals [\[help\]](#)

- a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

- birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:
- mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:
- fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other _____

- b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.
- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.
- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:
- e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

6. Energy and Natural Resources [\[help\]](#)

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

7. Environmental Health [\[help\]](#)

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.
 - 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

 - 2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.

 - 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.

 - 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

 - 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

- b. *Noise*
 - 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

 - 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

 - 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

8. Land and Shoreline Use [\[help\]](#)

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

- b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?
 - 1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

- d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

- h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

- L. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

- m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

9. Housing [\[help\]](#)

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

10. Aesthetics [\[help\]](#)

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

11. Light and Glare [\[help\]](#)

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

12. Recreation [\[help\]](#)

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?
- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

13. Historic and cultural preservation [\[help\]](#)

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.
- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.
- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.
- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

14. Transportation [\[help\]](#)

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.
- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?
- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).
- e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.
- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?
- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

15. Public Services [\[help\]](#)


- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.
- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

16. Utilities [\[help\]](#)

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site:
 electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system,
 other _____
- c. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

C. Signature [\[HELP\]](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: 

Name of signee Ethan Spoo, AICP,

Position and Agency/Organization Consulting Planner (WSP USA Inc)

Date Submitted: July XX, 2023

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions [\[HELP\]](#)

(IT IS NOT NECESSARY to use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Increased density transfers available in the LDR-7.5, MDR-16, RP, and MX zones is not anticipated to increase discharges to water or the production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances. The proposed code update may lead to insignificant increases to air emissions and production of noise as compared to existing density regulations as it will allow greater residential densities on a site. An increase of residential development and densities can increase vehicular traffic which can increase vehicular emissions and noise production. However, these impacts are to be typical of what is expected for a residential neighborhood. . Developments using the revised density transfer provisions would still be required to be consistent with the City's zoning, stormwater, environmental, traffic, and noise regulations to minimize and mitigate any impacts.

The proposal may lead to decreased discharges to water because it would decrease the incentive of development applicants to request impacts to stream and wetland areas by allowing them greater densities on areas of the site where critical areas do not occur.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

A proposed measure to avoid or reduce increases to noise and air emissions resulting from the critical areas density transfer provisions is to limit the maximum net density allowed for the buildable area of a site. This mitigation measure has already been incorporated into the draft code.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

The primary benefit of increasing density transfers is to provide additional protections to critical areas that are habitat for plants, animals, and fish. Therefore, the proposed provisions are expected to better protect plants, animals, and fish.

In addition, applicants using the critical areas density transfer provisions must comply with the City's critical areas ordinance, SEPA regulations, stormwater regulations, shoreline ordinance, and tree protection ordinance where applicable. These ordinances protect plants (in and outside critical areas), animals, and fish inside critical areas.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

Applicants wishing to develop using the density transfer and related MDR-16 density updates will be required to comply with LCMC 18.300 (Critical Areas), LCMC 18.310 (Environmental Policy), LCMC 18.320 (Stormwater and Erosion Control), LCMC 18.330 (Shorelines), and LCMC 18.350 (Tree Protection), therefore, proposed residential developments would not be expected to impact plants, animals, fish, or marine life more than the current code provisions. No additional measures are proposed or required.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The critical areas density transfer provisions and related MDR-16 density updates are expected to incrementally increase the demand for water and energy due to an allowed increase of residential density on developable lands.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Increases in density and demand for water and energy are expected to be incremental, minor, and insignificant, therefore no measures are proposed or required.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

Any development utilizing the critical areas density transfer provisions and related MDR-16 density updates will be subject to the City's critical areas ordinance protecting wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and critical aquifer recharge areas prior to approval. These developments would be further incentivized to protect these critical areas using the critical areas density transfer. All residential developments, including those using the density transfer would not be permitted in parks. There are no wilderness areas or wild and scenic rivers in La Center. Threatened and endangered habitat is regulated by the City's critical areas ordinance. All residential developments are required to comply with the City's archaeological protection requirements, if applicable, in LCMC 18.360. There is no prime farmland in La Center. Therefore, no substantial impacts are anticipated for these resources.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

No additional mitigation proposed. Future development using the density transfer provisions will be reviewed for consistency with regulations protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposed code update would not conflict with the City's Comprehensive Plan or Shoreline Master Program which accommodate residential uses with the Urban Residential plan designation and within shoreline jurisdiction. The proposed code update would be consistent with the following applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan include providing a variety of housing products (Policy 1.2.5); providing adequate residential lands and developments that shall emphasize low density residential (Policy 1.2.1); ensure that medium density housing accounts for 25% of new residential constructions (Policy 3.1.1); encouraging flexible and cost-efficient land use regulations allowing differing housing needs for an economically diverse population (Policy 3.1.2); adopt implementation measures to assure that new residential development occurs at an average density of four units per net acre (Policy 3.1.3); encourage, support, and initiate activities to preserve, conserve, or improve the natural shorelines of the East Fork Lewis River, Brezee Creek, and McCormick Creek (Policy 6.1.9); ensure that wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas are protected from development (Policies 9.1.12, 9.1.13, 9.1.14, 9.1.15, 9.1.16, and 9.1.17); update, develop, and/or maintain regulatory and incentive programs for the protection and conservation of environmentally critical areas (Policy 9.1.19); encourage habitat protection that will provide a

diverse and sustainable population of fish and wildlife (Policy 9.1.23), and develop and implement a zoning ordinance that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan (Policy 10.1.40)

All residential developments must comply with the zoning regulations that include compatibility and density requirements. Therefore, the proposed MDR-16 density updates will not encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

The proposed code update would be compatible with the City's land use and shoreline plans. No mitigation measures are proposed or required.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

The increased density allowed as a result of the increased density transfer and MDR-16 density updates could increase demands on transportation and public services and utilities. Greater density will increase the amount of residential units and traffic using local roadways and will also increase the demand for public services and utilities including parks, sewer, water, stormwater, electricity, police, fire, schools, and hospital services. New residential developments are subject to the City's land use and zoning review process, which includes engineering analysis to ensure and/or mitigate any impacts to the local transportation and public services and utilities system. Additionally, new residential development is subject to the City's impact fees for transportation, schools, park and system development charges for sewer and water to mitigate or minimize impacts from additional residential density. Police, fire, and schools are funded through the City's general fund from property and sales tax revenues. Property taxes would increase along to help offset impacts from increased density. Also, new development is financially liable to provide roads, parks, and utilities concurrent with new development, which will also mitigate or minimize impacts from development.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

No additional measures are proposed.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

There would be no known conflicts with local, state, or federal laws or requirements created by the proposed updates. The code update is being completed to comply with state law in RCW 35.21.684 and 35A.21.213.