



Market Expansion Policy

The WPL fundamentally believes in open markets and open competition. Open markets and direct competition creates innovation and consumer choice that is healthy for the sport. While it is true that most clubs have no legal or contractual right to the territory they serve, it is also true that traditional club boundaries have generally been respected by most WPL clubs.

The league has drawn up a policy aimed to guide clubs on the steps that is required for market expansion or new growth beyond traditional borders. If any club wants to expand their traditional market, they will be required to follow the *Market Expansion Policy*.

The league has the authority to set its own rules on league matters, including the question of market expansion outside traditional boundaries. If clubs agree to play in the WPL, they agree to follow all of its rules and regulations, as spelled out in the WPL Ethics Policy:

"Membership in any Washington Premier League, or other WPL competitions, is considered to be an automatic acceptance of its rules, policies and procedures. Membership is defined as players, teams and clubs agreeing to play in WPL-run leagues, events or tournaments." [ETHICS POLICY](#)

The league has established a new set of rules to reiterate support for open markets while also proposing a transparent process for all clubs to follow if seeking to expand into an existing or a new market.

Rules of Play

Section 1

- 1.1 - Submit Market Expansion application with a non-refundable deposit of \$200.
- 1.2 - Click [MARKET EXPANSION APPLICATION](#)
- 1.3 - Application process opens **Sept 1 and closes Dec 1**.
- 1.4 - Clubs shall aim to enter new market for the next fall season.
- 1.5 - The league will make final determination no later than April 30.**
- 1.6 - Following the close of application date, a six-month waiting period begins.

Section 2

- 2.1 - Clubs that seek to enter into new markets beyond their contiguous boundaries and well beyond their traditional market will be required to establish:
 - 2.1.1 Proof of local club office in new community
 - 2.1.2 Proof of separate club staff members - Coaching Director, Club Administrator, team coaches, Referee and Fields assignor.
 - 2.1.3 Proof of fields secured in local community.
 - 2.1.4 Separate website or webpage.
 - 2.1.5 Proof of a minimum roster of players from local community for each team.

The Application Process

Section 3

- 3.1 - All applicants must submit club-wide business plan for new market, which shall be reviewed by the league office.
- 3.2 - Business plan must be submitted between Dec. 1 - 15.**
- 3.3 - Business plan must show that their targeted market has enough population and infrastructure (primarily fields) to support additional soccer clubs.
- 3.4 - Business plan must show that its model offers a different soccer option - defined as an extraordinary opportunity – that surpasses what current clubs are offering.
- 3.5 - Clubs facing new entrant in their traditional market receive notification of application on **Dec 1.**
- 3.6 - New entrant is required to meet face-to-face with all affected clubs and league officials in a meeting set up by the league: between **December 1 and January 31.**
- 3.7 - Aim of formal meeting is for new entrant to explain business plan to potential competitors.
- 3.8 - If new entrant fails to meet face-to-face with its potential competitors, then proposal is automatically denied.
- 3.9 - New entrant must prove that a healthy field supply exists and would not be adversely disrupted with a new competitor.**

Club Boundaries, New Markets, Open Markets, Congested Markets

Section 4

- 4.1 - Club boundaries have historically been defined by school district boundaries, geography, location, size of community, and unwritten agreements between clubs.
- 4.2 - A new market is defined as a geographical area that recently became open due to existing WPL club dissolving or departing area.

- 4.3 - An open market is defined as a geographical area with no PSPL club operating in the vicinity or within traditional boundaries of said market for some period of time.
- 4.4 - A congested market is one that hosts multiple youth soccer clubs in a defined region that shares several contiguous markets within relative short distances.
- 4.5 - Legitimate field space issues are also a defining feature of congested markets.
- 4.6 - If a WPL club dissolves or leaves the league, its market will be regarded as a new market.
- 4.7 - Clubs adjacent or contiguous to this new market will need to apply if they want to expand into this nearby area. But they will not be required to set up separate offices or form separate staffs. They will be required to show proof of field and referee availability.
- 4.8 - Clubs wishing to enter an open market must apply and notify the league of their intentions. But as long as no other club opposes applicant, the evaluation process will be minimal.
- 4.9 - Clubs intending to enter a congested market must be prepared to assert a positive case for growth. Key question to answer: why a new entrant into the market will expand the base of soccer players rather than mostly take from the existing clubs.
- 4.10 - If an established WPL Club member is looking for Open Market opportunities, they are encouraged to contact the league.

Mergers and Competitive Markets

Section 5

- 5.1 - If clubs decide to merge in order to grow and expand their market, they will be required to notify the league and submit a one-page document outlining benefits and plans of merger.
- 5.2 – Clubs will be required to submit a timeline for the merger to be completed.
- 5.3 - If both clubs support the merger, the league also will stand behind it.
- 5.4 - Merging Clubs shall provide all pertinent US Club Soccer documents (unified Club name/ID, updated Club rosters,...) to the League.