



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 28, 2018  
TO: Rob Johnson, Chair, Planning Land Use and Zoning Committee  
FROM: Bill Mills, Senior Planner SDCI  
RE: CB 119217 - Land Use Code Omnibus Amendments

The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) is responsible for normal maintenance of the Land Use Code and related regulations. Such maintenance is recommended by the State Department of Commerce as a good government practice in furtherance of Growth Management Act implementation.

SDCI packages a collection of amendments that are relatively small in scale, and have a limited scope of impact, into an “omnibus” bill. These amendments primarily correct typographical errors, fix section references, and clarify or update existing code language. The proposed omnibus legislation addresses amendments collected from June 2015 to present. The following are highlights from the proposal and serve as examples of the range and scale of issues addressed in the legislation:

- Relies on publication in the department’s Land Use Information Bulletin to provide public notice and removes 300-foot mailed notice to neighbors of unit lot subdivision (townhouse plats) applications.
- Adds a limited exception to minimum floor area ratio (FAR) limits in commercial zones for nonprofit medical service uses that provide a specialized service that is lacking in certain urban villages, such as kidney dialysis.
- Clarifies language regulating small efficiency dwelling units (SEDUs a.k.a. micro-housing) to align with similar building code regulations and provides SDCI authority to promulgate a Director’s Rule to clarify that units treated as SEDUs by the building code are also treated as SEDUs by the Land Use Code.
- Clarifies that child care centers in existing or former public schools must meet standards already applicable to other child care centers requiring new children's play area or equipment to be located a specified distance from neighboring lots.
- Clarifies that the height exception for pitched roofs does not apply to shed roofs (pitched only on one side) or “butterfly roofs” (back-to-back shed roofs with low point in the middle).
- Clarifies that existing residential structures built as single-family residences prior to 1982 are exempt from FAR limits regardless of the number of dwelling units in the structure, provided that the exemption applies only to existing square footage of the structure.
- Adds a requirement for live-work units in commercial zones to have a visually prominent pedestrian entry if the unit is located on a street-level street-facing façade.
- Adds regulations to Seattle Mixed (SM) zones for helistops, heliports, and public facilities, to clarify that these uses are regulated in SM zones similar to all other commercial zones.
- Clarifies that a city block in the SM zone created by vacation of a portion of Broad Street has two podium height limits, 65 feet and 85 feet, instead of a third height limit of 45 feet for a portion of the block.
- Changes the zoning height designation for Downtown Office Core 2 (DOC 2) zones from 500/350-550 to 550/350-550, to allow non-residential uses up to a maximum height of 550 feet on the same basis as residential uses up to that maximum height.

- Clarifies that the exception in Downtown regulations allowing additional FAR, under certain conditions, on sites with existing development, also applies if the lot area is decreased.
- Allows an elevator penthouse to extend to 25 feet instead of 15 feet in the International District, on the same basis as in other Commercial and Downtown zones, on structures with height limits of 125 feet or more, to accommodate energy efficient elevators.
- Applies tree protection regulations of Chapter 25.11 to MPC-YT zones (Master Planned Communities – Yesler Terrace) on the same basis as Midrise zones.
- Adds a variety of changes to Chapter 25.05, State Environmental Policy Act, to reflect recent changes to the state regulations by the Department of Ecology, mainly with respect to transportation and street improvement exemptions.

The omnibus amendments are intended to make the Land Use Code clearer and easier to use for permit applicants, neighbors and City staff. More specific information about all proposed amendments is found in the detailed SDCI Director's Report explaining the draft legislation. Thank you for considering this legislation. I am available to answer any questions you may have.