



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

**Date:** August 5, 2015

**To:** Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Chair  
Planning Land Use and Sustainability (PLUS) Committee

**From:** Ryan Moore, DPD, Senior Planner  
Mike Podowski, DPD, Land Use Policy Manager

**Subject:** Council Bill 118429 – Seattle Mixed Amendments

---

### **Background**

- The Seattle Mixed (SM) zone was initially established to meet the unique needs of SLU. It has since been amended a number of times and currently includes provisions that apply to all parcels zoned SM and special provisions that apply to three specific SM zoned neighborhoods: South Lake Union (SLU) Urban Center, West Dravus area, and the North Rainier Hub Urban Village. In 2013, major amendments to the Seattle Mixed (SM) zone (Chapter 23.48 of the Land Use Code) were adopted to allow a diversity of building types and design standards that apply specifically to South Lake Union (SLU). SM zoning started earlier than 2013.
- Area planning efforts often lead to requests from neighborhoods to create new zones or tailor existing zones to fit what are viewed as unique conditions or needs. This can make the code complicated. The proposal would allow the SM zone to be used in a way to satisfy the desire for tailored zoning, when appropriate, while effectively managing code complexity.
- Use of the SM zone, with special provisions, is anticipated to be proposed for the University District and Rainier Beach. Adoption of this proposal would facilitate rezoning and land use code work.

### **Proposed Amendments**

- The legislation would:
  - Simplify the chapter by making clear which provisions apply where;
  - Provide the ability to tailor neighborhood -specific provisions based on community vision;
  - Establish a format that allows areas to be rezoned to SM in a more consistent manner; and
  - Update standards consistent with original policy intent (*more details below*).

Notable amendments consistent with original policy intent:

- Current lot area requirements and tower floor size limits have been shown to be an obstacle for the slender residential towers that people indicated a desire for in SLU. The proposal would



City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development  
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000  
P.O. Box 34019, Seattle, WA 98124-4019

An equal employment opportunity, affirmative action employer. Accommodations for people with disabilities provided upon request.

provide an option to allow residential towers on lots less than 21,000 square feet, to have a maximum footprint up to 75 percent of the lot area (compared with the current 50 percent), through the Design Review departure process in SM-SLU zones. The current maximum floor plate size of 10,500 square feet would continue to apply. This amendment would make about six additional sites available for tower development, but would maintain other limits on towers, such as a limit of two per half-block. There was significant discussion regarding tower development when SLU was rezoned in 2013.

- Principal use *surface* parking is currently prohibited in the SM zone; the code is silent in terms of principal use *structured* parking. To meet the intent of prohibiting principal use parking in general, the code will be clarified to read that all types of principal use parking are prohibited in SLU. Currently there are no existing principal use parking uses that would become nonconforming as a result of this clarification.
- Existing regulations in the SM zone limit the maximum size of general manufacturing uses to 25,000 square feet. The definition of general manufacturing includes activities as varied as machine shops and the production of paint, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Biotechnology research and development companies in neighborhoods like South Lake Union, and potentially North Rainier/Mt. Baker, that seek to expand into on-site production, require larger facilities than allowed by this size limit. This proposal is intended to allow new and expanded facilities in keeping with the City's policy to promote areas such as SLU as a biotech hub.
- Clarify that existing religious institutions can expand or redevelop within their existing locations. Adopted language restricting the amount of non-residential uses in the SM 85-240 zone prevents this, which was not intended.