

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE*

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** Note that the Summary and Fiscal Note describes the version of the bill or resolution as introduced; final legislation including amendments may not be fully described.*

1. BILL SUMMARY

a. Legislation Title:

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; amending Sections 22.206.200, 22.208.020, 23.40.006, and 23.91.002 of the Seattle Municipal Code; to modify maintenance and demolition standards related to vacant buildings.

b. Summary and background of the Legislation:

The Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) is recommending amendments to the maintenance and development standards for vacant buildings in the Land Use Code and Housing and Building Maintenance Code (HBMC). The proposal is intended to respond to an increase in the public nuisance and health and safety risks associated with vacant structures in the city. The proposal is the product of conversations and data shared between City code compliance, police, and fire staff related to vacant buildings, as well as input from stakeholders from the development community and homeless advocacy community.

The proposed bill would update the minimum standards for vacant buildings to strengthen the standards for securing windows from entry and to establish an expedited process for removing garbage, junk, or other debris from a vacant property if the owner does not respond to a notice of violation. In addition, the proposed bill would establish an expedited process in the HBMC for ordering the demolition of a vacant building that can be documented as hazardous, and modify the permitting standards in the Land Use Code related to demolition of housing. The proposal would shorten the timeline for demolitions that under existing standards would occur on a much longer timeline, reducing the opportunity for such structures to be illegally occupied. The proposal would apply to properties in all areas of the City, where development has previously occurred. SDCI has completed an associated environmental analysis (SEPA) and made a determination of non-significance. SDCI recommends adoption of the proposal.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

a. Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? ___ Yes ___ X No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

a. Does this legislation amend the Adopted Budget? ___ Yes ___ X No

b. Does the legislation have other financial impacts to the City of Seattle that are not reflected in the above, including direct or indirect, short-term or long-term costs?

The new code standards are anticipated to have a minor effect on costs associated with cleaning up and boarding problem properties that are abated by the City rather than the property owner. The board-up standards are slightly more rigorous and costly; however, many of our board-ups are already completed using these higher standards. The reduced need to re-secure resulting from more effective initial closure is likely to offset any increased costs. SDCI staff time monitoring and inspecting problem properties is not likely to decrease given the volume of such properties but resolution may be faster overall. Staff time responding to neighbor concerns may be reduced if problems can be resolved more quickly by faster demolition or do not occur in the first place due to enhanced prevention, freeing up time for other work. Police and Fire staff time may also be spent more efficiently to the extent the provisions will reduce the number of repeat calls and allow faster demolition of problem buildings. SDCI staff will still spend time reviewing demolition permits but there will be a slight time savings on individual applications due to changes in development standards that ease existing barriers to speedy demolition.

c. Is there financial cost or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation?

SDCI believes that the cost of not implementing the legislation would not be significant. However, staff currently devote significant time to repeated emergency situations at vacant buildings, so continuing current practices rather than implementing more efficient prevention, enforcement, and resolution would mean a continued diversion of staff time and resources by SDCI, SPD, and SFD away from other duties and services, and possible need for continuing temporary staff assignment devoted to this caseload.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?

See question 3b above in regards to Police and Fire resources.

b. Is a public hearing required for this legislation?

Yes. The City Council is required to hold a public hearing on the proposal and will conduct a public hearing during their review of the proposed legislation anticipated to be held in 2017.

c. Does this legislation require landlords or sellers of real property to provide information regarding the property to a buyer or tenant?

No

d. Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?

Yes. Publication of notice of the Council public hearing will be made in *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and in the City's Land Use Information Bulletin. Environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is also required for this legislation, and publication

of notice of the environmental determination was also made in The Daily Journal of Commerce and in the City's Land Use Information Bulletin.

e. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

This legislation would apply to vacant buildings located throughout the city.

f. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities?

This legislation is not anticipated to negatively impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities. The proposal could have some impact on property owners that struggle to keep properties clean. This could result in more low-income and/or minority property owners being charged fees if the City cleans junk/debris off a property as an enforcement action. However, this is intended to be partially offset by the benefit to the surrounding communities, which may also be of a similar racial or income group, and further reduced by the faster pathway for a property owner interested in demolishing a problem vacant building to do so.

g. If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program's desired goal(s).

Not applicable. This legislation does not involve a new initiative or programmatic expansion.

h. Other Issues:

None.

List attachments/exhibits below:

None.