



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Land Use Committee

Agenda

Revised - Public Hearing

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Eddie Lin, Chair
Dan Strauss, Vice-Chair
Debora Juarez, Member
Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Member
Maritza Rivera, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8802; Eddie.Lin@seattle.gov

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Meeting Location:

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Committee Website:

<https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/land-use>

This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business. Pursuant to Council Rule VI.C.10, members of the public providing public comment in Chambers will be broadcast via Seattle Channel.

Members of the public may register for remote or in-person Public Comment to address the Council. Speakers must be registered in order to be recognized by the Chair. Details on how to register for Public Comment are listed below:

Remote Public Comment - Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the meeting at <https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>. Online registration to speak will begin one hour before the meeting start time, and registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting.

In-Person Public Comment - Register to speak on the public comment sign-up sheet located inside Council Chambers at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting start time. Registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting.

Please submit written comments no later than four business hours prior to the start of the meeting to ensure that they are distributed to Councilmembers prior to the meeting. Comments may be submitted at Council@seattle.gov or at Seattle City Hall, Attn: Council Public Comment, 600 4th Ave., Floor 2, Seattle, WA 98104. Business hours are considered 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Comments received after that time will be distributed after the meeting to Councilmembers and included as part of the public record.

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

A. Call To Order

B. Approval of the Agenda

C. Public Comment

D. Items of Business

1. [CB 121143](#) **AN ORDINANCE relating to floodplains; tenth extension of interim regulations established by Ordinance 126113, and as amended by Ordinance 126536, for an additional six months, to allow individuals to rely on updated National Flood Insurance Rate Maps to obtain flood insurance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Program.**

Supporting
Documents: [Summary and Fiscal Note](#)

Public Hearing and Possible Vote

E. Adjournment



Legislation Text

File #: CB 121143, **Version:** 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

AN ORDINANCE relating to floodplains; tenth extension of interim regulations established by Ordinance 126113, and as amended by Ordinance 126536, for an additional six months, to allow individuals to rely on updated National Flood Insurance Rate Maps to obtain flood insurance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Program.

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126113 in July 2020, the City adopted interim floodplain development

regulations to regulate development in special flood hazard areas in accordance with standards

established by the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology

and areas identified as flood-prone in subsection 25.09.012.B of the Seattle Municipal Code, with an

effective date of August 24, 2020, and an expiration date of February 24, 2021; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126271 in January 2021, the City renewed the interim floodplain development

regulations for 12 months with an effective date of February 22, 2021, and an expiration date of

February 22, 2022, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State

Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126536 in February 2022, the City amended Section 25.06.110 of the Seattle

Municipal Code and extended the interim floodplain development regulations for six months with an

effective date of February 18, 2022, and an expiration date of August 18, 2022, to continue to meet the

National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to

remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126651 in August 2022, the City again renewed the interim floodplain

development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of August 17, 2022, and an expiration date of February 17, 2023, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126763 in February 2023, the City again renewed the interim floodplain development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of February 15, 2023, and an expiration date of August 15, 2023, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126885 in August 2023, the City again renewed the interim floodplain development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of August 15, 2023, and an expiration date of February 15, 2024, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 126994 in February 2024, the City again renewed the interim floodplain development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of February 13, 2024, and an expiration date of August 13, 2024, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 127064 in August 2024, the City again renewed the interim floodplain development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of August 7, 2024, and an expiration date of February 7, 2025, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 127179 in February 2025, the City again renewed the interim floodplain development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of February 4, 2025, and an expiration date of August 4, 2025, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, through Ordinance 127258 in August 2025, the City again renewed the interim floodplain development regulations as amended by Ordinance 126536 for six months with an effective date of August 4, 2025, and an expiration date of February 4, 2026, to continue to meet the National Flood Insurance Program and the Washington State Department of Ecology requirements to remain in compliance; and

WHEREAS, in July 2021, the City published its State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) decision on the proposed permanent regulations that included amendments to the interim code and additional amendments; and

WHEREAS, in July 2021, the City's SEPA decision was appealed by the Port of Seattle, which has delayed the adoption of the proposed permanent regulations because the Port and City staff have been working on amendments to the proposed permanent regulations, Director's Rules, Tips, and a variance guidance document to address the Port's concerns; and

WHEREAS, in February 2022, the City withdrew its SEPA decision to address the issues raised by the Port of Seattle's appeal and planned to reissue SEPA on the amended proposed permanent Floodplain Development Regulations; and

WHEREAS, in August 2024, the City published its State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) decision on the proposed permanent regulations that included amendments to the interim code and additional amendments; and

WHEREAS, the August 2024 SEPA decision was not appealed but it did bring about new interest in the

proposal and has led to additional outreach and discussion; and

WHEREAS, on August 21, 2025, an addendum to the August 1, 2024 Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) was issued based on a modified legislative proposal for the permanent floodplain development regulations; and

WHEREAS, the permanent floodplain regulation proposal has not yet been transmitted to Council; thus, the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections now seeks another extension of the interim floodplain regulations to be in place while the City deliberates on the permanent floodplain proposal; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council makes the following legislative findings of fact and declares as follows:

A. The Council incorporates by reference the findings of fact contained in Ordinance 126113.

B. In July 2020, the City Council passed, and the Mayor signed Ordinance 126113, establishing interim floodplain development regulations to maintain the City’s standing in the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) National Flood Insurance Program, enabling residents to continue to be eligible for flood insurance while preventing development incompatible with City goals related to development in the floodplains.

C. Since that time, the City has proposed permanent floodplain development regulations that included the amendments proposed in the interim regulations and additional code amendments and published a new State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) decision on this proposal; however, due to factors detailed below, the work necessary to complete the permanent regulations will not be completed before the expiration of the interim regulations on February 4, 2026.

D. The City’s initial SEPA decision, published in July 2021, was appealed to the Hearing Examiner by the Port of Seattle (“Port”) and Port and City staff subsequently worked to resolve the issues raised by the Port with code amendments, Director’s Rules, Tips, and a variance guidance document.

E. The City withdrew its SEPA decision in February 2022 in order to reissue an updated SEPA analysis on the amended proposed permanent Floodplain Development Regulations that address some or all issues raised by the Port of Seattle.

F. The City issued a new SEPA decision in August 2024 and this decision was not appealed. However, the Port of Seattle continues to request additional amendments, and additional constituents have requested additional engagement with the City and FEMA.

G. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.390 authorizes the City to renew interim regulations by ordinance for a six-month period.

Section 2. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.390, the interim regulations first set forth in Ordinance 126113, and as amended by Ordinance 126536, shall be renewed for a period of six months from the date this ordinance becomes effective, and shall automatically expire after the six-month period unless the same is extended as provided by statute, or unless terminated sooner by the City Council.

Section 3. This ordinance, which is not subject to referendum, shall take effect: immediately after its approval by the Mayor; immediately after its unsigned return by the Mayor; if the Mayor disapproves it and the Council upon reconsideration passes it again, immediately after that passage; or, if not returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, 15 days after its passage by the City Council.

Passed by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2025, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2025.

President _____ of the City Council

Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Bruce Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
SDCI	Margaret Glowacki	Christie Parker

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to floodplains; tenth extension of interim regulations established by Ordinance 126113, and as amended by Ordinance 126536, for an additional six months, to allow individuals to rely on updated National Flood Insurance Rate Maps to obtain flood insurance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Program.

Summary and Background of the Legislation: This legislation extends the interim floodplain development legislation adopted by Ordinance 126113, and amended by Ordinance 126536, for a tenth time with a public hearing as allowed by the State Growth Management Act. Without adoption of this legislation the interim regulations would expire on February 4, 2026. This legislation extends the amended interim regulations for 6 months so that the City's floodplain mapping and development regulations will continue to be consistent with federal law. These interim regulations will continue to be in place while SDCI conducts the final work before Council considers the Permanent Floodplain Development legislation, which incorporates feedback from enhanced stakeholder outreach. The additional time is needed to allow for the 60-day notice, as required by the Department of Commerce. This time will also be used to provide opportunities for additional public comment during Council deliberations.

The extension of the interim regulations applies to permit applications for construction on property within floodplain areas mapped by FEMA. FEMA has required these types of updates across the country. FEMA published the final updated floodplain map for King County in February 2020. This map (called the Flood Insurance Rate Map) identifies properties that are at risk of flooding and is used to determine which properties are required to have flood insurance. The updated FEMA map is considered final and took effect on August 19, 2020.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City? No

3.d. Other Impacts

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle, including direct or indirect, one-time or ongoing costs, that are not included in Sections 3.a through 3.c? If so, please describe these financial impacts.

No. While the updated mapping in the interim legislation, Ordinance 126113, includes approximately 185 additional properties, the number of permit applications that are being reviewed using the interim regulations is minimal. Existing SDCI staff is sufficient to review permit applications and costs are recovered by existing permit fees. The updated maps have already been prepared.

If the legislation has costs, but they can be absorbed within existing operations, please describe how those costs can be absorbed. The description should clearly describe if the absorbed costs are achievable because the department had excess resources within their existing budget or if by absorbing these costs the department is deprioritizing other work that would have used these resources.

See response above.

Please describe any financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation.

No financial costs to the City are anticipated. If the City does not extend the interim regulations, property owners in the FEMA mapped floodplain areas may not be able to purchase flood insurance, renew an existing policy, or attain federally backed mortgages.

Please describe how this legislation may affect any City departments other than the originating department.

Seattle Public Utilities, Parks, Seattle Department of Transportation, and any other department that is proposing development in the floodplain will need to comply with these regulations.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Is a public hearing required for this legislation?

Yes.

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

Yes.

c. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

The legislation will continue to apply to approximately 2,190 properties along the Puget Sound coast, the Duwamish River, and certain streams. This number includes the additional 185 properties included in the interim regulations

d. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative.

- i. How does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you arrive at this conclusion? In your response please consider impacts within City government (employees, internal programs) as well as in the broader community.**

Nationally, areas with more minority residents tend to have a greater share of unmapped flood risk. While FEMA's February 2020 maps better reflect that risk, some property owners will need to purchase flood insurance, which low-income property owners may struggle to afford. The City's floodplain regulations meet the federal requirements for flood insurance and in some instances are more protective. The more protective standards will result in lower insurance rates over the long term.

- ii. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.**

No specific RET or equity analysis was prepared for these interim regulations.

- iii. What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?**

Access to language translation services is available, if needed. No language access plan was prepared for these interim regulations.

e. Climate Change Implications

- i. Emissions: How is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way? Please attach any studies or other materials that were used to inform this response.**

There will be no increase or decrease of carbon emissions as a result of this legislation.

- ii. Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle's resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.**

The interim floodplain regulations are intended to increase resiliency to climate change in Seattle by identifying areas that are at risk of flooding and requiring building standards that either keep development out of the areas that are at the highest risk of damage or require structures to be elevated and/or floodproofed to decrease the risk of damage.

- f. 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)? What mechanisms will be used to measure progress towards meeting those goals?**

N/A

- g. Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP project that involves a shared financial commitment with a non-City partner agency or organization?**

No.

5. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments:

None.