

March 18, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Land Use Committee
From: Ketil Freeman, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120265 – Extension of Home Occupation Interim Controls

On March 23, the Land Use Committee (Committee) will hold a public hearing and may make a recommendation to City Council on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120265](#), which would extend for six months interim development standards for home occupations in residential zones that were originally established through [Ordinance \(ORD\) 126293](#).

This memorandum: (1) describes the interim development standards and (2) describes what CB 120265 would do.

Interim Development Standards Established by ORD 126293

In March 2021, Council passed ORD 126293, which modified for one year development standards applicable to home occupations in residential zones.¹ The modifications are intended to allow home-based businesses to operate with fewer restrictions during the COVID civil emergency, which may result in more small businesses remaining in operation during the pandemic and speed the economic recovery once pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Specifically, the interim controls relax certain performance standards for home occupations. Those standards are limitations on:

- The number of employees (would otherwise be limited to no more than two non-residents);
- The type of customer visits (would otherwise require visits by appointment);
- Use of accessory parking by the home occupation (would otherwise require that accessory parking be utilized for the residential use);
- Increased traffic and parking demand (would otherwise prohibit substantial increases in traffic and parking demand); and
- The non-commercial appearance of home occupations (would otherwise require that non-commercial appearance be maintained).

Additionally, the ordinance allows home occupations to have a larger sign, up to 720 square inches, which is five square feet, and utilize any required off-street parking for the home

¹ A memorandum detailing how the City regulated home occupations prior to the interim controls with a discussion of how other jurisdictions regulate home occupations is in the [legislative record to Ordinance 126293](#).

occupation. The ordinance maintains a prohibition on home occupations operating as a drive-in business and requires that automotive retail sales and services home occupations not cause an increase in parking or traffic congestion.

The legislation also sets out a work program for the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) and the Office of Economic Development (OED) to propose permanent changes to development standards for home occupations. SDCI and OED have not yet proposed permanent modifications to home occupation development standards.

What Would CB 120265 Do?

CB 120265 would extend for six months the interim development standards initially implemented by ORD 126293. The extension would allow SDCI and OED additional time to develop and propose permanent modifications to development standards for home occupations while also allowing business operating under the interim standards additional time to remain in their current locations.

Next Steps

The interim development standards established by ORD 126293 will expire on April 21, 2022. On March 23, 2022, the Committee will hold a public hearing on CB 120265 and may make a recommendation to the City Council. The earliest the City Council could consider the bill would be at its regularly scheduled meeting on March 29, 2022.

cc: Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Yolanda Ho, Lead Analyst