

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE*

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
Legislative	Lish Whitson/206-615-1674	N/A

** 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

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to environmental review; amending Section 25.05.800 of the Seattle Municipal Code to update categorical exemptions for “infill” development consistent with changes to the State Environmental Policy Act.

Summary and Background of the Legislation: This bill amends the City’s Environmental Policies and Procedures to increase the size of development in Downtown Seattle that is exempt from review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to reflect changes to State law. Because, Downtown Seattle has reached its 20-year estimated growth under the Comprehensive Plan, Seattle’s current SEPA regulations require environmental review for residential projects up to 20 units, or non-residential projects that are 12,000 square feet or smaller. Consistent with SEPA and its regulations, this bill would raise those levels to exempt projects up to 200 units, and non-residential projects that are 30,000 square feet or smaller. Attachment 1 to the bill summarizes how the environmental impacts of development Downtown are currently mitigated through other regulations.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

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?

If not approved, more housing projects in Downtown Seattle would have to submit environmental checklists as part of their application, increasing the time that the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) takes to review the project. If the environmental documents are appealed, the time required to staff the appeal can be significant. Those costs would be reduced, as would permit fees collected to compensate staff for their time to review the checklist as part of the development application.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation?
See above.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- a. Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?**
SDCI reviews SEPA environmental documents, as described above.
- b. Is a public hearing required for this legislation?**
The Land Use Committee will hold a public hearing on June 14, 2023.
- c. Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?**
Notice was provided in the Daily Journal of Commerce (DJC).
- d. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**
This legislation affects all properties in the Downtown Urban Center where a residential project with up to 200 units or a non-residential project with up to 30,000 square feet of space is proposed.
- e. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? What is the Language Access plan for any communications to the public?**
The Downtown Urban Center includes the Chinatown/International District (CID). The entire CID is within the International Special Review District (ISRD) and projects within the ISRD are reviewed by the community elected ISRD board. However, there would be less opportunity for review and comment on projects with between 21 and 200 units than under the current code. After reviewing recent development with up to 300 units in Downtown very few projects were required to provide mitigation beyond mitigation of construction impacts, which are addressed by the current building and construction codes.
- f. Climate Change Implications**
- 1. Emissions: Is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way?** Households in dense neighborhoods are likely to produce less carbon on a per capita basis than households in less dense neighborhoods. Encouraging development in Downtown Seattle and other dense neighborhoods is one of the City's strategies for reducing carbon emissions.
 - 2. 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.** No
- 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

Summary Attachments (if any): None