

Affordable Housing on Religious Organization Property

May 26, 2021

Office of Housing
Office of Planning and Community Development



City of Seattle

Today's briefing

- Origin of this proposal
- Eligibility and affordability requirements
- What we heard from stakeholders
- Summary of proposed Land Use Code changes
- Potential impact



A new affordable housing tool to help faith communities address displacement and support affordability.

What does it do?

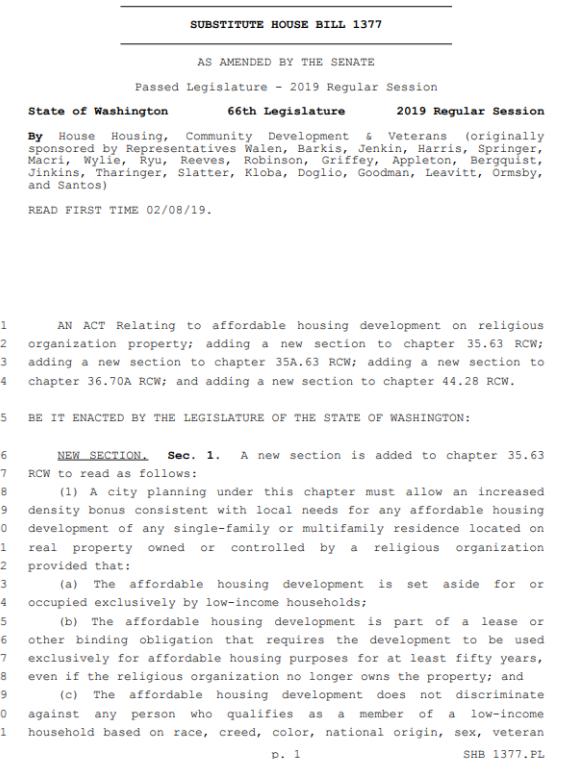
Create flexibility in our land use rules to support religious organizations redeveloping their property with long-term income- and rent-restricted housing.

How did it arise?

Faith organizations advocated for a state bill, adopted in 2019, requiring cities to allow additional density for affordable housing on religious organization land. This local tool would fulfill the requirements of SHB 1377.

Why focus on faith organizations?

- Direction from state legislation (RCW 36.70A.545)
- Supporting their low-income neighbors aligns with mission
- Underdeveloped land throughout Seattle



Eligibility & affordability

For development using this new tool, the state bill establishes the following requirements:

- Property must be owned or controlled by a religious organization
- All housing created must be income-restricted
- Housing can be rental or ownership
- 80 percent of area median income (AMI)
- Affordability term of at least 50 years, including if property is sold



Engagement

Stakeholders

- Faith organizations exploring redevelopment
- Neighborhood-based efforts in the Central District
- Affordable housing developers
- Public outreach

What we heard

- Desire to include community spaces
- Need for financial, technical, and regulatory support
- Intent to engage directly with community

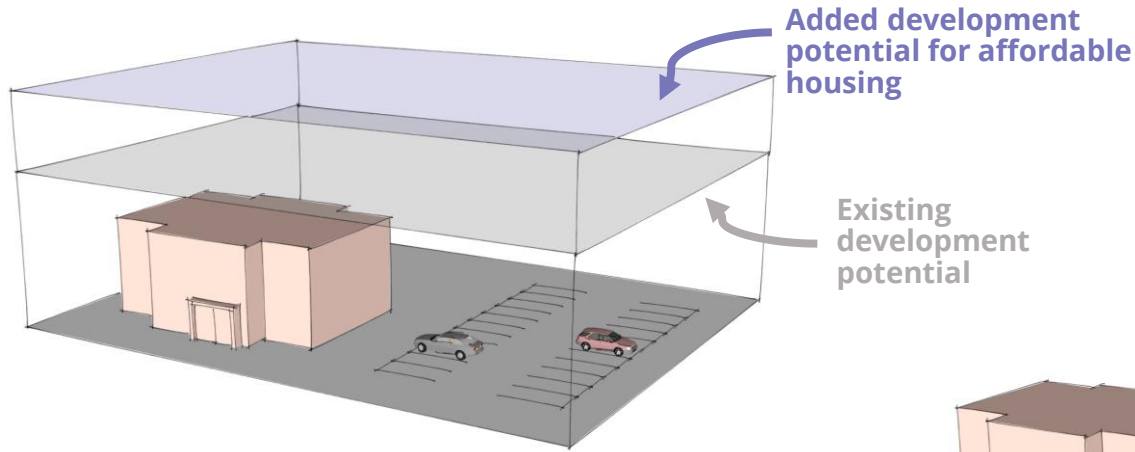


Ebenezer A.M.E. Zion Church, Central Area

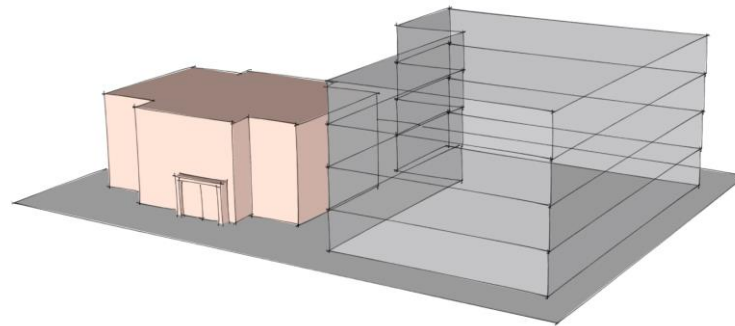
Faith-owned property

- Located throughout Seattle
- Variety in property size
- About 1% of Seattle land
- This new affordable housing tool would be available citywide, tailored to specific zones and contexts
- Completed environmental analysis as part of SEPA process, with public hearing scheduled June 23

How it works

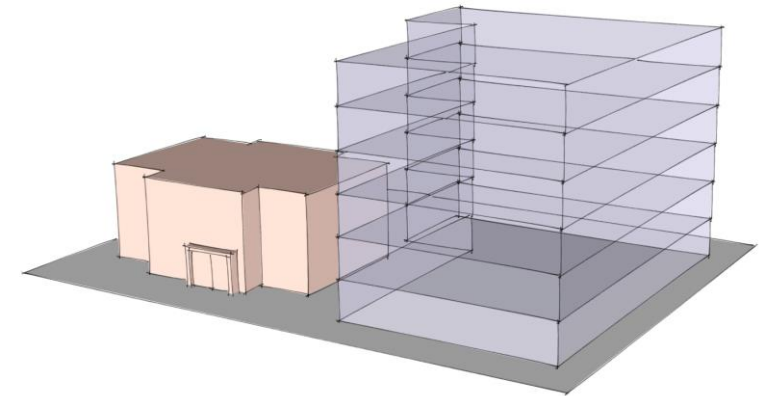


A religious organization may have a portion of land they want to redevelop, like an underused surface parking lot.



Currently, development on faith-owned land is limited to the height and size allowed under existing zoning.

With this new tool, additional height and floor area helps faith organizations compete more effectively for public funds and build more affordable housing than otherwise possible.



Proposal summary

Development options for affordable housing on religious organization property

Zone type	Under existing zoning...	Under the proposal...
Multifamily zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum height 3-8 stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 additional floor
Mixed-use commercial zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum height 3-8 stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-3 additional floors
Zones with height limits above 85 feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum height 12-44 stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 6 additional floors
Single-family zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum height 3 stories• Maximum density 1 unit per 2,000-9,600 square feet of lot area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No change in height*• 1 unit per 1,250-1,500 sq ft of lot area• Housing type flexibility (e.g., affordable for-sale townhomes)

* on certain large sites near more intensive zones or frequent transit, up to 1 additional floor

Potential impact

- Helps faith institutions repurpose their real estate assets to support their missions and address their congregations' changing needs
- Increases project financial feasibility and creates a more predictable regulatory environment
- Responds to community stability and anti-displacement work by organizations
- Helps maximize outcomes when faith-owned land is available for affordable housing



Good Shepherd Supportive Housing

Thank you

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