

December 1, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee
From: Lish Whitson, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120214: Neighborhood Residential Code Amendments

On December 3, 2021, the Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee will discuss [Council Bill \(CB\) 120214](#), which would amend the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) to rename “Single-family” zones “Neighborhood Residential.” A public hearing and possible vote are scheduled for Wednesday, December 8.

This bill follows the adoption of [Ordinance 120155](#), which amended the Seattle Comprehensive Plan to replace the term “single-family residential area” with “neighborhood residential area,” as shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#). This memorandum briefly summarizes CB 120214 and identifies next steps with the legislation.

CB 120214

Seattle’s zoning (aka the Land Use Code) implements the Comprehensive Plan’s land use policies, including implementation of the official zoning maps that divide the city geographically into zoning districts (e.g., single-family residential, multifamily residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). It divides neighborhood residential areas into four zones, based on minimum required lot sizes: Single-family 9600 (SF 9600), Single-family 7200 (SF 7200), Single-family 5000 (SF 5000), and Residential Small Lot (RSL). The proposed bill would rename these zones as shown in Table 1. Attachment 1 shows the location of these zones.

Table 1. Zoning Name Changes

Existing Zone (Abbreviation)	New Zone (Abbreviation)
Single-family Residential 9600 (SF 9600)	Neighborhood Residential 1 (NR1)
Single-family Residential 7200 (SF 7200)	Neighborhood Residential 2 (NR2)
Single-family Residential 5000 (SF 5000)	Neighborhood Residential 3 (NR3)
Residential Small Lot (RSL)	Neighborhood Residential Small Lot (RSL)

CB 120214 would update these names throughout the SMC. Zoning district names would be updated: (1) on the [Official Land Use Map/Seattle Zoning Maps](#); (2) throughout the Land Use Code (SMC [Title 23](#)); (3) in short-term rental licensing regulations (SMC [Chapter 6.600](#)); (4) in traffic administration regulations (SMC [Chapter 11.16](#)) and street use regulations (SMC [Title 15](#)); (5) in building and construction codes (SMC [Title 22](#)); and (6) in environmental regulations (SMC [Title 25](#)). The bill would only update these names and add definitions for these new names, no other changes are made.

The only code sections that currently refer to single-family zones that CB 120214 would not update are SMC [Chapter 23.60A](#), the Seattle Shoreline Master Program Regulations. Amendments to shoreline regulations require approval by the State and extensive targeted outreach to shoreline stakeholders. After consultation with the Washington State Department of Ecology, it was determined that the best approach to updating this chapter of the SMC would be to make changes to references to single-family zones in the Shoreline Chapter as part of the next general update to the City's Shoreline regulations. Both Ordinance 120155 and Council Bill 120214 have been drafted to retain references to single-family zones to maintain consistency in this case.

CB 120214 would be effective 180 days after adoption to provide the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) sufficient time to update the City's zoning maps, SDCI's Director Rules, and other documents that reference single-family zones.

Next Steps

A briefing is scheduled for December 3 with a public hearing scheduled for the December 8 Committee meeting. If the Committee decides to vote at that meeting, it should waive the Council Rule that limits votes the same day as a public hearing. A vote at the December 8 Committee would enable Council action at the December 13 meeting.

Attachments:

1. Map of Single-family/Neighborhood Residential Zones

cc: Esther Handy, Director
Aly Pennucci, Policy and Budget Manager