Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	CB 121005 **Version:** 1	**Name:**	CB 121005
Type:	Ordinance (Ord)	**Status:**	Passed
		In control:	City Clerk
On agenda:	9/2/2025		
Final Action:	9/5/2025	**Ord. No.**	Ord 127285
Title:	AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; updating and clarifying requirements for solid waste storage, staging areas, and access for residential, commercial, and industrial development; adding new requirements for Neighborhood Residential and industrial zones; updating provisions for alternative arrangements to meet requirements; and amending Sections 23.49.025, 23.54.040, and 23.84A.036 of the Seattle Municipal Code.		
Sponsors:	Joy Hollingsworth		
Indexes:			
Attachments:	1. Summary and Fiscal Note, 2. Presentation (7/23/25), 3. Signed Ordinance 127285, 4. Affidavit of Publication		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/5/2025	1	City Clerk	attested by City Clerk	
9/5/2025	1	Mayor	returned	
9/5/2025	1	Mayor	Signed	
9/5/2025	1	City Clerk	submitted for Mayor's signature	
9/2/2025	1	City Council	passed	Pass
8/13/2025	1	Parks, Public Utilities, and Technology Committee	pass	Pass
7/23/2025	1	Parks, Public Utilities, and Technology Committee	discussed	
6/17/2025	1	City Council	referred	
6/9/2025	1	Council President's Office	sent for review	
6/4/2025	1	City Clerk	sent for review	
6/4/2025	1	Mayor	Mayor's leg transmitted to Council	

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; updating and clarifying requirements for solid waste storage, staging areas, and access for residential, commercial, and industrial development; adding new requirements for Neighborhood Residential and industrial zones; updating provisions for alternative arrangements to meet requirements; and amending Sections 23.49.025, 23.54.040, and 23.84A.036 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, the Seattle City Council adopted Ordinance 123495 in 2010 that established the existing development regulations for solid waste storage, access, and collection in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.54.040; and

WHEREAS, as The City of Seattle's population and housing stock continue to grow, amendments to SMC Section 23.54.040 and related subsections are required to meet the needs of increased residential, commercial, and industrial development citywide; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to SMC Section 23.54.040 are intended to clarify existing code to help streamline the permitting process, codify existing collection contractor and industry practices for solid waste access and collection that currently exist in practice but not in existing code, and establish new regulations to meet the solid waste storage, access, and collection needs as the City continues to grow; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 23.49.025 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127099, is amended as follows:

23.49.025 Odor, noise, light/glare, and solid waste ((~~recyclable materials~~)) storage, ((~~space~~)) access, and collection standards

* * *

D. ((~~The standards of~~)) Section 23.54.040 ((~~for~~)) shall be applied to determine the provision of solid waste ((~~and recyclable materials storage space shall be met~~)) facilities and services.

Section 2. Section 23.54.040 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126157, is amended as follows:

23.54.040 Solid waste ((~~and recyclable materials~~)) storage, ((~~and~~)) access, and collection

A. General provisions. For the purposes of this Section 23.54.040, compostable materials, garbage, recyclable materials, and solid waste are as defined in Chapter 21.36. "Solid waste" refers to compostable

materials, garbage, and recyclable materials.

1. Except as otherwise provided in ((~~subsection 23.54.040.I, in RSL, downtown, multifamily, master planned community, and commercial zones,~~)) this Section 23.54.040, solid waste storage space ((~~for solid waste and recyclable materials containers~~)) shall be provided as shown in Table A for 23.54.040 and Table B for 23.54.040 for:

a. ((~~all~~)) All new principal structures((~~, and for~~)) and detached accessory dwelling units;

b. An addition of more than 5,000 gross square feet of non-residential use(s) to an existing structure;

c. A change of use of more than 10,000 gross square feet of non-residential use(s) in an existing structure;

d. Existing structures to which two or more live-work units are added;

e. ((~~existing~~)) Existing structures to which two or more dwelling units are added((~~.~~)) ; and

f. Existing structures to which four or more sleeping rooms are added.

((~~1.~~)) 2. Residential ((~~uses proposed to be located on separate platted lots, for which each dwelling unit will be billed separately for utilities,~~)) development shall provide one solid waste storage ((~~area per dwelling unit that has~~)) space with minimum dimensions of ((~~2~~)) 2.5 feet by 6 feet for each dwelling unit, unless they provide solid waste storage space according to subsection 23.54.040.A.3.

((~~2.~~)) 3. Residential development for which a home ownership association, or other single entity, exists or will exist as a sole source for utility billing may meet the ((~~requirement~~)) standards in subsection ((~~23.54.040.A.1~~)) 23.54.040.A.2, or the ((~~requirement~~)) standards in Table A for 23.54.040.

((~~3.~~)) 4. Except as otherwise provided in this Section 23.54.040, ((~~Non~~)) non-residential development shall meet the ((~~requirement~~)) standards in Table ((~~A~~)) B for 23.54.040.

5. Solid waste storage spaces, solid waste staging areas, and solid waste collection locations

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shall meet contractor safety standards promulgated by the Director of Seattle Public Utilities.

6. Each solid waste storage space shall include solid waste containers for compostable materials, garbage, and recyclable materials.

7. A solid waste storage space may also serve as a solid waste staging area and/or solid waste collection location if the storage space meets the requirements for such area(s).

Table A for 23.54.040((:))
Shared ((~~Storage Space~~)) solid waste storage space for ((~~Solid Waste Containers~~)) residential development

Residential development[1]	**Minimum area for shared storage space**
2-8 dwelling units	84 square feet
9-15 dwelling units	150 square feet
16-25 dwelling units	225 square feet
26-50 dwelling units	375 square feet
51-100 dwelling units	375 square feet plus 4 square feet for each additional unit above 50
More than 100 dwelling units	575 square feet plus 4 square feet for each additional unit above 100, except as permitted in subsection 23.54.040.C
((~~For residential uses that are not readily described as a discrete number of dwelling units, such as congregate residences, the Director shall determine the amount of storage space required based on the number of sleeping rooms as a substitute for the number of dwelling units.~~	
~~Non-residential development (Based on gross floor area of all structures on the lot)~~	**~~Minimum area for shared storage space~~**
~~0-5,000 square feet~~	~~82 square feet~~
~~5,001-15,000 square feet~~	~~125 square feet~~
~~15,001-50,000 square feet~~	~~175 square feet~~
~~50,001-100,000 square feet~~	~~225 square feet~~
~~100,001-200,000 square feet~~	~~275 square feet~~
~~200,001 plus square feet~~	~~500 square feet~~
~~Mixed use development that contains both residential and nonresidential uses, shall meet the requirements of subsection 23.54.040.B.~~))	

Footnote to Table A for 23.54.040

[1] For residential uses that are not readily described as a discrete number of dwelling units, such as congregate residences, the Director shall determine the amount of storage space required based on the number of sleeping rooms as a substitute for the number of dwelling units, at a rate of one dwelling unit for every four sleeping

rooms.

Table B for 23.54.040
Shared solid waste storage space for non-residential development

Non-residential development[1]	Minimum area of shared storage space
0-5,000 gross square feet	82 square feet
5,001-15,000 gross square feet	125 square feet
15,001-50,000 gross square feet	196 square feet
50,001-100,000 gross square feet	225 square feet
100,001-200,000 gross square feet	275 square feet
Greater than 200,000 gross square feet	500 square feet

Footnote to Table B for 23.54.040
[1] Based on gross floor area of all principal structures on the lot.

B. Mixed use development that contains both residential and non-residential ((~~uses~~)) use shall meet the minimum solid waste storage space area requirements shown in Table A for 23.54.040 for residential development or as modified by subsection 23.54.040.C, plus 50 percent of the solid waste storage space requirement for non-residential development shown in Table B for 23.54.040. In mixed use developments, solid waste storage space ((~~for garbage~~)) may be ((~~shared between residential and non-residential uses, but separate spaces for recycling shall be provided~~)) located together.

1. Residential and non-residential uses may share containers for garbage.

2. Residential and non-residential uses shall use separate containers for recycling and compostable materials.

C. For development with more than 100 dwelling units, the required minimum area for residential solid waste storage space shown in Table A for 23.54.040 may be reduced by 15 percent, if the area provided as residential solid waste storage space has ((~~a~~)) minimum horizontal ((~~dimension~~)) dimensions (width and depth) of 20 feet.

D. ((~~The storage~~)) Solid waste storage space required by Table A for 23.54.040 shall meet the ((~~following~~)) minimum dimensional requirements in Table C for 23.54.040, Table D for 23.54.040, and Table E for 23.54.040, according to type of uses present.

((~~1. For developments with eight or fewer dwelling units, the minimum horizontal dimension (width and depth) for required storage space is 7 feet. For developments with nine dwelling units or more, the minimum horizontal dimension of required storage space is 12 feet;~~))

Table C for 23.54.040
Minimum solid waste storage dimensional requirements for residential development

Residential development[1]	**Minimum dimensions (width and depth)**
1-15 dwelling units	8 feet by 8 feet
16 dwelling units or more	14 feet by 14 feet

Footnote to Table C for 23.54.040
[1] For residential uses that are not readily described as a discrete number of dwelling units, such as congregate residences, the Director shall determine the amount of storage space required based on the number of sleeping rooms as a substitute for the number of dwelling units, at a rate of one dwelling unit for every four sleeping rooms.

Table D for 23.54.040
Minimum solid waste storage dimensional requirements for non-residential development

Non-residential development[1]Minimum dimensions (width and depth)	
1-15,000 gross square feet	8 feet by 8 feet
Greater than 15,000 square feet	14 feet by 14 feet

Footnote to Table D for 23.54.040
[1] Based on gross floor area of all principal structures on the lot.

Table E for 23.54.040
Minimum solid waste storage dimensional requirements for development with a mix of residential and non-residential uses

Development size[1,2]Minimum dimensions (width and depth)	
1-15 dwelling units, or up to 15,000 square feet of non-residential use gross floor area, or both	8 feet by 8 feet
16 dwelling units or more, or greater than 15,000 square feet or non-residential use gross floor area, or both	14 feet by 14 feet

Footnotes to Table E for 23.54.040
[1] For residential uses that are not readily described as a discrete number of dwelling units, such as congregate residences, the Director shall determine the amount of storage space required based on the number of sleeping rooms as a substitute for the number of dwelling units, at a rate of one dwelling unit for every four sleeping rooms.
[2] Based on gross floor area of all principal structures on the lot.

((~~2.~~)) 1. The floor of the solid waste storage space shall be level and hard-surfaced, and the floor

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beneath garbage or recycling compactors shall be made of concrete; and

((~~3.~~)) 2. If located outdoors, the solid waste storage space shall be screened from public view and designed to minimize light and glare impacts.

E. The location of all solid waste storage spaces shall meet the following requirements:

1. The solid waste storage space shall be located on the lot of the structure it serves and, if located ((~~outdoors~~)) outside the principal structure, shall not be located between a street-facing facade of the structure and the street (development permitted for unit lot subdivision may designate a shared solid waste storage space within the parent lot of the unit lot subdivision);

2. The solid waste storage space shall not be located in ((~~any required~~)) driveways, parking aisles, or parking spaces;

3. The solid waste storage space shall not block or impede any fire exits, any public rights-of-way, or any pedestrian or vehicular access;

4. The solid waste storage space shall be located to minimize noise and odor impacts on building occupants and beyond the lot lines of the lot; and

((~~5. The storage space shall meet the contractor safety standards promulgated by the Director of Seattle Public Utilities; and~~))

((~~6.~~)) 5. The solid waste storage space shall not be used for purposes other than solid waste ((~~and recyclable materials~~)) storage and access to or movement of solid waste containers.

F. Solid waste staging areas and solid waste collection locations

1. Solid waste staging areas located within a planting strip may not conflict with required landscaping, including but not limited to street trees, and other required public right-of-way characteristics. Evaluation of consistency with this subsection 23.54.040.F.1 shall be in consultation with the Director of Transportation.

2. The Director may allow staging of solid waste containers in the right-of-way in consultation

with the Director of Transportation.

3. Solid waste staging areas and solid waste collection locations shall not be within a bus stop or within the street right-of-way area abutting a vehicular lane designated as a sole travel lane for a bus.

4. A minimum 14-foot overhead clearance shall be provided at the solid waste collection location, except as otherwise specified in subsection 23.54.040.G.

5. Solid waste carts shall be staged within 8 feet of the solid waste collection location unless an alternative staging location is approved by Seattle Public Utilities.

6. Solid waste staging and solid waste collection areas for dumpsters shall be paved with asphalt or concrete.

((~~F~~)) G. Access to solid waste containers for solid waste service providers and solid waste collection vehicles ((~~to the storage space from the collection location~~)) shall meet the following requirements:

1. For ((~~containers~~)) dumpsters 2 cubic yards or smaller:

a. ((~~Containers~~)) Dumpsters to be manually ((~~pulled~~)) transported for collection by a solid waste service provider, shall be ((~~placed~~)) staged no more than 50 feet from ((~~a curb cut or~~)) the solid waste collection location((~~;~~)), in a manner that provides access to each container for service;

((~~b. Collection location shall not be within a bus stop or within the right-of-way area abutting a vehicular lane designated as a sole travel lane for a bus;~~))

b. The slope of the solid waste staging area and solid waste collection locations for dumpsters shall not exceed a grade of six percent;

c. ((~~Access ramps to the storage space and~~)) The slope of access paths used to move dumpsters to the solid waste collection location shall not exceed a grade of six percent; ((~~and~~))

d. An enclosed solid waste staging area for dumpsters shall have an access door or opening that is at least 6 feet wide;

e. Paths and corridors through which dumpsters are transported shall be at least 6 feet

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wide and shall be paved with asphalt or concrete; and

((~~d.~~)) f. Any gates or access routes for ((~~trucks~~)) solid waste collection vehicles shall be a minimum of ((~~10~~)) 12 feet wide.

2. For containers larger than 2 cubic yards, any container to be loaded for service by the front of the solid waste collection vehicle, and all containers storing compacted ((~~refuse containers~~)) materials:

a. Direct access to the containers shall be provided ((~~from the alley or street to the containers;~~)) at the solid waste collection location;

b. The slope of the solid waste collection location and solid waste staging area shall not exceed two percent;

((~~b.~~)) c. Any gates or access routes for ((~~trucks~~)) solid waste collection vehicles shall be a minimum of ((~~10~~)) 12 feet wide;

((~~c. Collection location shall not be within a bus stop or within the street right-of-way area abutting a vehicular lane designated as a sole travel lane for a bus;~~

~~d. If accessed directly by a collection vehicle, whether into a structure or otherwise, a 24-foot overhead clearance shall be provided.~~))

d. Paths and corridors through which containers are transported shall be a minimum of 6 feet wide and shall be paved with asphalt or concrete;

e. In locations where a compactor will be placed, the solid waste storage space shall accommodate a minimum 2 feet of clearance around all sides of the compactor(s);

f. The solid waste collection location for front-load dumpsters shall have a 24-foot overhead clearance; and

g. Solid waste collection locations shall be located such that solid waste service providers do not need to reposition containers larger than 4 cubic yards or containers that store compacted materials.

3. For roll-off dumpsters (uncompacted and compacted solid waste):

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a. Gates or access routes for solid waste collection vehicles shall be a minimum of 12 feet wide;

b. Direct access to the dumpsters by solid waste collection vehicles shall be provided at the solid waste collection location;

c. Overhead clearance (floor to ceiling) for a low-profile roll-off dumpster shall be a minimum of 14 feet;

d. Overhead clearance (floor to ceiling) for a roll-off dumpster of standard height shall be a minimum of 16 feet; and

e. Overhead clearance (floor to ceiling) if the container is not stored on a dock shall be a minimum of 18 feet.

((~~G. Access for occupants to the storage space from the collection location shall meet the following requirements:~~

~~1. Direct access shall be provided from the alley or street to the containers;~~

~~2. A pick-up location within 50 feet of a curb cut or collection location shall be designated that minimizes any blockage of pedestrian movement along a sidewalk or other right-of-way;~~

~~3. If a planting strip is designated as a pick-up location, any required landscaping shall be designed to accommodate the solid waste and recyclable containers within this area.~~))

H. The solid waste ((~~and recyclable materials~~)) storage space, access, solid waste staging area, and ((~~pick-up~~)) solid waste collection location specifications required in this Section 23.54.040, including the number, ((~~and sizes of containers,~~)) volume, and dimensions (width and depth) of containers and the type of solid waste, shall be included on the plans submitted with the permit application for any development subject to the requirements of this Section 23.54.040.

((~~I. The Director, in consultation with the Director of Seattle Public Utilities, has the discretion to modify the requirements of this Section 23.54.040 as a Type I decision, if the applicant proposes alternative,~~

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~~workable measures that meet the intent of this Section 23.54.040 and if either:~~

~~1. The applicant can demonstrate difficulty in meeting any of the requirements of this Section 23.54.040; or~~

~~2. The applicant proposes to construct or expand a structure, and the requirements of this Section 23.54.040 conflict with opportunities to increase residential densities and/or retain ground-level retail uses.~~))

((~~J.~~)) I. Ramps to accommodate solid waste container access

1. A solid waste access ramp to the street ((~~to accommodate solid waste container access~~)) that is not more than 5 feet in width may be approved by the Director of Transportation if:

a. Access to solid waste containers is not from an alley;

b. No on-site parking is provided;

c. The lot contains solid waste containers that are 1 cubic yard or larger; and

d. There are no existing solid waste access ramps ((~~to accommodate solid waste container access~~)) or other curb cuts within 150 feet of the street lot line, as measured parallel to the street lot line. For purposes of this subsection ((~~23.54.040.J.1.d~~)) 23.54.040.I.1.d, curb ramps at crosswalks are not considered existing ramps for solid waste access.

2. The standards of subsections ((~~23.54.040.J.1.a~~)) 23.54.040.I.1.a through ((~~23.54.040.J.1.d~~)) 23.54.040.I.1.d may be modified by the Director of Transportation where unusual topography, inability to temporarily stage solid waste containers in a parking lane, or other local conditions present significant challenges for accommodating solid waste container access.

J. If the requirements of this Section 23.54.040 cannot be met, the Director, after consultation with the Director of Seattle Public Utilities, may approve alternative arrangements. Such measures may be approved as a Type I decision in relation to any requirement of this Section 23.54.040, except subsection 23.54.040.I. Alternative staging arrangements may be approved as a Type I decision by the Director after consultation with the Director of Seattle Public Utilities and the Director of Transportation. Approval of alternative arrangements

is at the discretion of the Director and does not obligate the Director to grant relief from any requirement or obligate the Director to provide any improvements within a right-of-way. The Director may consider, but is not limited to considering:

1. Whether adequate areas exist on the lot or in the right-of-way for staging or collecting solid waste containers;

2. Whether the solid waste requirements adequately accommodate the needs of a particular development type, such as:

a. Affordable housing;

b. Small efficiency dwelling units;

c. Congregate housing; or

d. Development using compaction of solid waste;

3. Whether alternative solid waste arrangements would result in one or more additional dwelling units being constructed; and

4. The effect on the efficiency of collection services such as:

a. Minimizing the number of days for collection service;

b. Providing safe access to the solid waste collection area; or

c. Providing an efficient route between the solid waste storage space and the solid waste collection location.

Section 3. Section 23.84A.036 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126157, is amended as follows:

23.84A.036 "S"

* * *

"Solarium" means a room, porch, or other area, that is designed to admit sunlight, is part of a larger structure, is enclosed substantially entirely by glass or another transparent material, and is not primarily used

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for the cultivation or protection of plants.

"Solid waste collection location" means the location where solid waste is collected from solid waste containers into a solid waste collection vehicle.

"Solid waste containers" include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. "Carts" are wheeled containers and available in sizes ranging from 10 gallons to 100 gallons.

2. "Dumpsters," with or without wheels, are containers designed to allow mechanical loading of solid waste onto solid waste collection vehicles, provided in volumes ranging from 0.75 cubic yards to 8 cubic yards.

3. "Roll-off dumpsters" are containers for solid waste that require a winch system to load onto the flatbed of a specialized solid waste collection vehicle. They may include compacted or uncompacted materials.

4. "Front-load dumpsters" are containers loaded by mechanisms on the front of solid waste collection vehicles to dump solid waste and require 24 feet of overhead clearance to complete service.

5. "Low-profile roll-off dumpsters" are roll-off dumpsters with a height maximum of 88 inches.

"Solid waste incineration facilities." See "Solid waste management" under "Utility."

"Solid waste landfills." See "Solid waste management" under "Utility."

"Solid waste management." See "Utility."

"Solid waste service providers" means persons that provide solid waste management services for a solid waste management business or utility, and persons hired by site occupants to move solid waste containers on a regular basis.

"Solid waste staging area" means a location for intermediate placement of garbage, recycling, and compostable materials in preparation for collection by solid waste collection vehicles, either on private property or within the right-of-way.

"Solid waste storage space" means a location for keeping, maintaining, or storing garbage, recycling, or

compostable materials from the time of disposal by users until the time of staging or collection, provided that a solid waste storage space may serve as a solid waste staging area and/or solid waste collection location if the storage space meets the requirements for such area(s).

"Solid waste transfer station." See "Solid waste management" under "Utility."

* * *

Section 4. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, or portion of this ordinance, or the invalidity of its application to any person or circumstance, does not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Section 5. This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

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.

_____

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Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2025.

_____

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)

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