

The City of Seattle

Ordinance _____

Council Bill _____

..title

An ordinance relating to land use and zoning; adjusting the definition of recreational vehicle; adjusting the definition of outdoor storage to include outdoor storage areas for certain unoccupied vehicles, including recreational vehicles; adjusting the definition of flexible-use parking to exclude storage of recreational vehicles; and amending Sections 23.84A.032, 23.84A.036, and 23.84A.038 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

..body

Recitals:

The current definitions in the Land Use Code for outdoor storage and flexible-use parking create ambiguity as to appropriate locations for the storage and parking of certain vehicles, Clarifying definitions in the Land Use Code will bring commonly used practices into explicit compliance with Land Use Code.

The City is seeking to help people living in vehicles transition to available shelter, but faces a major barrier in vehicle residents' inability to park or store their vehicle at the shelter.

People entering shelter are often faced with the difficult decision to give up their vehicle, which can leave them worse off in the long run.

Establishing facilities for storage of such persons' vehicles enables vehicle residents to enter shelter and determine if that shelter is the right fit for them without losing their vehicle.

This small and simple change in code, is a large and broad change for vehicle residents accessing shelter because under this ordinance, no matter which shelter has space, people will have time to transition out of the vehicles and into shelter or housing, without requiring them to give up their vehicles.

This Land Use Code change allows the City of Seattle to provide vehicle residents access to the entire portfolio of shelter units by storing their vehicles while they enter shelter.

The City is seeking to establish shelter storage programs that allow individuals and families who are transitioning into shelter or housing to safely store their vehicles in locations that permit storage as a land use. Therefore,

Be it ordained by The City of Seattle as follows:

Section 1. Section 23.84A.032 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127376, is amended as follows:

23.84A.032 "R"

* * *

"Recreational vehicle" means a wheeled vehicle designed for temporary occupancy with self-contained utility systems and not requiring a separate highway movement permit for highway travel. A recreational vehicle may contain its own motor or may be towed behind a motorized vehicle. A recreational vehicle is not a dwelling unit.

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Section 2. Section 23.84A.036 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127376, is amended as follows:

23.84A.036 "S"

* * *

"Storage" means a use in which goods or products are stored more than ~~((4))72((4))~~ hours. Storage uses include but are not limited to the following uses:

1. "Mini-warehouse" means a storage use in which enclosed storage space divided into separate compartments no larger than ~~((five hundred))500((4))~~ square feet in area is provided for use by individuals to store personal items or by businesses to store material for operation of a business establishment at another location.

2. "Storage, outdoor" means a storage use in which an outdoor area is used for retention of materials, containers and/or equipment. Outdoor storage does not include sale, repair, incineration, recycling or discarding of materials or equipment. Outdoor storage areas are not accessible to the public unless an agent of the business is present. Outdoor ~~((parking))~~ areas that are solely for the storage of (a) unoccupied vehicles, including recreational vehicles that are being stored while the persons formerly living in those vehicles are engaged with a City-sponsored program whose goal is to provide them with housing or shelter, or (b) two ((2)) or more fleet vehicles of more than ~~((ten thousand))10,000((4))~~ pounds gross vehicle weight shall also be considered outdoor storage. Temporary outdoor storage of construction equipment and materials associated with an active permit to demolish or erect a structure and vehicle sales areas

where motorized vehicles are stored for the purpose of direct sale to the ultimate consumer shall not be considered outdoor storage.

3. "Warehouse" means a storage use in which space is provided in an enclosed structure for the storage of goods produced off-site, for distribution or transfer to another location.

* * *

Section 3. Section 23.84A.038 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127376, is amended as follows:

23.84A.038 "T"

* * *

"Transportation facility" means a use that supports or provides a means of transporting people or goods from one location to another. Transportation facilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. "Cargo terminal" means a transportation facility in which quantities of goods or container cargo are, without undergoing any manufacturing processes, transferred to carriers or stored outdoors in order to transfer them to other locations. Cargo terminals may include accessory warehouses, railroad yards, storage yards, and offices.

2. "Parking and moorage" means the short-term or long-term storage of automotive vehicles or vessels or both when not in use. Parking and moorage uses include but are not limited to:

a. "Boat moorage" means a use in which a system of piers, buoys, or floats is used to provide moorage for vessels except barges, for sale or rent usually on a monthly or yearly basis. Minor vessel repair, haul out, dry boat storage, and other services are also often provided. Boat moorage includes, but is not limited to:

1) "Commercial moorage" means a boat moorage primarily intended for commercial vessels except barges.

2) "Recreational marina" means a boat moorage primarily intended for pleasure craft. (See also "Boat moorage, public")

b. "Dry boat storage" means a use in which space on a lot on dry land, or inside a building over water or on dry land, is rented or sold to the public or to members of a yacht or boating club for the purpose of storing boats. Sometimes referred to as "dry storage."

c. "Parking, principal use" means a use within a Shoreline District, subject to Chapter 23.60A, in which an open area or garage is provided for the parking of vehicles by the public, and is not reserved or required to accommodate occupants, clients, customers, or employees of a particular establishment or premises. Battery charging stations for electric vehicles are accessory to principal use parking.

d. "Parking, flexible-use" means a use in which an open area or garage is provided for the parking of vehicles by the public, and is not reserved or required to accommodate occupants, clients, customers, or employees of a particular establishment or premises. Flexible-use parking does not include a use in which an area is provided solely for the storage of recreational vehicles. Battery charging stations

for electric vehicles are accessory to flexible-use parking. Flexible-use parking includes but is not limited to the following uses:

1) "Flexible-use parking garage" means a parking garage structure that solely consists of flexible-use parking.

2) "Flexible-use parking surface lot" means a surface parking lot that solely consists of flexible-use parking.

e. "Park and ride facility" means a use, operated or approved by a public transit or ridesharing agency, where commuters park private vehicles and either join together in carpools or vanpools, or board public transit.

f. "Towing services" means a parking and moorage use in which more than two tow trucks are employed in the hauling of motorized vehicles, and where vehicles may be impounded, stored, or sold, but not disassembled or junked.

3. "Passenger terminal" means a transportation facility where passengers embark on or disembark from carriers such as ferries, trains, buses, or planes that provide transportation to passengers for hire by land, sea, or air. Passenger terminals typically include some or all of the following: ticket counters, waiting areas, management offices, baggage handling facilities, restroom facilities, shops, and restaurants. A passenger terminal use on the waterfront may include moorage for cruise ships and/or vessels engaged in transporting passengers for hire. Activities commonly found aboard such vessels, whether moored or under way, that are incidental to the transport of passengers shall be considered part of the passenger terminal use and shall not be treated as separate uses. Metro street bus stops, monorail transit stations, and light rail transit stations are not included in this definition. Also excluded is the use of sites where

passengers occasionally embark on or disembark from transportation in a manner that is incidental to a different established principal use of the site.

4. "Rail transit facility" means a transportation facility that supports or is used for public transit by rail. Rail transit facilities include but are not limited to the following:

a. "Light rail transit facility" means a structure, rail track, equipment, maintenance base, or other improvement necessary to support a light rail transit system, including but not limited to ventilation structures, traction power substations, light rail transit stations and related passenger amenities, bus layover and intermodal passenger transfer facilities, transit station access facilities located on or off a light rail transit station site, and structures accessory to the development of a light rail transit system.

b. "Light rail transit station" means a light rail transit facility whether at grade, above grade, or below grade that provides pedestrian access to light rail transit vehicles and facilitates transfer from light rail to other modes of transportation. A light rail transit station may include mechanical devices such as elevators and escalators to move passengers and may also include such passenger amenities as informational signage, seating, weather protection, fountains, artwork, or concessions.

c. "Light rail transit system" means a public rail transit line that operates at grade level, above grade level, or in a tunnel and that provides high-capacity, regional transit service, owned or operated by a regional transit authority authorized under chapter 81.112 RCW. A light rail transit system may be designed to

share a street right-of-way although it may also use a separate right-of-way. Commuter rail, and low capacity, or excursion rail transit service are not included.

5. "Transportation facility, air" means one of the following transportation facilities:

a. "Airport, land-based" means a transportation facility used for the takeoff and landing of airplanes.

b. "Airport, water-based" means a transportation facility used exclusively by aircraft that take off and land directly on the water.

c. "Heliport" means a transportation facility in which an area on a roof or on the ground is used for the takeoff and landing of helicopters or other steep-gradient aircraft, and one or more of the following services are provided: cargo facilities, maintenance and overhaul, fueling service, tie-down space, and other accessory buildings and open spaces.

d. "Helistop" means a transportation facility in which an area on a roof or on the ground is used for the takeoff and landing of helicopters or other steep-gradient aircraft, but not including fueling service, hangars, maintenance, overhaul or tie-down space for more than one aircraft.

6. "Vehicle storage and maintenance" means a use in which facilities for vehicle storage and maintenance are provided. Vehicle storage and maintenance uses include but are not limited to:

a. "Bus base" means a transportation facility in which a fleet of buses is stored, maintained, and repaired.

b. "Railroad switchyard" means a vehicle storage and maintenance use in which:

- 1) Rail cars and engines are serviced and repaired; and
- 2) Rail cars and engines are transferred between tracks and coupled to provide a new train configuration.

c. "Railroad switchyard with a mechanized hump" means a railroad switchyard that includes a mechanized classification system operating over an incline.

d. "Streetcar maintenance base" means a transportation facility in which a fleet of streetcars is stored, maintained, and repaired.

e. "Transportation services, personal" means a vehicle storage and maintenance use in which either emergency transportation to hospitals, or general transportation by car, van, or limousine for a fee is provided. Such uses generally include dispatching offices and facilities for vehicle storage and maintenance.

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

Passed by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its
passage on _____.

President _____ of the City Council

_____ on _____.

Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Attested on _____.

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

Seal

Summary and Fiscal Note

1. Legislation Summary

Department: Legislative

Title: An ordinance relating to land use and zoning; adjusting the definition of recreational vehicle; adjusting the definition of outdoor storage to include outdoor storage areas for certain unoccupied vehicles, including recreational vehicles; adjusting the definition of flexible-use parking to exclude storage of recreational vehicles; and amending Sections 23.84A.032, 23.84A.036, and 23.84A.038 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

Background: The City of Seattle continues to see growth in the number of individuals living in vehicles on city streets, reflecting broader regional housing insecurity and need for access to appropriate affordable housing and shelter. Vehicles that people live in, including recreational vehicles, can create significant safety, mobility, and environmental challenges when parked for extended periods in areas not designed to accommodate their size or use. The City of Seattle seeks to provide housing and shelter that better meets the needs of residents currently living in vehicles and to maintain safe, accessible, and well managed public rights-of-way for all residents, businesses, and visitors. The current definitions in the Land Use Code for outdoor storage and flexible-use parking create ambiguity as to the allowed locations for the storage and parking of recreational vehicles and other formerly lived-in vehicles outside of the right of way. The City has a desire to facilitate the establishment of facilities that allow individuals

transitioning into shelter or housing to safely store their vehicles in certain locations that are outside of the right of way and distinct from where those individuals are living. This proposed legislation amends Land Use Code definitions to clarify that storing unoccupied vehicles that are being stored while the persons formerly living in those vehicles are engaged with a City-sponsored housing or shelter program is considered “outdoor storage” as a land use, and flexible-use parking does not include areas that are solely for storing recreational vehicles.

Summary Attachments:

2. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project?

☐ Yes

☒ No

a. CIP Project Name:

b. Master Project ID:

c. Project Location:

d. Start Date:

e. End Date:

f. Total Project Cost Through 2030:

3. Summary of Financial Implications

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City?

☐ Yes

☒ No

4. Other Impacts

a. Does this legislation require a public hearing?

☒ Yes – September 8, 2026 planned

☐ No

b. Does this legislation require a notice to be published in The Daily Journal of Commerce and/or The Seattle Times?

☒ Yes

☐ No

c. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

Citywide

d. Race and Social Justice Initiative impacts:

1. How does this legislation affect vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you come to this conclusion? Please consider both impacts within City government (like employees and internal programs) and in the broader community.

People living in recreational vehicles (RVs) are vulnerable, without stable housing; however, this legislation clarifying land use definitions does not specifically negatively affect people living in RVs. Rather, it will positively impact allowable storage of unoccupied recreational vehicles and other lived-in vehicles which will be useful should the City decide to provide safe storage of RVs for people transitioning to shelter or temporary housing.

2. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses used to develop or assess this legislation.

N/A

3. What is the Language Access Plan for communicating with the public about this legislation?

N/A

e. Climate change impacts:

1. Emissions: Will this legislation significantly increase or decrease carbon emissions? Attach any studies or materials that inform your answer.

N/A

2. Resiliency: Will this legislation make Seattle more or less able to adapt to climate change? If it reduces resiliency, explain what can be done to lessen the impact.

N/A

f. If this legislation creates a new program or expands an existing one, what are the long-term, measurable goals? How will this legislation help achieve those goals? What methods will be used to track progress?

N/A

g. Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP that involves shared funding with a non-City partner or organization?

N/A