



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Council Bill 121243 – Reenactment of Design Review Exemptions and Interim Controls

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What would CB 121243 Do?

- Suspend mandatory design review
- Allow low-income housing projects to receive departures that would otherwise only be available through design review
- Allow projects subject to the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program that opt to provide affordable units on-site to receive departures that would otherwise only be available through design review
- Allow all projects with residential uses that would otherwise be subject to full design review to elect to go through administrative design review.

Design Review Program

Purposes

- Encourage better design and site planning
- Provide flexibility for developers in application of development standards
- Improve communication and mutual understanding among developers, neighborhoods, and the City early and throughout the development review process

Three Types of Design Review

- Streamlined
- Administrative
- Full Design Review

Development Standard Departures: Potential Development Benefit

- Delegation of police power authority to design review boards and SDCl to modify development standards

Exemptions and Interim Controls - Legislative History

Ordinance 126854 (2023)

- Exempts low-income housing projects from design review;
- Exempts projects subject to the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program that provide affordable units on-site from design review
- Allows all projects with residential uses that are otherwise subject to full design review to elect to go through administrative design review.

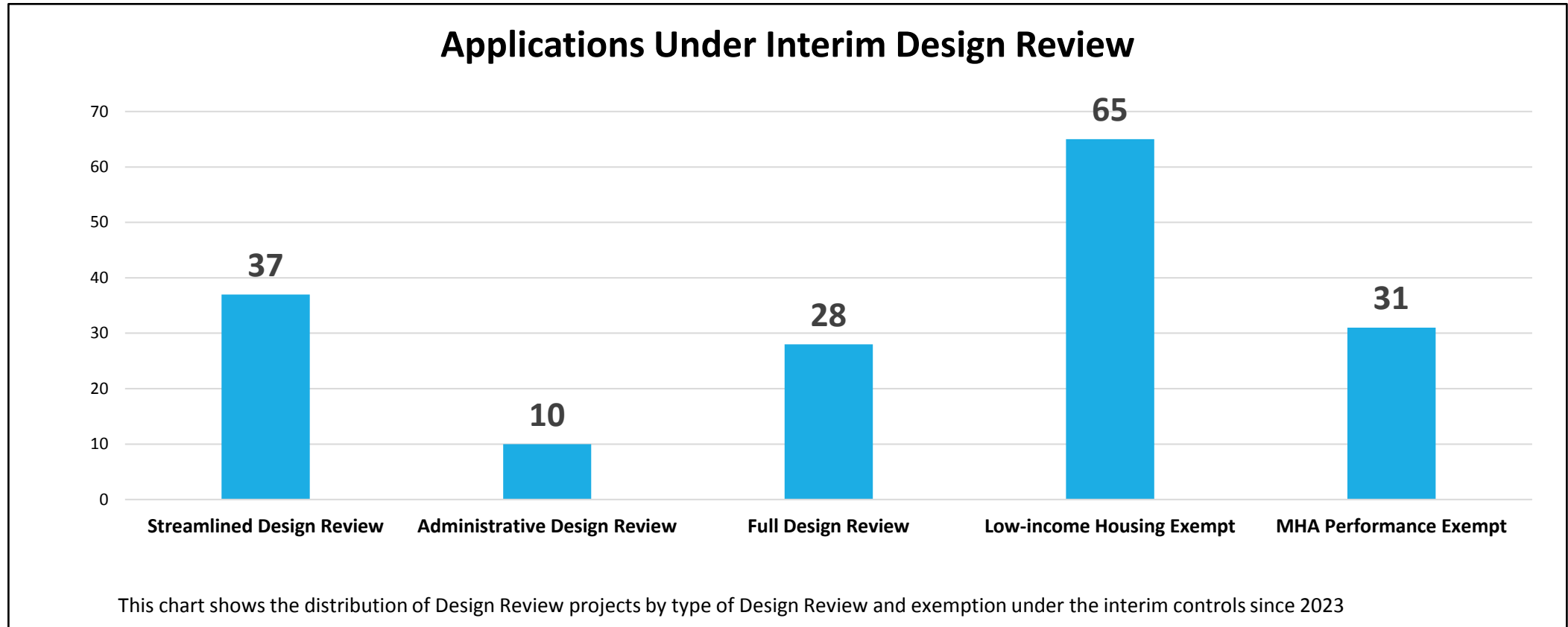
Passage of Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1293 (2023)

- Limits number of required public meetings for design review programs
- Requires that design guidelines contain objective standards

Ordinance 127309 (2025)

- Extends exemptions in Ordinance 126854
- Suspends mandatory design review

Permit Applications Under Interim Controls Since 2023



Preliminary Issue Identification

- *Should the City continue to offer an interim design review option or allow the program to lapse pending consideration of ongoing regulations that comply with ESHB 1293?*
- *If the City continues to offer an interim design review option, should the City also continue interim exemptions for low-income housing development and mandatory housing affordability performance projects?*
- *If the City continues to offer an interim design review option, should the City restart confirmation for design review board members?*

Questions?