

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the [SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS \(part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Amendments to the Land Use Code (Title 23) to modify the applicability of design review, add a new hybrid design review process, eliminate the existing streamlined design review process, add a new requirement for applicant-led community outreach, modify the composition of design review board members, modify the review process for exceptional trees in Title 25, and make various other updates and clarifications.

2. Name of applicant:

City of Seattle

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1800
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Contact: Christina Ghan, (206) 233-3749, christina.ghan@seattle.gov

4. Date checklist prepared:

May 25, 2017

5. Agency requesting checklist:

City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

The proposed code amendments will be reviewed by the Seattle City Council and considered at a public hearing in the summer or fall of 2017.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

No, the proposal is a non-project action that is not dependent upon any further action.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

This SEPA environmental checklist, a SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance, and a Director's Report have been prepared for this proposal. In addition, a March 2016 report outlining the department's recommended program improvements, and other associated documents related to this proposal, are available online at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/changestocode/designreviewprogramimprovements>.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

This is a non-project action that affects multiple parcels in many zones across Seattle. There are currently several hundred pending applications for development projects related to the types of development affected by this proposal.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

The proposed amendments require approval by City Council. No other agency approvals are anticipated.

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

This is a non-project legislative action proposing amendments to the Land Use Code (hereafter "Code") to modify the applicability of design review, add a new hybrid design review process,

eliminate the existing streamlined design review process, add a new requirement for applicant-led community outreach, modify the composition of design review board members, modify the review process for exceptional trees in Title 25, and make various other updates and clarifications. There is no specific site or development proposal.

The proposal is intended to update the Codes to improve the overall function of the Design Review program by enhancing the efficiency and predictability of project reviews, improve dialogue amongst project stakeholders, and make the program more transparent and accessible to the public and project applicants. In addition, the proposal also aims to focus design review on the development projects most likely to influence the character of a neighborhood, and, by excluding those types of projects that are less likely to influence the character of a neighborhood, reduce the overall housing costs by removing the requirement for Design Review.

The proposed amendments would:

- Simplify and raise the thresholds for projects subject to design review, switching from a variety of thresholds based on use, units, and zoning to simple square footage thresholds that respond to the complexity of a site and type of project (SMC 23.41.004);
- Create a new “hybrid” process that allows one phase of design review to be handled administratively and the remainder by the Design Review Board (SMC 23.41.015);
- Require applicants to conduct outreach to the communities near their projects before they begin design review (SMC 23.41.014, SMC 23.41.015, and SMC 23.41.016);
- Require certain institutional uses and development in certain types of industrial zones to participate in design review (SMC 23.41.004);
- Allow affordable housing projects to be reviewed through an administrative design review process or opt into other types of design review (23.41.004);
- Limit the number of Design Review Board meetings for projects that are not pursuing any departures from development standards, or a Council type IV or V approval, or those located next to single-family zones (23.41.008);
- Eliminate the Streamlined Design Review process and remove related cross references throughout Title 23 and Title 25 (SMC 23.41.018, 23.76.011, 23.76.012, 23.76.026, 23.76.040, 25.11.070, 25.11.080);
- Adjust the configuration of the Board seats, while maintaining the share of neighborhood and citywide seats (23.41.008);
- Increase the number of Get Engaged program members that may participate on the Boards (3.51.030 and 23.41.008);
- Relocate the list of early design guidance submittal requirements to an administrative rule to allow more flexibility using best practices (SMC 23.41.014, 23.41.016, and 23.41.020);
- Modify the procedure for allowing additional height for minor communication facilities Downtown, shifting from a departure approved through design review to an administrative (Type I) decision. (SMC 23.57.013, 23.76.004, and 23.76.006);
- Clarify with an administrative rule the process to revise an approved MUP that went through design review (SMC 23.76.004, 23.76.004, and 23.76.006);
- Remove the option of waiving pre-submittal meeting for Design Review projects, an option which is rarely exercised (SMC 23.41.014, 23.41.016, 23.41.020 and 23.76.008);
- Cleanup of the list of development standards that may not be modified through a departure, removing a few outdated items, and reordering the list for added clarity. (SMC 23.41.012);
- Clarify and update the option of going through design review as a way to remove an “exceptional” tree in lowrise, midrise, or commercial zones (SMC 25.11.070 and 25.11.080);
- Update cross references to departures in the Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District (23.73.009, 23.73.010, 23.73.012, 23.73.014, 23.73.015, 23.73.024);
- Clarify the applicability of the Downtown Design Guidelines (23.41.010); and

- Make various updates, clarifications, and technical corrections.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

This is a non-project action. The proposal would affect multiple parcels in locations with multifamily, commercial, downtown, and industrial zoning throughout the city. The proposal would require design review in certain industrial zones where it does not apply today and would no longer require design review for certain types of small-scale development, which typically occurs in lowrise zones. The proposal does not affect single-family development or properties located in Industrial General zones, landmark districts, special review districts, or in Major Institution Overlays, where design review does not apply. The proposal would modify the review process for minor telecommunication facilities in Downtown zones, and would modify the review process for the removal of exceptional trees in midrise, highrise, and commercial zones.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

a. General description of the site:

(circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels. Citywide topography includes flat, hilly, and steep slope areas.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels. Slopes of varying steepness are located throughout the City of Seattle.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels. Citywide soil conditions include a wide variety of glacially-influenced soils, as well as clay, sand, peat, and muck in different parts of the city.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

No. This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels.

e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site and would not directly result in filling, excavation, or grading. There is no specific likelihood that the proposal would lead to increased amounts of excavation, fill, or grading or related adverse effects.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

No. This non-project proposal has no particular development site, and would not directly result in erosion. Any potential indirect impacts to clearing or construction are discussed in Question #D.1 of this checklist.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site, and would not directly result in creation of any impervious surfaces. The proposal would not necessarily impact the amount of impervious surface in future development in an adversely-impacting manner.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

None proposed.

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and will not directly result in emissions to the air.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

No. This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels and defines no particular development site.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

None are proposed.

3. Water

- a. Surface Water:

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

No. This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels and defines no particular development site.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

No. This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels and defines no particular development site. No such work is identified.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected.

Indicate the source of fill material.

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels and defines no particular development site, and no such work is identified.

- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

No. The non-project proposal affects multiple parcels and defines no particular development site, and does not have a particular bearing on 100-year floodplains.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site, and no such potential for discharges is identified.

b. Ground Water:

1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No.

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

None identified.

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

None. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site, and no such potential for runoff is identified. Similarly, there is no particular aspect of the proposal that is projected to adversely affect runoff or generate adverse runoff impacts.

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

No. See the response to c.1 above.

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

No. See the response to c.1 above.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:

None proposed.

4. Plants

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

- evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- shrubs
- grass
- pasture
- crop or grain
- Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels and has no particular development site. City-wide vegetation patterns include greenbelts and urban forest, and including trees, grass, and other vegetation on individual properties.

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

None. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site, and will not directly result in the removal of vegetation. The proposal would modify the approval process for the removal of exceptional trees in lowrise, midrise, and commercial zones. Any potential indirect impacts related to the removal of vegetation are discussed in Question #D.2.

c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None known.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

None known or applicable to this non-project proposal.

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

None known or applicable to this non-project proposal.

5. Animals

a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other _____

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels located throughout the City and defines no particular development site. Seattle is relatively highly urbanized in its development patterns, but it also has a variety of retained greenbelts, hillsides, stream, and river environments where plant, animal, fish, and marine habitats are present. As well, wildlife habituated to urban areas and fragmented vegetated areas in the city, such as squirrels, opossum, coyotes, and a variety of bird species including eagles, are present. See the response to Question D.2 later in this checklist.

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels located throughout the City and defines no particular development site. See the response to Question #D.2 later in this checklist.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

This non-project proposal affects multiple parcels located throughout the City and defines no particular development site. See the response to Question #D.2 later in this checklist.

- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

None proposed.

- e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

None known.

6. Energy and Natural Resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site and would not directly result in the use of energy. Potential indirect impact to energy and natural resources are discussed in Question #D.3.

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site and would not directly result in any impacts to solar access. Also, the proposal does not generate potential for height/bulk/scale concerns of existing or future buildings, and thus is unlikely to affect solar energy access.

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

This non-project proposal has no particular development site, and no features or measures are proposed

7. Environmental Health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

- 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site.

- 2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site.

- 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site.

- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

This non-project proposal has no particular development site.

- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

None proposed.

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

None. This non-project proposal has no particular development site.

- 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site. See the response to Question #D.1 later in this checklist.

- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

None proposed.

8. Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and affects multiple parcels. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist for more discussion of potential land use impacts.

- b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

No.

- 1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

No.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and affects multiple parcels. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist for discussion around potential indirect impacts on land use and housing due to any future development related to this proposal.

- d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist for discussion around potential indirect impacts on land use and housing due to any future development related to this proposal.

- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and affects multiple parcels. The proposal could relate to properties with multifamily, mixed-use, commercial, downtown, and industrial zoning. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist.

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and affects multiple parcels. The city as a whole has numerous comprehensive plan designations. See the responses to Question #D.5 later in this checklist.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site. See the responses to Question #D.5 later in this checklist.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site. Environmentally critical areas are located throughout the City of Seattle. See the responses to Question #D.4 of this checklist.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

None. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and affects multiple parcels.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist for discussion related to possible indirect impacts to housing and displacement.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

None proposed. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

None proposed, other than the processes undertaken to develop legislation that is consistent with City policy. See the response to Questions #D.5 and #D.7 later in this checklist for discussion of compatibility of the proposed legislation with existing and projected land uses and plans.

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

None proposed.

9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and would not directly result in the creation of any new housing units. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist for discussion related to possible indirect impacts to housing.

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site and would not directly result in the elimination of any new housing units. See the response to Question #D.5 later in this checklist for discussion related to possible indirect impacts to housing.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:
None proposed. See the responses to Question #D.5 later in this checklist.

10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?
This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. Also, the non-project proposal is not identified to have any particular implications for height/bulk/scale of buildings. The proposal modifies the approval process for minor communication facilities in Downtown zones. Potential indirect impacts related to height and aesthetics are discussed in Question #D.5.
- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?
This non-project proposal defines no particular development site. Potential indirect impact to aesthetics are discussed in Question #D.5.
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:
None proposed.

11. Light and Glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?
This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.
- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?
No.
- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?
This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.
- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:
None proposed.

12. Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?
This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.
- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.
No. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:
None proposed.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Question #D.4 later in this checklist.

- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Question #D.4 later in this checklist.

- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Question #D.4 later in this checklist.

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

None proposed.

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.

- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. Potential indirect impacts to transportation are discussed in Question #D.6.

- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

None. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. Potential indirect impacts related to transportation are discussed in Question #D.6.

- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

No such improvements are known. This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.

- e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Questions #D.5 and D.6 later in this checklist for evaluation of the relationship of the transportation implications of the proposal.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Questions #D.5 and D.6 later in this checklist for evaluation of the transportation implications of the proposal.

- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect, or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

No.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

None proposed.

15. Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development. See the response to Question #D.6 later in this checklist for evaluation of the relationship of the proposal to public services.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

None proposed.

16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other _____

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

This non-project proposal defines no particular development site or development.

C. Signature

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: _____ On file _____

Name of signee _____ Christina Ghan _____

Position and Agency/Organization _____ Senior Planner, SDCI _____

Date Submitted: _____ May 25, 2017 _____

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions

(IT IS NOT NECESSARY to use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

The proposed changes would result in no direct impacts, and are unlikely to result in indirect or cumulative impacts related to increased discharges to water, emissions to air, production, storage or release of toxic/hazardous substances, or increased production of noise. The eligible locations for development and the allowed scale of development would not be significantly altered by the proposal, and the proposal does not significantly alter procedures or regulations related to natural environment protections.

While the proposal will likely result in slight increases in the production of housing units or the amount of development activity in certain areas, other code changes proposed in this non-project action have the potential to lead to a greater level of design review for certain projects. Any potential increase in the production of housing units resulting from the proposal is expected to be minor and is not expected to significantly alter the overall expected pattern or amount of growth. It is thus reasonable to assume that any net increase in the production rate of new development, and thus the land use impacts associated with new development, will be moderate and not constitute a dramatic or exponential shift from currently observed patterns.

To the extent that the proposed changes to design review thresholds result in slight increases in the production of housing units or the amount of development activity in certain areas, the proposal could contribute indirectly to slight additional amounts of water discharge or emissions to air; however, any increase would be very marginal beyond what could occur under the existing code. To the extent that the proposed changes to design review thresholds result in slight increases in the production of housing units or the amount of development activity in certain areas, the proposal could contribute indirectly to slight additional amounts of noise production. The noise control ordinance sets allowable noise levels and would mitigate noise impacts. Any future project-specific development proposal that is above adopted thresholds is subject to environmental review as a part of the permit review process, and would continue to be subject to environmental review under the proposal. The stormwater and drainage codes would continue to apply and would mitigate stormwater and drainage impacts.

See the response to Question #D.5 below for more discussion about land use and development implications.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

None proposed. Applicable regulations, including the Land Use Code, SEPA regulations, Environmental Critical Areas regulations, and the Shoreline Master Program, are anticipated to adequately mitigate any impacts of any future associated project-specific actions.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

The proposal would result in no direct impacts, and are unlikely to result in indirect or cumulative impacts related to plant, animal, fish, or marine life. The proposal could result in an increase in the production of small-scale residential development, which could slightly affect habitats for plants, animals, fish, and marine life. The proposal does not alter any regulations related to natural

environment protections, and does not include any changes to setback requirements or other limits on the density of development. The locations where the proposal would have an effect are multifamily and commercial zones in Seattle, which are already urbanized areas. Existing regulations including the stormwater and erosion control codes, the Shoreline Management Act, and the Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance are anticipated to be sufficient to mitigate any impacts to plants, animals, fish, or marine life.

The proposal would modify the process to remove a protected “exceptional” tree in lowrise, midrise, or commercial zones in order to make the review process more consistent with the purview of the design review program over a building’s mass and form. Under current rules, an applicant with an exceptional tree on their property may pursue departures from development standards in order to modify the proposed building in a way that would allow them to preserve the tree. An applicant would only be allowed to remove the tree if they can demonstrate that there is no way for them to protect the tree and still achieve the development capacity allowed in that zone. In instances when the proposed building is not otherwise required to go through design review, the current rules require that the project also go through streamlined design review in order to remove the tree. The proposal would remove this extra requirement, which imposes additional regulatory burden but does not result in any demonstrable number of exceptional trees being protected. The proposal would not modify the existing requirement for the applicant to demonstrate the necessity of tree removal, and thus is not expected to affect the number of exceptional trees removed or result in any adverse environmental impacts.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:
None proposed.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

The proposed changes would result in no direct negative impacts related to energy or natural resources, and are unlikely to indirectly cause significant adverse depletion of energy or natural resources. The proposal does not alter any procedures or regulations related to energy consumption or natural resource protections. To the extent that the proposed amendments result in an increase in certain types of development activity, the proposal could result in higher energy or resource use. The incremental difference in energy and resource use is not likely to be significant because new structures must comply with the Seattle Energy Code and other standards for energy efficiency, and because the proposal is not expected to significantly affect the scale of new development.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:
None proposed.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

The proposed changes would result in no direct negative impacts, and are unlikely to result in indirect or cumulative impacts related to environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated for governmental protection that are indicated in this question. The proposed changes are not expected to significantly alter the scale of future new residential development, and would not alter allowances for new development that could otherwise occur in or near environmentally sensitive areas under existing regulations. Therefore, the potential for significant adverse impacts upon these elements of the environment is minimal.

The proposed amendments would not alter the regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas as set out in Chapter 25.09 of the Seattle Municipal Code, which prohibit or limit development in sensitive

areas such as wetlands, floodplains, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and riparian corridors. The locations where the proposal would have an effect are largely in multifamily, commercial, and downtown zones in Seattle, which are already urbanized areas.

The proposal is not likely to generate adverse impacts on historic landmarks, historic districts, or cultural resources. The proposed amendments would not alter the existing protections on historic landmarks and historic districts and any future development proposals in these areas that meet existing criteria would be subject to a separate historic review process.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:
None proposed

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The proposal does not change current zoning including land and shoreline uses. The proposed changes would continue to allow land uses and land use patterns that are compatible with the objectives and intent of the Comprehensive Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, goals and policies related to land use, housing, and community involvement (see a list of relevant policies from the Comprehensive Plan in the response to Question #D.7 below).

The proposal would affect multiple parcels in locations with multifamily, mixed-use, commercial, downtown, and industrial zoning throughout the city. Existing structures and new development in these areas range from small, four-unit townhouse projects to large skyscrapers. The proposal would require design review in certain industrial zones where it does not apply today, and would result in fewer projects in lowrise zones going through design review, the potential impacts of which are discussed in more detail below. The proposal does not affect single-family development or properties located in Industrial General zones, landmark districts, special review districts, or in Major Institution Overlays, where design review does not apply. The proposal does not impact the zoning of any parcel or the types of land uses allowed in any zone. It does not include any changes to existing regulations related to the allowable height, bulk, or scale of development and does not alter density of development allowed in any particular area.

Floor Area-Based Thresholds

The proposal would modify the minimum thresholds which trigger projects to go through design review, to be based solely on the size of a development, measured in square feet of gross floor area. This change would improve the clarity of thresholds for applicants and the public, and make the thresholds more consistent with Design Review's purview over building massing and form, not density of housing units. The proposal would also make the new thresholds more consistent across different zones throughout the city. Under current regulations, thresholds use a combination of both size and the number of dwelling units and vary zone-by-zone. By shifting from thresholds based on unit count to thresholds based on overall square footage of a development, the proposal could result in an increased likelihood that future development projects in lowrise zones would propose a slightly greater number of housing units than they would under current thresholds, without affecting the overall size of a development project allowed at any given location. Under current regulations, there is the opportunity for developers to propose a lower number of units on a development site to stay below the threshold. This change would remove that incentive, and thus could result in an incremental increase in the number of units produced. This modification to the design review thresholds is not expected to result in significant adverse environmental impacts. Any potential incremental change in the number housing units produced at any future related development project is expected to be minimal. This proposal is closely related to the other thresholds changes, the potential impacts of which are discussed in more detail below.

Complexity Characteristics

The proposal would refine the size-based thresholds to consider the relative complexity of a site or proposal in order to focus board review on more complicated projects that meet specific criteria related to the context, scale, and special features of the proposal. Under current rules, the relative complexity of a site is not taken into consideration as part of the thresholds, resulting in projects of varying levels of complexity going through the same type of design review (and thus consuming similar public resources). Under the proposal, projects that qualify as more complex would go through a type of design review process that involves at least one public meeting with the design review boards. Projects that do not meet any of the complexity characteristics would go through a more administrative process than complex projects of a similar size. This change would allow 30% of projects to move through a faster track of design review, allowing the design review boards to focus on the remaining 70% of projects determined to be more complex. This change, on its own, is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts to land use patterns. Rather, the extra consideration given to complex land use issues, as identified in the proposal, could reduce the impacts that any particular future development project may have on the surrounding community. This proposal is closely related to the other thresholds changes, the impacts of which are discussed below.

Administrative Reviews

As described above, the proposal would allow smaller and less complex projects to go through a more administrative form of design review, in order to reduce the number of projects reviewed through the full design review process and focus the attention of the Design Review Boards on the largest and most complex projects with the greatest design challenges. A new “hybrid” design review process would consist of an administrative (staff-led) early design guidance step followed by a public meeting with the design review board making the final recommendation on the development proposal. The least complex and smallest projects would be reviewed administratively by staff for both steps through the existing administrative design review process. Under current rules, projects going through the full design review process include, on average, around 150,000 square feet of development and 145 units of housing. However, projects as small as 8,000 square feet and 8 units have been reviewed by the board. These changes would reduce the number of projects that would be required to go through the full design review process by approximately 37%, allowing over 40 projects to instead be reviewed through the hybrid or administrative design review processes each year. The proposal does not include any changes to the minimum thresholds in Downtown zones, which are slightly higher than in most other areas of the city where large-scale development is less common.

This change is not expected to result in adverse land use impacts. New requirements included in the proposal related to applicant-led community outreach will help ensure that the shift to more administrative reviews does not decrease opportunities for public involvement overall and does not reduce the quality of a future project’s design. While the shift to more staff-led reviews could result in a slight decrease in the review timeline for a project, this change is not expected to impact the amount of development that the City experiences in a significant way. This proposal is closely related to the other thresholds changes, the potential impacts of which are discussed in more detail below.

Minimum Thresholds

The proposal would set the minimum thresholds for design review at 10,000 square feet of gross floor area in most zones, reducing the number of projects subject to design review in order to focus board and staff resources on projects of a larger scale with a greater potential to impact neighborhoods and reduce the cost of building new housing. The proposed 10,000 square-foot threshold is slightly lower than current thresholds in midrise, highrise, and some commercial zones, and slightly higher than the current thresholds in lowrise zones. Under current rules, projects as small as 4,400 square feet have been required to go through streamlined design review and projects as small as 8,000 square feet have been required to go through full design review. The proposed threshold would reduce the number of projects that would be required to go through the design review process by approximately 28%,

allowing roughly 50 projects each year to be permitted without going through the design review program. The vast majority of development of this scale, other than single-family development which is not subject to design review, is located in lowrise zones and involves the production of between four and six townhouse units. Nearly all development at this scale (99%) is currently reviewed through streamlined design review (SDR), which is a Type I land use decision that is not appealable to the Hearing Examiner.

This change is not expected to significantly reduce the quality of design of this type of development or result in any significant adverse aesthetic impacts or other land use impacts. Under current rules and under the proposal, residential development in lowrise, midrise, and highrise zones that falls below design review thresholds is required to meet existing design standards in SMC 23.45.529, which address a wide range of criteria to improve the relationship between the proposed development and the street and these criteria help add visual interest to the front of the building. In addition, the standards address the location and prominence of pedestrian entries and pedestrian access to amenity areas. Further, the ability of the existing streamlined design review process to substantially improve a project's design is limited, as the SDCI planners reviewing projects in SDR often rely on design guidelines that address issues somewhat similar to the design standards in SMC 23.45.529. Any common design issues encountered with smaller residential developments that are not addressed in 23.45.529, such as the appearance of side/rear facades, could be addressed through amendments to SMC 23.45.529, as needed.

The proposal is not expected to significantly impact the bulk and scale of development. Under existing rules, SDCI sometimes requests projects reviewed through SDR to provide modest additional setbacks or make other changes that may result in marginal reductions to the development capacity of an individual site. However, the SDR process is not intended to reduce the general development capacity of the site and may not reduce the number of units allowed per square foot of lot area. Also, certain development standards can be adjusted through SDR if there are unique environmental or site conditions or if the additional flexibility will allow the project to better meet the intent of the adopted design guidelines. These adjustments may allow for small increases in the development capacity of a site, but are limited to reductions to required setbacks, amenity areas, landscaping, and screening or small increases in the maximum width, depth, and length of a structure. As such, the overall impacts of design review on the height, bulk, and scale of development, whether positive or negative, are likely minimal. Under existing rules and under the proposal, projects that do not go through design review are not subject to any of the possible slight reductions to development capacity that may result from design review, nor are they able to pursue adjustments or departures that are only allowed through design review. Thus, while the changes in the number of projects going through design review may result in slight impacts to the bulk and scale of development, any such changes are expected to be minimal. Further, any projects that fall below design review thresholds that are interested in pursuing departures must opt-into design review. It is thus expected that under the proposal, some of the projects that are newly exempt from design review will decide to opt into design review for this reason.

To the extent that the proposal reduces the amount of time it takes to build new housing and decreases the cost of building housing, this component of the proposal could result in a slight increase in the amount of development activity generated in lowrise zones. However existing development regulations, including those related to environmental review and the design standards discussed above, are anticipated to adequately mitigate any potential land use impacts. This proposal is closely related to the other thresholds changes, the impacts of which are discussed below.

Industrial Zones

The proposal would extend design review to apply in some industrial zones where it does not apply today, in order to enhance the connection of design review to the bulk and scale of development, regardless of zone. Specifically, commercial and institutional development in Industrial Buffer (IB) and

Industrial Commercial (IC) zones would be required to go through the program if it is above the proposed thresholds. While this change would apply to the relatively large geographic areas that are currently zoned IC or IB, due to the relatively low occurrence of commercial and institutional development in IB and IC zones, this change is expected to result in only a slight increase in the number of projects reviewed through design review and thus is not expected to result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. The proposal would not impact any industrial-type development, such as warehouses, in industrial zones, which would continue to be exempt from design review under the proposal. Also, any development in the Industrial General zones, regardless of size, would also continue to be exempt.

Institutional Uses

The proposal would also modify thresholds to apply design review to some institutional development projects that are not subject to design review under current regulations, in order to enhance the connection of design review to the bulk and scale of development, regardless of use. Under current regulations, institutional uses such as libraries, community centers, childcare centers, churches, and schools are exempt from design review. The proposal would make more of these institutional uses subject to design review thresholds, but would continue to exempt K-12 schools and religious facilities from design review under the proposal. The proposal would not impact development within Major Institution Overlays (MIOs), which have a separate planning and review process, and are exempt from design review under current regulations as well as under the proposal. This change is not expected to impact a large number of development projects. Typically, only a small number of institutional uses are developed outside of MIOs each year. Most are either relatively small structures that would fall below thresholds, or are part of a larger mixed-use development project that would likely otherwise be required to go through design review. Thus, this change is not expected to result in any adverse environmental impacts.

Affordable Housing

The proposal would modify thresholds to allow affordable housing projects to be reviewed through an administrative design review process, in order to reduce permit review times and support Citywide policy goals of producing more affordable housing. Under current regulations, affordable housing is subject to the same design review thresholds as other forms of development, and thus is often reviewed through the full design review process. This change is not expected to result in any adverse impacts to the quality of development in neighborhoods, as affordable housing projects are typically held to a higher standard of design and durability, due to the requirements of their funding sources.

Overall Impacts of Thresholds Changes

Under current regulations, and in today's development climate, an average of about 190 projects go through design review each year. The largest portion of projects (120 total or 63%) went through full design review, with another third (31%) reviewed through streamlined design review, and just a few (3%) reviewed through administrative design review.

Staff completed an analysis of the 384 projects that went through the design review program between 2014-2015, comparing the existing regulations to the proposal and determining the likely design review path for each project under the proposal. This analysis suggests that an estimated 42% of projects (80 projects per year) would go through the same type of design review under the proposal that they would today. With the addition of the proposed applicant-led early outreach process, this would result in a greater amount of dialogue and public involvement than exists for these projects under the current rules. As proposed, the required outreach is not expected to impact the overall timeline of a project and the costs associated with conducting this outreach are expected to be minimal. While this outreach requirement could be perceived as a new regulatory burden, other thresholds changes associated with this proposal would free up design review board meeting slots, which could provide a small amount of

time savings and help offset any potential impacts to housing development costs resulting from the early outreach.

An estimated 40 projects per year, or 21% of all projects reviewed each year under current rules, would be reviewed through the proposed hybrid design review process or the existing administrative design review process instead of full design review. Hybrid and administrative design review involve the same basic steps as full design review but with some steps conducted by SDCI staff, and thus are expected to, on average, result in a slightly shorter review timeline than projects undergoing the full board review process. While these efficiency gains could provide an amount of time savings sufficient to reduce housing development costs, the changes are not expected to lead to any “adverse” environmental impacts. As discussed above, the proposed applicant-led early outreach process would result in a greater amount of dialogue and public involvement than exists for these projects under the current rules.

An estimated 8% of projects, or 15 projects each year, would be required to go through a more substantial design review process than they would be under current regulations. Most of these projects are currently reviewed through streamlined design review and would be reviewed through hybrid design review under the proposal. This change, which would lead to a greater amount of project review and public involvement than under the current process, is not expected to lead to any adverse impacts. Also, due to the small number of projects affected, the land use impacts of this change are expected to be negligible. An estimated 28% of projects, or 53 projects each year, will no longer be required to go through the design review program. As described above, this change is not expected to significantly reduce the quality of design of this type of development or result in any significant adverse land use impacts.

While the overall intention of the amendments is to improve the predictability and efficiency of the program, the various components of the proposal would each impact the function of the program in different ways. While some changes will likely result in slight increases in the production of housing units or the amount of development activity in certain areas, other changes have the potential to lead to a greater level of design review for certain projects. Any potential increase in the production of housing units resulting from the proposal is expected to be minor and is not expected to significantly alter the overall expected pattern or amount of growth. It is thus reasonable to assume that any net increase in the production rate of new development, and thus the land use impacts associated with new development, will be moderate and not constitute a dramatic or exponential shift from currently observed patterns.

Minor Telecommunication Facilities

The proposal would modify the procedure for allowing additional height for minor communication facilities Downtown. Under current rules, an antenna or similar device installed on an existing structure may exceed the height limit of the zone by up to 10% by a departure approved through administrative design review. A new building with a minor communication facility may similarly exceed the height limit of the zone by going through full design review. The proposal would shift this review process to an administrative process that, on its own, does not require design review. This change is not expected to impact the number of minor communication facilities permitted or their distribution across the city. The allowed height of these structures is not proposed to be changed by the proposal, and the proposal is not expected to result in any significant impacts to the aesthetics of these facilities or any protected public views. Thus, this component of the proposal is not expected to result in any discernable land use impacts.

This checklist does not identify any particular potential for cumulative adverse impacts, meaning there is little potential for these regulatory changes, in combination with other pending or recent land use legislation, to generate unforeseen kinds of significant adverse land use compatibility impacts.

The proposal does not alter any procedures or regulations related to the Shoreline Management Program and would not alter allowances for development that could otherwise occur in or near shoreline areas under existing regulations.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:
None are proposed.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

This proposal is not likely to result in significant adverse impacts in the form of increased demands on transportation or public services and utilities. The proposal does not significantly alter the scale of development allowed in any particular area. As discussed in Question #D.5, any potential increase in the production of housing units resulting from the proposal is expected to be minor and is not expected to significantly alter the overall expected pattern or amount of growth or to lead to an appreciable increase in the demand for transportation or public services or utilities.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:
None proposed.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

The proposal is not likely to result in conflicts with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for protection of the environment.

This proposal would support the following goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan:

- LU 5.18 Seek excellence in new development through a design review process that encourages multiple perspectives on design issues and that complements development regulations, allowing for flexibility in the application of development standards to achieve quality design that:
 - enhances the character of the city;
 - respects the surrounding neighborhood context, including historic resources;
 - enhances and protects the natural environment;
 - allows for variety and creativity in building design and site planning;
 - furthers community design and development objectives;
 - achieves desired intensities of development; and
 - responds to the increasingly diverse social and cultural character of the city.

- H G2 Help meet current and projected regional housing needs of all economic and demographic groups by increasing Seattle's housing supply.

- H 4.8 Explore ways to reduce housing development costs.

- H 5.16 Consider implementing a broad array of affordable housing strategies in connection with new development, including but not limited to development regulations, inclusionary zoning, incentives, property tax exemptions, and permit fee reductions.

- CI G1 Provide opportunities for inclusive and equitable community involvement.

- CI 1.1 Promote racial and social justice, human and civil rights, and mutual respect to reduce intolerance, and reach out and bring people together in ways that build bridges between individuals and between groups.
- CI 1.4 Build community capacity for meaningful and authentic community involvement, enhance the ability of community members, including those of marginalized communities, to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively participate in planning and decision-making processes.
- CI 1.5 Provide a wide range of opportunities for obtaining information and involvement in decision-making processes.
- CI 1.6 Seek greater equity and more meaningful involvement by diverse community members (homeowners, renters, businesses, employees, property owners, institutions, youth, seniors, etc.), and especially members of marginalized communities in decision-making processes.
- CI 1.7 Effectively and efficiently manage the use of City and community resources to plan and implement community involvement.
- GS G3 Maintain and enhance Seattle's unique character and sense of place, including its natural setting, history, human-scaled development, and community identity, as the city grows and changes.