



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray
Mayor

March 18, 2014

Honorable Tim Burgess
President
Seattle City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Dear Council President Burgess:

I am pleased to transmit the attached proposed Council Bill that improves land use regulations for micro-housing and congregate residences. The proposal recognizes that this type of housing provides options to meet income and lifestyle needs, while applying an appropriate level of permit review, especially in terms of Design Review. The addition of Design Review provides notice about new micro-housing and congregate residence development, and provides opportunity for the public to participate in the permit process.

In addition, a number of new development standards are proposed including common space requirements, increased secure bicycle parking, and increased automobile parking in areas where parking is required. With improved regulations we can continue to support these new lower-cost housing options, while improving compatibility of development with neighborhood character, and livability for renters.

In the past few years, the city experienced a wave of permit applications for micro-housing and congregate residences that were not fully anticipated by existing regulations. The housing is a response to need in our community for a lower-cost housing option that allows people with limited housing dollars or limited housing needs to live in some of our most desirable neighborhoods near transit and businesses. It helps achieve City policies such as: accommodating a diversity of ages and household types and fostering innovation to provide affordable housing. However, without clear regulations, some of the micro-housing and congregate residences permitted in the past few years resulted in buildings that are not as good a fit with their surrounding neighborhoods as they could have been.

I am directing the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to continue monitoring micro-housing and congregate residence production to help ensure the new rules achieve the desired intent. I have also directed DPD to analyze future measures to target the location of micro housing and congregate residences to designated urban villages and urban centers only. Should you have questions, please contact Geoffrey Wentlandt at 684-3586.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray
Mayor of Seattle

cc: Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council

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