



## City Neighborhood Council

December 6, 2013

Richard Conlin, PLUS Committee Chair  
Mike O' Brien, PLUS Committee Member  
Tim Burgess, PLUS Committee Member  
Seattle City Council  
601 Fifth Avenue, POB 4749  
Seattle, WA 98124-4749  
**Re: Land Use Omnibus Amendments**

Dear Council Members:

This year's 194-page Omnibus Amendments package is far too complex to be considered in a single piece of legislation. In attempting to analyze the possible implications of the proposed "clarifications" to the land use code, the City Neighborhood Council has concluded that the process needs modification immediately.

Any such Omnibus should be split into at least two legislative packages: one for the intended purpose of the Omnibus, i.e., "to correct typographical errors and cross-references, and clarify existing regulations" and a separate package for any amendments "identified by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) in the course of Code administration."

The latter are often not minor modifications as evidenced by the analysis of the Council staff and the withdrawal of several amendments from the package even before the public hearing on December 11th. We have observed, based in part on the Council's discussion at committee, that many of these proposed amendments are peculiar to a single developer, a single project, an interest group (such as CORA), or an attorney representing unnamed parties.

These amendments and others identified by DPD staff that are not "minor" in nature, should be considered in separate legislation so that citizens have a better chance of focusing on the amendments that will have an impact on future development in a significant way. The land use code is arcane enough. The Council should be interested in making it easier for citizens to prioritize, track and understand the land use code and its implications for their neighborhoods. Mixing up minor and potentially subtle, but significant changes into one super-sized bill has the opposite effect. It is mind numbing and intended to discourage all but the professional interests from paying attention to the details.

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## Land Use Omnibus Amendments

We ask that DPD re-draft the legislation to separate the minor from the other code amendments. We also ask that the Director's analysis of changes include more illustrations, photographs or other ways of visualizing the possible application of the proposed amendments. Several years ago when she chaired the land use committee, Council president Sally Clark challenged teams of architects to show how then proposed changes to the MF code might be interpreted by developers.

The result was helpful to really "see" the best and worst case scenarios of how the new code provisions could be applied in reality. This concept of providing visualizations should be included for all amendments that touch on FAR, height, bulk, and scale, location of access points, setbacks, and departures that can be granted in any form of design review.

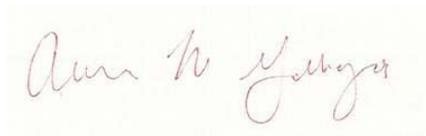
Such illustrations and accompanying narrative explaining how these changes could affect development and identifying, where relevant, the specific project (s) and proponents requesting them will make the process far more transparent to the general public.

This matter was discussed at the CNC's November 25th meeting where this letter was authorized.

Sincerely,



Laine Ross  
CNC Co-Chair



Alexis Gallegos  
CNC Co-Chair

Irene Wall, Cindi Barker  
Co-Chairs  
CNC Neighborhood Planning Committee

C: City Council  
Diane Sugimura, DPD