



April 8th, 2014

Dear Friends and Members of the CNC,

Thank you for your December 6th letter about micro-housing legislation. As I mentioned to Cindi Barker over the phone last month, I share many of the same concerns you expressed.

I had the opportunity to discuss this issue for the first time in depth with DPD leadership on February 19, 2014. I have moved forward with legislation because we are currently operating under less stringent regulations. This legislation, while not perfect, is a start.

Some new rules in the proposed legislation include:

- Defining a “micro-housing unit” under Residential Use within the Land Use Code.
- Prohibiting new micro-housing developments in single-family zones.
- Applying a Design Review threshold for these residences by the size of the building rather than number of dwelling units.
- Update development standards for these residences to add a minimum size requirement for shared kitchens and common areas.
- Increasing vehicle and bicycle parking requirements for these residences.
- Accounting for sleeping rooms toward residential growth targets.
- Deepening the required affordability levels for participation in incentive zoning for affordable housing projects with micro-housing or congregate residences and for very small studio apartments.

Legislation was transmitted quickly because without clear regulations, some of the micro-housing and congregate residences permitted in the last few years led to buildings that aren’t as good a fit with their surrounding neighborhoods as they could have been. Better regulations were necessary and this legislation is a great first step. But it is not the end of the issue.

I have directed the department to monitor these developments closely because I want to make sure the new rules successfully address key issues. I have also directed the department to draft additional legislation to make sure micro-housing and congregate residences are built in appropriate and adequately supported locations. Specifically, I’m interested in further limiting micro-housing to our densest urban centers and villages.

When I spoke with Ms. Barker, she asked about the comments that we submitted to DPD during the appeal process. She asked what happened to those. As I assured her, we have gathered those comments and

submitted them to City Council with the legislation. She also expressed concerns about the cumulative impact and that is a valid concern that we are examining.

Moving forward, I have directed the DPD to continue monitoring newly built micro-housing and congregate housing developments after these proposed regulations take place to ensure that they have the intended effect. I have also asked the department to identify any newly identified regulatory needs that have not already emerged, which may include identifying more strictly defined areas where this type of development is appropriate.

Thank you for your diligence in monitoring these issues. Your concerns about micro-housing and congregate residences have been heard and I and am watching this issue carefully.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mayor Ed Murray
City of Seattle