



# Legislative Department Seattle City Council Memorandum

**Date:** March 3, 2009

**To:** All Councilmembers

**From:** Sally Clark, Chair  
Planning, Land Use, and Neighborhoods Committee (PLUNC)

**Subject:** Planning Commission Housing-related Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The Planning Commission's report, *Affordable Housing Action Agenda*, proposes a number of Comprehensive Plan amendments. The Commission includes general descriptions of the amendments in its report, and plans to develop specific language for each of its proposed Comprehensive Plan changes over the following year. The Commission also recognizes that each strategy should be coordinated with neighborhood plan updates that will touch on the same issues. Still, some amendments may be ready for consideration with annual amendments this fall.

It would be consistent with the City Council's guidelines to place any of these amendments on the docket for consideration in 2008 when they are ready for consideration. Therefore, I recommend that we include a placeholder in the docket-setting resolution to recognize that some Commission proposed amendments may become ready for consideration in time for action this year. As usual at this stage of review, this is not a final recommendation to adopt the amendments, but a recommendation that they be given consideration this year.

I have attached the description of potential amendments from the Commission's report.

# Seattle Planning Commission Housing-related Comprehensive Plan Amendments From the Report *Affordable Housing Action Agenda*, February 2008

## 1 Workforce housing:

- *Strengthen language generally (supporting the development of affordable housing in mixed-use, transit-supportive, walkable neighborhoods).*
- *Strengthen language to include concept of transit corridors rather than just transit hubs.*
- *Encourage bike-friendly neighborhoods and developments.*
- *Encourage working with neighborhoods when creating Transit Oriented Development (TOD).*
- *Encourage linking of incentive zoning programs with TOD.*
- *Encourage mixed-use developments to include affordable housing component.*

## 2 Preserving existing stock and mitigating condominium conversions:

- *Encourage preservation of rental housing stock.*
- *Explore new strategies for addressing condo conversions, i.e. increased notice time, increased relocation payments, or caps on the number of condominium conversions per year, while taking into account potential opportunities for homeownership and investment in aging infrastructure condo conversions present.*

## 3 Incentive zoning programs:

- *Strengthen language. Consider using an incentive zoning system that requires affordable units, regardless of whether developer takes advantage of bonus or not.*
- *Encourage broader application of incentive zoning programs to include moderate-income residents.*
- *Encourage a stronger incentive program when land is rezoned and /or a major increase in land value results from a rezone.*

## 4 Increase development capacity:

- *Reexamine LU59<sup>1</sup> to determine whether the criteria for rezoning single family-zoned land should be adjusted.*
- *Add “opportunities to provide affordable housing” to all rezone evaluation criteria.*
- *Promote increased density in urban villages and centers before other areas.*
- *Promote family-oriented housing in higher-capacity areas, such as downtown, by encouraging increased large unit stock and infrastructure important to families (i.e. schools, open space, playgrounds, etc.).*

<sup>1</sup> LU59 states, “Permit upzones of land designated single-family and meeting single-family rezone criteria, only when all of the following conditions are met: The land is within an urban center or urban village boundary; The rezone is provided for in an adopted neighborhood plan; The rezone is to a low-scale single-family, multifamily or mixed-use zone, compatible with single-family areas; The rezone procedures are followed.”

## 5 Accurately measure Comprehensive Plan goals for affordable housing:

- *Introduce principle ensuring that those that work in the city should be able to afford to live in the city, and introduce goal of providing housing to Seattle’s workers who have been priced out of the market.*
- *Require the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) or the Office of Housing (OH) to monitor the City’s achievement of these goals, reporting to Council at certain time intervals.*
- *Introduce strategies should these goals not be met.*

## 6 Ensure Land Use code works to create more affordable housing

- *Include low-income housing (up to 80 percent of median income) in Housing Policy 6<sub>1</sub>.*
- *Introduce other strategies for offering appropriate and affordable housing for families with small children.*
- *Ensure tenant relocation assistance benefits are extended to those earning up to 80 percent median income.*

- *Encourage affordable housing for families and first time homebuyers while ensuring this housing is not created through the displacement of low to moderate income renters.*
- *Introduce other strategies for offering appropriate and affordable housing for families with small children.*

7 Expand housing choices:

- *Strengthen language.*
- *Encourage such units in 'areas outside of urban villages' or 'single family zones,' but discourage in Urban Centers.*

8 Encourage development of more resources for providing affordable housing:

- *Pursue additional funds and create additional strategies for providing affordable housing using other cities as models.*

9 Coordinate density with transportation strategies or infrastructure, open space, and other public amenities:

- *Strengthen language.*
- *Encourage any significant upzones include a funding and subarea plan for developing transportation strategies or infrastructure, open space and other public amenities.*

*The Commission will be developing specific language for each of its proposed Comprehensive Plan changes over the following year.*