



**Sally J. Clark**  
**Seattle City Councilmember**

To: Diane Sugimura  
From: Council President Sally Clark  
Date: October 18, 2013  
Subject: **Fixing Lowrise zoning**

I am writing you to request that DPD work on correcting problems with a specific area of the otherwise excellent changes that we made to the Multifamily Code in 2010. Councilmember Conlin, chair of the Council's Planning, Land Use and Sustainability (PLUS) Committee, agrees that some unanticipated problems need to be addressed. We are interested in fixing these problems quickly, similar to the fast work that was done on the amendment we adopted this fall that lowered the height limit in Midrise zones located next to single family areas.

I recently met with some Capitol Hill residents who have been tracking new development in the LR3 zones in their neighborhood. The concern they raised that I find most compelling has to do with ways some developers are combining incentives and the new approach to measuring height. Bottom line - I never envisioned or intended that developers would be able to achieve five stories in LR3 zones. I think five stories is too big a change in height and scale for the LR3 zone.

I know that one deadly combination of height bonuses (the partially undergrounded floor plus a butterfly roof) will be cured via the omnibus bill that the PLUS Committee is now considering. I'd like to look further into making sure we don't leave open other methods of achieving five stories. This may involve looking at the existing height incentives, FAR exemptions and bonuses, and the height measurement approach.

In the past, when a new chapter of the Land Use Code was adopted, we have always needed "clean-up" amendments to address problems that were not apparent in the abstract. In this case, the recession delayed construction under the new code provisions, but I believe we now have enough experience and examples to make needed corrections. I understand that this issue is on your radar, but that you have not yet started serious work. I am requesting that this issue be given priority, and that legislation be submitted to the Council in the first quarter of 2014.

Thank you.

cc: Councilmember Richard Conlin