

# **SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

## **Purpose of checklist**

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

## **Instructions for applicants**

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. **You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown.** You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to **all parts of your proposal**, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

## **Instructions for lead agencies**

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

## **Use of checklist for nonproject proposals**

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B, plus the [Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions \(Part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for nonprojects) questions in "Part B: Environmental Elements" that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

## **A. Background** [Find help answering background questions](#)

### **1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:**

Equitable Development Zoning Code Changes

### **2. Name of applicant:**

City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development

### **3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:**

Office of Planning and Community Development

600 Fourth Avenue

P.O. Box 94788

Seattle, Washington 98124-7088

Contact: Nick Welch (206) 276-6371

### **4. Date checklist prepared:**

March 20, 2023

### **5. Agency requesting checklist:**

City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development

### **6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):**

Approval by City Council and Mayor anticipated in summer 2023.

### **7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.**

No.

### **8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.**

No other environmental information directly related to this proposal has been prepared apart from this SEPA checklist.

### **9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

Permit applications for equitable development projects that could be affected by the proposed code changes may be pending before the City. Those projects may already be vested to existing development standards. Some could elect to revise and resubmit their application following adoption of the proposal.

### **10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

The proposal requires approval of an ordinance by the City Council. No other agency approvals are anticipated.

**11. Give a brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

This proposal is a nonproject action that would amend various provisions of the Land Use Code (Seattle Municipal Code Title 23) to remove regulatory barriers to equitable development projects in Seattle. The intent of this proposal is to increase the regulatory feasibility of equitable development projects, which provide public benefits in the form of affordable housing, community space, and other uses that help to mitigate ongoing or potential cultural displacement. Equitable development projects are often permitted as community centers, which are currently a conditional use in Neighborhood Residential and Multifamily Residential zones. Conditional uses are subject to additional standards and requirements that can limit project viability and require a special permit that involves discretionary review and adds unpredictability and cost to the permitting process.

The proposed legislation would add flexibility for certain nonresidential uses in residential zones. The proposal would:

- Allow community centers that do not include shelters, and libraries as institution uses permitted outright in Neighborhood Residential zones rather than requiring a conditional use permit for these uses
- Modify the amount of off-street parking required for community centers and libraries
- Define and provide standards for “community farms” as a type of institution allowed outright in residential zones
- Modify the definition of “community club or center” to better reflect the types of activities and programming commonly included in equitable development projects and increase predictability in the permitting process
- Allow community centers to include certain accessory commercial uses, subject to limits
- For institutions in LR zones, apply setback requirements consistent with uses permitted outright zone rather than larger setback requirements

No changes to other development standards, such as maximum height, floor area, or density limits, are proposed.

**12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.**

This is a nonproject action that would amend various sections of the Land Use Code related to Neighborhood Residential and Multifamily Residential zones. Attachment 1 includes a map of these areas.

## B. Environmental Elements

### 1. Earth [Find help answering earth questions](#)

#### a. General description of the site:

The affected areas by the proposal are city wide contain a diversity of site conditions consistent with urbanized areas.

Circle or highlight one:  Flat,  rolling,  hilly,  steep slopes,  mountainous, other:

#### b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

The affected areas by the proposal are city wide contain a diversity of slopes from flat areas to steep slopes. Slopes exceed 40 percent in some areas of the city affected by the proposal. Any development that would disturb the ground in such areas will continue to be subject to review under the City's Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) regulations.

#### c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them, and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Seattle has various soil types, mostly glacial in nature. There is no prime farmland within the city's boundaries. The proposed legislation is not likely to result in a significant adverse increase in the removal of soils, although future institutions that might arise due to the proposal in some cases could result in additional grading of soils depending on the nature of the development, which could include remodels, expansions, or new construction.

#### d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle, including in areas where unstable soils are present. Existing ECA regulations would apply to any development in areas with unstable soils. The areas affected by the proposal contain peat settlement- and liquefaction-prone areas.

#### e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

This is a nonproject action. No filling, excavation, or grading is proposed. It is not anticipated that the proposed legislation would significantly adversely increase the amount of filling, excavation, or grading involved in any development associated with the creation, expansion, or modification of institutions that might arise due to this proposal. Grading, excavation, and fill outcomes would relate to building design and siting choices. In some cases an incremental increase in the amount of grading, excavation, and/or fill could result if an institution is added as an expansion to an existing building. However, these outcomes would generally not differ under the proposal compared to current regulations since there is no change proposed to the maximum allowed size of development on any site.

#### f. Could erosion occur because of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

This is a nonproject action. No clearing, construction, or change of use is proposed. Erosion could occur indirectly as a result of future development if the proposal incrementally encourages or discourages development in the affected area. Existing erosion control measures would continue to apply on sites where construction occurs.

**g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**

This is a nonproject action. No change is proposed in the amount of impervious surface allowed. Changes in impervious surface could occur indirectly as a result of future development if the proposal incrementally encourages or discourages development in the affected area.

**h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any.**

None proposed. Compliance with existing City ordinances to reduce or control erosion is required for development in Seattle.

**2. Air** [Find help answering air questions](#)

**a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.**

This is a nonproject action. No emissions will occur as a direct result of this proposal. Minor changes in emissions could occur indirectly due to future development if the proposal incrementally encourages or discourages development in the affected areas.

**b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Off-site sources of emissions or odor exist in locations throughout the city. The proposal is not likely to increase exposure of community center or library facilities to emissions or odor.

**c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any.**

None proposed. This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle and is not likely to increase emissions or result in other impacts to air. Compliance with existing city ordinances to reduce or control emissions and other impacts to air is required for development in Seattle.

**3. Water** [Find help answering water questions](#)

**a. Surface Water:** [Find help answering surface water questions](#)

**1. Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle, including in areas near Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Union, Green Lake, Bitter Lake, and Haller Lake.

**2. Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.**

This is a nonproject action, and no development is directly proposed. The proposal would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Development over, in, or adjacent to the described waters would be regulated under the Shoreline code, which is not affected by this proposal.

- 3. Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

No filling or dredging is anticipated as a result of this proposal.

- 4. Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No.

- 5. Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle, some of which are in floodplains. Development on these sites would continue to be regulated under the City's ECA regulations.

- 6. Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

No.

**b. Ground Water:** [Find help answering ground water questions](#)

- 1. Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

This is a nonproject action. The affected area may include land that contains wells. No withdrawal of groundwater is anticipated to result from this proposal for drinking water or other purposes.

- 2. Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals...; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

None is likely. This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Seattle is served almost entirely by sanitary sewage systems.

**c. Water runoff (including stormwater):**

- 1. Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Seattle is served by stormwater systems that include combined, partially separated, and separated systems.

- 2. Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.**

No. This is a nonproject action. This proposal will not result in waste materials entering ground or surface waters.

- 3. Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so,**

**describe.**

No. This is a nonproject action. This proposal will not affect drainage patterns.

**4. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any.**

None proposed.

**4. Plants** [Find help answering plants questions](#)

**a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:**

deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

shrubs

grass

pasture

crop or grain

orchards, vineyards, or other permanent crops.

wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

other types of vegetation

**b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?**

This is a nonproject action. This proposal will not result in the direct removal or alteration of vegetation. Changes in vegetation could occur indirectly as a result of future development if the proposal incrementally encourages or discourages development in the affected area.

**c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.**

No threatened or endangered plant species are known to be on or near the site.

**d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any.**

None proposed.

**e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.**

The affected area contains a diversity of invasive plants consistent with urbanized areas. These plants include but are not limited to common urban invasives such as ivy, blackberry, and bindweed.

**5. Animals** [Find help answering animal questions](#)

**a. List any birds and other animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.**

**Examples include:**

- **Birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:** crows, pigeons, doves, starlings, robins, gulls, and house sparrows are common urban species
- **Mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:** rodents, including mice, rats, squirrels, and raccoons are common urban species
- **Fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:**

The affected area contains a diversity of animals consistent with urbanized areas including a diversity of birds, mammals, and fish. These animals include but are not limited to hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, and salmon.

**b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.**

None known. This is a nonproject action that affects the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. Various threatened and endangered species, including salmon and various birds, may be in, on, or near sites affected by the proposal. It is conceivable that protected or threatened or endangered species could be present on or near future development sites. The most likely affected animals could be heron and salmon, to the extent they are present near future development or in downstream locations potentially affected by future development.

**c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.**

The City of Seattle is within the Pacific Flyway. The Pacific Flyway encompasses the entire Puget Sound Basin.

**d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any.**

None proposed.

**e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. The affected areas contain a diversity of invasive animal species consistent with urbanized areas. Invasive species present in Seattle include European starlings, house sparrows, Eastern gray squirrels, domestic cats and domestic dogs

**6. Energy and Natural Resources** [Find help answering energy and natural resource questions](#)

**a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. No energy use is proposed. Electricity, natural gas, oil and solar energy are all used in Seattle for heating and other typical uses. All kinds of energy could indirectly increase or decrease as a result of future development to the extent the proposal incrementally encourages or discourages development in the affected area.

**b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.**

This is a nonproject action that would affected the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. No use of solar energy is proposed. Solar energy use is unlikely to be affected since the proposal does not modify maximum height, floor area, or other standards that govern the size and bulk of buildings. Solar energy could be used indirectly as a result of future development if the proposal incrementally encourages or discourages



development in the affected area.

**c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any.**

Non proposed. This proposal will not directly result in additional energy needs. Current and future updated City energy codes will require increasing levels of energy efficiency for new structures, which would advance energy conservation through future development potentially affected by this proposal.

**7. Environmental Health** [Find help with answering environmental health questions](#)

**a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur because of this proposal? If so, describe.**

None identified. This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle.

**1. Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.**

None known. This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Contamination exists in some locations in Seattle and would continue to be addressed through existing regulations.

**a. Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.**

The affected areas contain a diversity of conditions consistent with urbanized areas. Liquid and gas transmission pipelines exist in some locations in Seattle and would continue to be addressed through existing regulations.

**b. Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.**

This is a nonproject action. This proposal will not result in the storage, use, or production of toxic or hazardous chemicals.

**c. Describe special emergency services that might be required.**

This is a nonproject action. This proposal will not directly result in additional need for special emergency services.

**d. Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any.**

None proposed.

**b. Noise**

**1. What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?**

This is a nonproject action that affects the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Typical urban noises, particularly traffic, are present throughout the city. Different properties in various zones could also be exposed to various noise levels depending on the intensities of adjacent uses. This kind of noise issue might be most likely to be present where commercial zones abut adjacent or nearby Neighborhood Residential- or Multifamily Residential-zoned properties. In most cases, noise from neighboring uses would not pose a major

issue for community center or library uses. In rare cases, one of these uses might include outdoor activity or gathering space that could be located near certain uses in a commercial zone like an automobile repair that generates high daytime noise levels, in the worst case.

**2. What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site)?**

The proposal could increase the potential for a community center use in a residential context that includes outdoor activity or gathering space where people playing, exercising, or congregating could result in some increased daytime noise impacts on abutting neighbors. Some noise could also be generated by vehicles arriving to and departing from the facility. SMC 25.08.410 establishes a limit of 55 dB(A) (A-weighted decibels) for exterior sound levels generated in and received by properties in residential zones. Most community centers operate during daytime hours, though some may include activities in the early morning or early evening hours. The range of activities described above is considered normal activities for residential land uses and would be unlikely to exceed daytime noise limits like 55 dB(A). However, noise impacts from a specific facility could vary according to the intensity of the activity, which depends on the number of people visiting and using the facility, how many times per day, and how many vehicles arriving and departing.

Noise generated from a community center use may be interpreted by a neighbor as an annoyance even if noise levels are within codified limits, and even if noise-reducing measures like fences are present. The degree of annoyance would vary according to the intensity, frequency, and nature of the noises generated from the facility. Since most activities at the facility are likely to occur during daytime hours, the potential for adverse nighttime noise impacts is low.

Community center facilities are likely to be dispersed across the city, and impacts would be localized. To the extent the proposal could increase the number of community center facilities in residential areas and decrease the number in denser mixed-use zones, the number of people affected by noise might be reduced if the typical density of neighboring residents near a future community center facility is lower. This is an approximate observation but may be instructive if community centers must otherwise locate in areas with denser multifamily housing that results in more residents exposed to noise impacts from outdoor activities and vehicle arrivals and departures.

**3. Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any.**

None proposed. Compliance with existing city ordinances for noise is required for development in Seattle.

**8. Land and Shoreline Use** [Find help answering land and shoreline use questions](#)

**a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.**

This is a nonproject action that would remove regulatory barriers to locating community center and library uses on sites throughout Seattle's residential zones. Uses in these areas include primarily residential but also institutional, commercial, recreational, and other uses typical of a city environment. The proposal could indirectly result in an increase in the number and frequency of community center and library uses located in residential zones. As discussed in question 7.b above, this could result in noise-related annoyances. Likewise the proposal could affect land use compatibility in a worst-case scenario. This is most likely if future community centers include outdoor activity or gathering space that generates noise that occasionally exceeds noise limits or if those community centers involve operational activities like vehicle arrivals and departures that contribute to increased congestion on nearby streets. Increased activity at future community center and library facilities could also increase demand for parking on nearby streets.

No changes are proposed to development standards that would increase the overall allowed size of

development for community centers or libraries in residential zones, and existing standards of the underlying zone, like yard, setback, and/or lot coverage requirements, would continue to apply. By allowing community center and library uses outright rather than as conditional uses, structures with these facilities would no longer be subject to additional setback requirements that currently apply to institutions permitted as conditional uses in residential zones. This would allow new structures to be located nearer to adjacent lots and to rights-of-way than currently allowed, but no closer than otherwise allowed for uses permitted outright (like housing) in these zones. This City rules would continue to provide controls, and these facilities would be subject to code enforcement if and when the City receives complaints.

The proposal would also define and allow “community farms” as an institution use allowed outright in Neighborhood Residential zones and, if they meet development standards, in Multifamily Residential zones. Community farm use would be subject to the same development standards as other uses permitted outright in NR zones. It would allow activities related to growing, processing, and selling crops and food, educational programming, classes, and events. These would likely be low-intensity uses from the standpoint of the size, height, and scale of structures created on sites used as community farms.

**b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses because of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?**

Agriculture was a historic use of some sites with the City of Seattle but is not currently a widespread use in the city. The affected areas contain small-scale agricultural uses and natural areas. This is a nonproject action. The proposal would not directly convert any farm or forest land. As described in question 8.a above, the proposal would define and allow community farms as a use permitted outright in residential zones.

**1. Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how?**

No.

**c. Describe any structures on the site.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle’s residential zones. The affected area includes various types and sizes of structures, primarily ranging from single detached dwellings to midrise multifamily apartment buildings, but also other institutions and commercial structures.

**d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle’s residential zones. This proposal will not directly result in demolition of structures because no development is proposed. Demolitions could occur indirectly as a result of future development affected by the proposal. In recent years, some community center uses have been located in existing structures or a change of use, where demolition did not occur.

**e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?**

The proposed legislation would amend Land Use Code regulations that apply citywide. Changes to uses allowed outright would apply in Neighborhood Residential and Multifamily Residential zones.

**f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?**

The proposed code changes would apply in urban centers, urban villages, and Neighborhood Residential, Multifamily Residential, and Commercial / Mixed-Use areas outside urban centers and villages.

**g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle, including in some shoreline environments. No changes are proposed to shoreline master program regulations. The following table summarizes the regulation of community center and library uses in shoreline environments:

<b>Shoreline environment</b>	<b>Community center use</b>	<b>Library use</b>
<b>Conservancy Management (CM)</b>	Allowed on upland lots and allowed on waterfront lots, if the uses are water-dependent or water-related	Prohibited on waterfront lots and allowed on upland lots
<b>Conservancy Navigation (CN)</b>	Prohibited	Prohibited
<b>Conservancy Preservation (CP)</b>	Prohibited	Prohibited
<b>Conservancy Recreation (CR)</b>	Community centers, limited to small-craft centers, are allowed as a shoreline conditional use if located in a public park and are prohibited otherwise	Prohibited
<b>Conservation Waterway (CW)</b>	Only yacht, boat and beach clubs allowed as a Special Use, prohibited otherwise	Prohibited
<b>Urban Commercial (UC)</b>	Prohibited on waterfront lots, permitted on upland lots	Prohibited on waterfront lots, permitted on upland lots
<b>Urban General (UG)</b>	Permitted	Permitted
<b>Urban Harborfront (UH)</b>	Allowed as shoreline conditional use on waterfront lots, permitted on upland lots	Prohibited on waterfront lots, permitted on upland lots
<b>Urban Industrial (UI)</b>	Prohibited	Prohibited
<b>Urban Maritime (UM)</b>	Prohibited on waterfront lots, allowed as shoreline conditional use in a Landmark structure on upland lots	Prohibited on waterfront lots, allowed as shoreline conditional use in a Landmark structure on upland lots
<b>Urban Residential (UR)</b>	Some community centers allowed as a Special Use on waterfront lots, permitted on upland lots	Prohibited on waterfront lots, permitted on upland lots

**h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.**

Yes, critical areas have been designated throughout the city, including areas affected by the proposal. The proposed legislation would not modify any ECA regulations.

**i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. This proposal will not directly result in any buildings in which people would reside or work. This proposal could indirectly increase the number of residents and employees to the extent it results in new community center or library uses that otherwise would not be created.

**j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. No displacement will occur as a direct result of the project because no development is directly proposed. In recent years, most community center and library uses have been created on vacant land or through renovations of existing space, without a substantial decrease in the number of residential units. This is likely to continue under the proposal. Occasionally an existing dwelling has been converted to an institutional use. To the extent the proposal increases the number of community center and library facilities than would otherwise be created under existing land use regulations, a decrease in the number of residential units could occur due to new institutions if they are created through demolition or conversion of existing units.

**k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any.**

The proposal is a nonproject action would affect the uses allowed outright on sites throughout Seattle. No development is directly proposed. The intent of this proposal is to support equitable development projects, which typically include affordable housing, community gathering space, arts and cultural space, and other uses and facilities that provide mitigation against displacement pressures.

**l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any.**

The proposal would modify the definition of “community center” to better reflect the types of activities that equitable development projects often include. To address regulatory hurdles that stymie these projects, community centers would become a use allowed outright in residential zones. However, community centers that include shelters would continue to require a conditional use permit and would not be allowed outright. This would allow discretionary review of those projects that may involve greater potential for compatibility issues with adjacent and nearby residential uses.

The proposal would not modify development standards that regulate the height, bulk, and scale of potential structures that could be affected by the proposal. This would serve to maintain compatibility of future development of institutions affected by this proposal relative to other current and future structures.

Existing noise- and nuisance-related regulations would continue to apply, allowing for enforcement actions that would mitigate the potential for adverse compatibility impacts.

**m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any.**

None proposed.

**9. Housing** [Find help answering housing questions](#)

**a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-**

### **income housing.**

None. This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. No housing is directly proposed. The proposal could indirectly increase the amount of new housing produced if it increases the feasibility of a mixed-use project that includes community center use and housing. These effects are anticipated to be marginal in the context of overall citywide housing production because of the relatively small number of community center or library uses permitted annually.

#### **b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.**

This is a nonproject action. No housing is directly proposed to be created or eliminated. To the extent community center or library facilities are constructed without housing on sites that currently have or would otherwise have had added housing, the proposal could indirectly reduce the number of housing units available or produced. These effects are anticipated to be marginal in the context of overall citywide housing production because of the relatively small number of community center or library uses permitted annually.

#### **c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any.**

None proposed. Existing City ordinances on housing and tenant relocation assistance would continue to apply.

### **10. Aesthetics** [Find help answering aesthetics questions](#)

#### **a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. No construction is directly proposed. The proposal would not modify any development standards that would affect the height of structures or exterior building materials.

#### **b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. No construction is directly proposed. Under the proposal, development that includes community center and library uses would be subject to the setback requirements of the zone rather than additional setbacks required for institutions permitted as conditional uses. This could result in structures that are closer to the abutting lots and rights-of-way than currently allowed, but no closer than allowed for other uses permitted outright in the zone. This could slightly affect sightlines for views from and around development sites. No public views are anticipated to be altered or obstructed. No other changes are proposed to development standards that would affect views.

#### **c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any.**

None proposed.

### **11. Light and Glare** [Find help answering light and glare questions](#)

#### **a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. Community center and library facilities are generally open during daytime hours and are unlikely to produce substantial light and glare. Community centers that include an accessory commercial use might operate during evening hours and could emit light or glare. These commercial spaces would be accessory to the principal use and therefore relatively small, but they might generate more light

and glare than uses otherwise currently allowed in residential zones. Community farms would primarily involve activities that do not produce light and glare.

**b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. It is unlikely that light or glare from institution or accessory commercial uses affected by the proposal would create a safety hazard or interfere with views.

**c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. It is unlikely that there would be off-site sources of light or glare that would affect community center or library facilities, where most activity is likely to occur during daylight hours.

**d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any.**

None proposed.

**12. Recreation** [Find help answering recreation questions](#)

**a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Parks and recreational facilities are located throughout the city.

**b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. It is unlikely that any community center or library facilities affected by this proposal would displace existing recreational uses. Some community center uses include space for recreation, like outdoor activity space. Community farms would be unlikely to displace existing recreational uses since the associated activities involve land area used for food production and outdoor activities.

**c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any.**

None proposed.

**13. Historic and Cultural Preservation** [Find help answering historic and cultural preservation questions](#)

**a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.**

This is a nonproject action that affects the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. There are buildings more than 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, and city preservation registers across the city. Sites affected by the proposal may be eligible for designation as a historic site with either locally or federally designated status.

**b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.**

This is a nonproject action that affects the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Seattle has several landmarks and evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, and cultural importance within its boundaries.

- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.**

The proposal is a nonproject action that affects the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. Potential impacts to cultural and historic resources from future development projects related to this proposal would be addressed through future permit review and in relation to the City's existing historic preservation regulations and policies. Information regarding historic structures is available through the Seattle Department of Neighborhood's Historic Resources Survey Database and Context Statements.

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.**

None proposed. Compliance with existing City ordinances for historic preservation would be required for development.

#### **14. Transportation** [Find help with answering transportation questions](#)

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.**

The proposed nonproject action does not pertain to a specific site or discrete geographic area. The proposal would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle in zones where residential uses are allowed. Seattle is an urbanized area with a dense grid of residential and arterial streets that connect to major transportation routes, including Interstate 5 and State Route 99, which run north-south through the city, and Interstate 90 and State Route 520, which connect Seattle to points east across Lake Washington. Public streets and/or highways that serve or are easily accessible from sites that could be affected by future development (indirectly related to the proposal) vary in terms of their size, design, access, capacity, vehicle volumes, and relationship to their local settings.

The geographic area affected by the proposal includes some of Seattle's least densely populated areas served primarily by low-capacity residential streets, as well as denser and more urbanized areas of Seattle served by arterial streets and major routes. Most sites affected by the proposal are likely to have access to the existing street system; some large, undeveloped sites may require a connection to the existing street system as part of future project development. More specific information concerning site-specific public streets and highways would be addressed during future permitting of individual development projects.

- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?**

This is a nonproject action that affects the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. Most of Seattle is served by public transit, which includes bus, bus rapid transit, streetcar, light rail, and ferry service.

- c. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses permitted on sites throughout Seattle. No development



is directly proposed. Most of Seattle is already served by transportation infrastructure. Potential future community center and library facilities are unlikely to require new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities given their relatively small size and likelihood of dispersion throughout the city, as opposed to being concentrated in a particular subarea. Depending on its size, future development of community center or library uses associated with this proposal may be subject to review during the permitting process that would evaluate potential demands the project create on or for local transportation infrastructure.

Some locations of potential future community center and library facilities would be served by local non-arterial streets where on-street parking and traffic congestion vary depending on factors like street width and proximity to other sources of traffic. Community center and library uses allowed under this proposal could vary in size, from smaller structures that have relatively few associated vehicle trips to larger facilities that may generate higher daily traffic volumes. It is possible, though unlikely, that certain street improvements like turning lanes, intersection controls, caution signs or lights, crosswalks, or loading zones could conceivably be determined necessary to serve future community center or library facilities.

**d. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.**

No. This is a nonproject action that affects the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. Some future community center or library uses affected by this proposal may locate in the immediate vicinity of rail transportation (light rail or streetcar) or water transportation (Washington State ferries).

**e. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?**

This is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. No development is directly proposed. The proposal could indirectly increase the number of community center or library facilities permitted in residential zones. This could indirectly increase the number of vehicular trips occurring in areas where potential future facilities would be located. These facilities are typically open during daytime hours and would be expected to have visitors and users coming and going throughout the day, not only during peak morning and afternoon commute times. This would serve to moderate any effects of an increase in vehicular trips on parking availability and traffic congestion.

The proposal would reduce the amount of off-street parking required for new community center uses, though some off-street parking would continue to be required. Depending on the size of a future community center, the activities, events, and programming it offers, and its location, parking demand from visitors and users could spill over onto nearby streets. Reduced parking requirements could also encourage more visitors and users to choose alternative modes of transportation instead of a vehicle trip, which could reduce the need for vehicle parking associated with future community centers.

See question D.6 below for further discussion of transportation.

**f. Will the proposal interfere with, affect, or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.**

No.

**g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any.**

None proposed.

## 15. Public Services [Find help answering public service questions](#)

### a. **Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.**

No. The proposed nonproject action does not include construction or development at this time that would directly result in an increased need for public services. The proposal would affect the uses allowed on sites entirely within the city of Seattle, and most affected properties are already served by existing public services, including fire and police protection, healthcare, and schools. Levels of existing public transit service vary across sites affected by the proposal, with some areas well served by high-frequency transit and others located further from transit service.

Existing public services, including fire protection, police protection, and other emergency services, are likely sufficient to serve future community center or library facilities that may arise as a result of this proposal. Potential future facilities related to the proposal would likely be dispersed throughout Seattle's residential zones. Community centers must be operated by a nonprofit organization. Potential future community center uses associated with this proposal could themselves provide public services in the form of community programs, health services, educational classes, and more. These activities would help to meet current and potential future demands for public services.

### b. **Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.**

None proposed.

## 16. Utilities [Find help answering utilities questions](#)

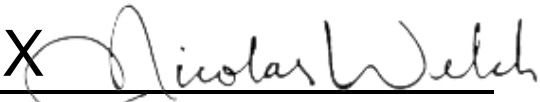
### a. **Circle utilities currently available at the site:** electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other:

### b. **Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.**

The proposal is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. The proposal does not pertain to a specific site, and no construction or development is proposed at this time. Community center and library uses generally use the typical utilities provided throughout the city. Future community center or library facilities developed after this proposed would require water and sewer services at levels commensurate with the activities and programming the facilities offer, which could include water for activities like food preparation, cleaning, or growing and harvesting plants. In most cases, future facilities associated with this proposal would be relatively small and not expected to result in excessive demands on local water and sewer systems. In certain cases, a larger community center or library, or a community farm use that has higher water usage, could conceivably require water and sewer services that challenge the capacity of existing pipe systems in the vicinity. This would depend on highly localized characteristics of the development and pipe sizing and condition across sites throughout Seattle that would be affected by the proposal. Proposed new facilities would be subject to review by the City, and local improvements could be required by Seattle Public Utilities on a project-by-project basis.

## C. Signature [Find help about who should sign](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

X   
Nick Welch  
Senior Planner

**Type name of signee:** Nick Welch

**Position and agency:** Senior Planner, Office of Planning and Community Development

**Date submitted:** 3/20/2023

#### **D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions** [Find help for the nonproject actions worksheet](#)

**IT IS NOT REQUIRED** to use this section for project actions.

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

##### **1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?**

As a nonproject action, the proposal would not result in any direct impacts to water, air, toxic substances, or noise because it does not directly propose construction or development. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have also been considered, and no changes to GHG emissions are expected because of this nonproject action. Individual development projects that could be affected by the proposal will occur over time and cannot be evaluated in terms of discharge to water, emissions to air, production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances, or noise, at this stage. It would be speculative to attempt to quantify specific impacts from future development. Such projects will be subject to environmental review (if they meet or exceed thresholds for environmental review) as they move forward. The proposal is unlikely to increase potential discharge of pollutants as compared to the amounts that could occur without the proposed changes.

By removing regulatory hurdles to creating a community center or library in residential zones, an increase in those facilities in those areas could result from the proposal. No change is proposed to existing regulations for lot coverage, landscaping, drainage, and wastewater. The City's existing protective regulations would tend to control, limit, or avoid washoff of soil and pollutants during development, avoiding impacts on natural water systems, Required use of best practices during construction, landscaping requirements, and existing protections for environmentally critical areas like steep slopes and erosion hazard areas would also help avoid destabilizing soils and watercourses.

If community center and library facilities are more easily able to locate in residential zones as a result of the proposal, there could be an increase in the number of automobile trips to and from

these facilities to the extent they are located in areas with less available public transit. This would result in an increase in emissions to air.

Community centers may include outdoor space for activities, events, or classes where people are gathering, recreating, or playing. Noise from these outdoor activities would likely tend to occur during daytime hours but could have impacts on residents of adjacent properties who are at home during these times. See the response to question 7.b.2 earlier in this checklist for more detail on noise impacts.

**Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:**

None proposed.

**2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?**

This non-project action would result in no direct impacts to plants, animals, fish, or marine life because it does not directly propose development or construction. The proposal would remove regulatory hurdles to community center and library uses but would not increase the number of sites where these uses could occur compared to current conditions. If community center or library uses were proposed in a new building, existing landscaping, environmental critical areas, shoreline, tree protection, and stormwater regulations would continue to apply to this development, which would tend to protect and avoid impacts from occurring in areas with the greatest animal, fish, and marine life habitat value.

**Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:**

None proposed.

**3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?**

As a non-project action, the proposal would not deplete energy or natural resources because it does not directly propose development or construction. The proposal would remove regulatory hurdles to community center and library uses but would not increase the number of sites where these uses could occur compared to current conditions. The proposal also would not modify the maximum size of community center and library uses compared to what is already allowed. Community center and library facilities may use more energy than other uses allowed in residential zones, like housing, that would otherwise be expected to occur on eligible sites. To the extent the legislation results in an increase in the overall number of community center or library facilities located in Seattle, there could be a minor increase in energy use. New development will continue to be subject to energy efficiency requirements in the Seattle Energy Code.

**Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:**

None proposed.

**4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection, such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?**

The proposed non-project action would not result in direct impacts to protected areas, parks, wilderness, habitat, historic or cultural sites, or other environmentally sensitive areas or areas

designated or eligible for governmental protection because it does not propose construction or development. The area affected by the proposal is located in an intensively developed urbanized area. Existing regulations for environmentally sensitive areas and for historic resources in Title 25 of the Seattle Municipal Code would continue to apply to future community center and library facilities.

Because they are buried under soils, most cultural sites and resources at risk from future development in Seattle are in unknown locations, though the presence of such resources is known to be more likely in certain areas, such as near-shore sites, given past activities of Indigenous peoples. The proposal is not likely to result in development outcomes that would significantly increase the potential for disturbance of cultural sites or resources. It would also not affect the strength of regulatory protection of those cultural sites or resources, if discovered, which is addressed by other State and local regulations, policies, and practices.

**Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:**

None proposed. The existing regulatory framework, i.e., the Land Use Code, the Shoreline Master Program, Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance, Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, and the City's SEPA ordinance would address impacts, if any, as part of the project-specific review of development proposals.

**5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?**

As a non-project action, the proposal would result in no direct impacts to land or shoreline use and is unlikely to result in significant indirect or cumulative impacts. The proposal would remove regulatory hurdles to the creation of community center and library uses in residential zones, where they are already allowed as a conditional use. The proposal would also define community farms as a type of institution use allowed outright in residential zones. By allowing these uses outright, the proposal would mean that the setback requirements of the residential zone would apply rather than additional setbacks that are required for institutions allowed only as conditional uses. The proposal would also allow small commercial uses accessory to a community center use in residential zones.

**Land use and development patterns**

Together, these changes would generally maintain the types of uses already allowed and present in residential zones. To the extent the proposal increase the number of community center or library facilities in residential zones, small changes in land use patterns could occur as areas that are currently predominantly or exclusively residential in nature incorporate institution uses that involve other activities, like classes or other programming. Adverse land use impacts could also occur due to the allowance for commercial uses accessory to a community center, as this would also introduce a greater variety of uses in areas that are presently predominantly or exclusively residential. These commercial uses could result in impacts in the form of added noise, increase pedestrian and vehicle trips, and other characteristics of commercial activity. (See question 7.b.2 for further discussion of potential noise impacts.) This impact would tend to be minor since the number of community centers likely to occur is relatively small, only a subset of those would be likely to include commercial space, and the commercial space is allowed only as an accessory use, which requires it to be incidental to the principal use on the property.

While the introduction of institution and accessory commercial uses could produce incrementally greater vehicle traffic in the immediate vicinity of the project, some of this impact would be at least partially offset by a reduction in vehicle trips that local residents otherwise would be likely to take to reach services and amenities these uses could fulfill.

Community farms that locate in residential zones because of this proposal would add further variety to the mix of uses in an area that may otherwise be predominantly or exclusively residential today. These are likely to be low-impact uses where the primary activities are growing and harvesting food, classes, events, food processing and preparation, and the sale of plants and food. This use could also result in an increase in pedestrian or vehicle trips in the immediate vicinity and impacts from additional noise due to outdoor activity. These impacts would be similar to those discussed above for community centers and accessory commercial uses.

### **Height, bulk, and scale**

No changes are proposed to development standards that affect overall height, bulk, and scale. Community center, library, and community farm uses allowed outright in residential zones under the proposal would be subject to the same maximum height, floor area, and lot coverage standards that apply today and that apply to other uses permitted outright (like housing). In Neighborhood Residential zones, these institutions would be subject to the setback requirements of the zone rather than additional setbacks required for institutions permitted as conditional uses. This change could affect where new structures associated with community center, library, or community farm uses are located on a site, and in some cases those structures could be closer to abutting properties or rights-of-way than currently allowed, but no closer than other uses allowed outright like housing. This change to setback requirements could result in minor adverse height, bulk, and scale impacts on neighboring properties since buildings could appear incrementally closer than under current regulations (though no overall change in the size of or amount of floor area in the building would be allowed under the proposal). Regulations for building height, floor area, and lot coverage would remain in effect and help to mitigate the potential for adverse bulk- or scale-related impacts.

### **Relationship to Comprehensive Plan policy**

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan includes policies that address "small institutions," which would apply to community centers, libraries, and community farms affected by the proposal. The Plan provides the following guidance:

**LU G2** Provide zoning and accompanying land use regulations that

- allow a variety of housing types to accommodate housing choices for households of all types and income levels;
- support a wide diversity of employment-generating activities to provide jobs for a diverse residential population, as well as a variety of services for residents and businesses; and
- accommodate the full range of public services, institutions, and amenities needed to support a racially and economically diverse, sustainable urban community.

The proposal would remove barriers to small institution uses that support equitable development projects. The City's Equitable Development Initiatives funds community-led projects that address the needs of low-income communities of color facing displacement pressure.

**LU 2.4** Limit nonresidential uses in residential zones to those necessary or highly compatible with the function of residential neighborhoods.

The proposal removes regulatory barriers to subset of institution uses that are already allowed as conditional uses. For community centers, these changes would apply only to those community centers that do not include shelter services as a way to increase compatibility with residential areas. It would allow community farms as a low-intensity institution use compatible with and similar to other institutions that support residential neighborhoods.

**LU 3.1** Regulate public facilities and small institutions to promote compatibility with other developments in the area.

This policy encourages small institutions that are compatible with the surrounding area. The proposal would modify how only a small subset of institutions are regulated by allowing them outright in residential zones rather than requiring a conditional use permit. This subset of institutions already existing in many residential areas and are generally compatible with their surroundings. The proposal would introduce commercial use, but only as a use accessory to a community center, which regulates it in such a way that it must be incidental to the principal use; this is consistent and compatible with the regulatory approach to home occupations, which are also allowed outright in residential zones.

**LU 3.2** Allow public facilities and small institutions to depart from development standards, if necessary to meet their particular functional requirements, while maintaining general design compatibility with the surrounding area's scale and character. Require public facilities and small institutions to adhere to zoned height limits, except for spires on religious institutions. Consider providing greater flexibility for schools in recognition of their important role in the community.

This policy suggests that efforts to help small institutions be successful are warranted. This is consistent with the intent of the proposal, which is to remove regulatory hurdles to the creation of community center, library, and community farm institutions. The proposal also promotes design compatibility by maintaining existing height, floor area, and lot coverage standards, which together ensure future development of these small institutions would have a scale and form consistent with other development allowed in the zone.

**LU 3.3** Allow standards to be modified for required off-street parking associated with public facilities and small institutions based on the expected use and characteristics of the facility and the likely impacts on surrounding parking and development conditions, and on existing and planned transportation facilities in the area.

As discussed further in question 6 below, the proposal would reduce the amount of off-street parking required for community centers to be more in line with the observed and expect needs for those facilities. This proposed change is consistent with the comprehensive plan policy above.

**LU 3.4** Avoid clusters of public facilities and small institutions in residential areas if such concentrations would create or further aggravate parking shortages, traffic congestion, and noise in the area.

The proposal would remove regulatory hurdles for small institutions in all residential areas. By applying this proposal citywide, the likelihood of clustering or concentration of small institutions in any single area may be lower compared to a change that affected only a smaller subarea. Changing community centers and libraries from a conditional use to a use permitted outright removes a dispersion requirement that would otherwise require new institution uses to be at least 600 feet from the lot line of any other institution in a residential zone. In a worst-case scenario, this change could allow small institutions located more closely to one another than under current regulations. To the extent new institutions allowed outright in residential zones following this proposal increase vehicle trips in their vicinity, some impacts on parking availability, traffic congestion, and noise could result, as discussed in more detail in earlier questions. Data on community center and library uses permitted since 2012 suggests that, in the context of the large amount of residentially zoned land in Seattle, relatively few such institutions are likely to occur even if allowed outright rather than through a conditional use process.

**LU 3.5** Allow nonconforming public facilities and small institutions to expand or make structural changes, provided these alterations comply with the zone's development standards and do not increase the structure's nonconformity.

The proposal would maintain all development standards for the zone in which any future small institutions are located.

**Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:**

The proposal would make community centers an allowed use (rather than a conditional use) only for community centers that do not include shelter services. A community center that includes a shelter would continue to require a conditional use permit. In recent years, some community centers have been permitted that included shelter services. This measure would avoid making a chance to how and where these types of developments are allowed and minimize potential land use impacts that could result from community center projects that include shelters.

City rules would continue to provide regulatory controls, and future community center, library, and community farm uses would be subject to code enforcement upon receiving complaints.

**6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?**

This proposal is a nonproject action that would affect the uses allowed on sites throughout Seattle. No direct impacts to or increases in demand for transportation, public services, or public utilities would occur because the proposal does not directly propose development.

**Transportation**

Over time, the proposal could result in additional small institutions located in residential zones than might otherwise occur under current regulations, which require community center and library uses to be permitted as conditional uses. The proposal would also reduce the amount of off-street parking required for new community centers. Together, these changes result in localized increases in demands on transportation systems, including greater usage of on-street parking and increased traffic congestion on streets in the vicinity of new facilities. These impacts would vary depending on the size of and activities occurring in new community center or library facilities and on the characteristics of local non-arterial street in the vicinity, such as street width and availability of on-street parking. In Neighborhood Residential zones, the availability of street parking varies substantially, with some areas experiencing relatively limited supply and high demand due to proximity to denser residential areas and/or traffic-generating amenities, and other areas where low-density residential development is the predominant use and street parking is abundant. Some small institutions would generate vehicle trips throughout the day rather than only at peak times, which could partially mitigate any increased demand on street parking or traffic congestion compared to new uses that generate trips only during morning and afternoon peak periods.

Potential future development of these small institutions is not likely to necessitate improvements to roads, streets, or pedestrian, bicycle, and state transportation facilities due to the relatively small size of most community center and library institutions. However, some community center and library uses allowed under this proposal could be larger in size, with more associated vehicle trips that may generate higher daily traffic volumes. It is possible, though unlikely, that certain street improvements like turning lanes, intersection controls, caution signs or lights, crosswalks, or loading zones could conceivably be determined necessary to serve future community center or library facilities.

**Public services and utilities**

The proposal is not likely to increase demands on public services and utilities beyond a minor degree. Small institutions would need to contract for waste disposal services. The likely level of demand for water, sewer, and energy services commensurate with potential future community



center and library facilities are accounted for in the City utilities' supply and demand models. These institutions have historically been developed at a relatively incremental rate and dispersed throughout the city. This trend is likely to continue, which allows service and utility providers to adjust planning and investment decisions as needed to accommodate any additional demand that may indirectly result from the proposal.

Depending on their size and activities, community farm uses could conceivably necessitate water service that exceeds the capacity of local pipe infrastructure. This would be identified during the permitting process on a project-by-project basis and would depend on highly localized characteristics of the development and pipe sizing and condition in the project vicinity. Proposed new facilities would be subject to review by the City, and local improvements could be required by Seattle Public Utilities.

Community center and library uses themselves provide public services that may not otherwise be available in the vicinity of potential future new institutions following this proposal. These facilities offer educational classes, civic events, community gathering space, and other programming that supports well-being and meets community needs. Community centers must be operated by a nonprofit and open to the public. Compared to a residential use, community centers and libraries may provide public services that partially offset any potential incremental increase in demand for public services generated by the project.

**Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:**

No increased demands are anticipated and so no measures are proposed.

**7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.**

It is believed that the proposal would not result in conflicts with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for protection of the environment.

**SIGNATURE:**

I, the undersigned, state that to the best of my knowledge the above information is true and complete. It is understood that the lead agency may withdraw any declaration of non-significance that it might issue in reliance upon this checklist should there be any willful misrepresentation or willful lack of full disclosure on my part.

Signature: 

Date submitted: March 17, 2023

Reviewed by: Nick Welch, Senior Planner, Office of Planning and Community Development