

# One Seattle Plan Zoning Update “Phase 2” Legislation

## Summary and Text

### Public Review Draft

This document contains a summary of the draft phase 2 legislation as well as the full text of the draft.

## SUMMARY

### **Overview**

The One Seattle Plan Zoning Update Phase 2 legislation would make the following changes to implement Seattle’s new Comprehensive Plan, the One Seattle Plan:

- implement zoning changes in Neighborhood Centers, in center expansions, and along frequent transit routes
- make various changes to development standards for Lowrise and Midrise zones
- create a consistent approach measuring FAR across zones

### **Background**

The City of Seattle has been working since 2022 to update our Comprehensive Plan. We are calling the updated plan the One Seattle Plan. The Plan is a roadmap for where and how Seattle will grow and invest in communities over the next 20 years, toward becoming a more equitable, livable, sustainable, and resilient city.

In March 2024, the City released a Draft One Seattle Plan, including a draft growth strategy. Following this release, the City conducted three months of public engagement, including eight open houses, and received more than 6,000 comments. In October 2024, the City released the Mayor Recommended Growth Strategy. This Growth Strategy will be transmitted to City Council in December 2024 for review and adoption as part of the Mayor’s Recommended One Seattle Plan.

The City is now working to implementing the Mayor's Recommended Growth Strategy through changes to zoning and development standards. This work will also ensure Seattle complies with the new state requirements. We are looking for feedback on a draft proposal for implementing both Phase 1 and Phase 2 changes through December 20, 2024. Revised Phase 1 legislation would then be transmitted to City Council in March of 2025. Revised Phase 2 legislation would be transmitted to City Council in May of 2025 and reviewed by City Council after Phase 1 legislation is passed.

### **Summary of Legislation**

The Phase 2 legislation would make the following changes to existing code:

- Implement rezones in Neighborhood Centers, in the expansion areas of existing centers, and along frequent transit routes (Rezoning in the expanded West Seattle Junction and the new Delridge Neighborhood Centers will be postponed to Phase 3 to due to the timing of light rail station area planning)
- Increase height from 40 feet to 50 feet and FAR limits from 1.8 to 2.3 for LR3 zones outside centers to match what is allowed within centers
- Increase height limit in MR2 zones from 80 to 85 feet to allow for ground-floor retail and better floor-to-ceiling heights, particularly on sloped lots.
- Update setbacks for MR zones as follows:
  - Reduce side setback to 5 feet minimum
  - Reduce rear setback to 10 feet in no alley and 0 feet with alley
  - Remove upper-level side setback above 42 feet
  - Remove upper-level front setback above 70 feet
- Remove structure width and depth requirement for MR zones
- Create a new MR1 zone with the following development standards
  - Height of 65 feet
  - FAR of 3.2
  - Setbacks similar to updated existing MR zone
- Create consistent standards for measurement of FAR across all zones (the main outcome of this change is that exterior stairs and corridors in NC zones would count toward FAR; however, these types of features are not common in those zones)
- Clarify where screening is required for surface parking in LR and MR zones

## TEXT

AN ORDINANCE relating to land use and zoning; amending Chapter 23.32 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) at pages XX, XX, XX and XX of the Official Land Use Map; amending Sections 23.30.010, 23.45.510, 23.45.514, 23.45.518, 23.45.530, 23.45.536, and 23.86.007; and repealing Sections 23.45.528, 23.45.586, 23.45.590 and 23.45.595 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

### Rezone Language

Section 1. The Official Land Use Map, Chapter 23.32 of the Seattle Municipal Code, is amended to rezone properties on pages XX, XX, XX... of the Official Land Use Map as follows:

A. Properties identified for rezones in Map X through X as shown on

Attachment 1 to this ordinance are rezoned as shown in those maps.

*[Note: The rezone maps will be added later. To review the proposed zoning, go to*

*[zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com](http://zoning.OneSeattlePlan.com)]*

B. Except for properties identified to be rezoned in Maps X through X as shown on Attachment 1 to this ordinance, all areas designated with a zone shown in Table A for Section 1 are rezoned as shown in Table A for Section 1.

<b>Table A for Section 1</b>	
<b>Standard Zoning Changes</b>	
<b>Existing Zoning</b>	<b>New Zoning</b>
MR (M)	MR2 (M)

<b>Table A for Section 1</b>	
<b>Standard Zoning Changes</b>	
<b>Existing Zoning</b>	<b>New Zoning</b>
MR (M1)	MR2 (M1)
MR (M2)	MR2 (M2)

2. Where the existing zoning includes a Major Institution Overlay, the underlying zoning shall be modified as stated in this subsection B and the Major Institution Overlay shall continue to apply.

3. The rezones in this subsection B shall not remove any existing suffixes other than height suffixes.

Section 2. Section 23.30.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126862, is amended as follows:

**23.30.010 Classifications for the purpose of this Subtitle III**

*Note: This section is being modified to add the new MR1 zone and change the name of the existing MR zone to MR2.*

A. General zoning designations. The zoning classification of land shall include one of the designations in this subsection 23.30.010.A. Only in the case of land designated "RC," the classification shall include both "RC" and one additional multifamily zone designation in this subsection 23.30.010.A.

Zones	Abbreviated
Residential, Neighborhood 1	NR1
Residential, Neighborhood 2	NR2

Zones	Abbreviated
Residential, Neighborhood 3	NR3
Residential, Multifamily, Lowrise 1	LR1
Residential, Multifamily, Lowrise 2	LR2
Residential, Multifamily, Lowrise 3	LR3
Residential, Multifamily, Midrise 1	MR1
<u>Residential, Multifamily, Midrise 2</u>	<u>MR2</u>
Residential, Multifamily, Highrise	HR
Residential-Commercial	RC
Neighborhood Commercial 1	NC1
Neighborhood Commercial 2	NC2
Neighborhood Commercial 3	NC3
Master Planned Community—Yesler Terrace	MPC-YT
Seattle Mixed—South Lake Union	SMU-SLU
Seattle Mixed—Dravus	SM-D
Seattle Mixed—North Rainier	SM-NR
Seattle Mixed - Rainier Beach	SM-RB
Seattle Mixed—University District	SM-U
Seattle Mixed—Uptown	SM-UP

Zones	Abbreviated
Seattle Mixed—Northgate	SM-NG
Commercial 1	C1
Commercial 2	C2
Downtown Office Core 1	DOC1
Downtown Office Core 2	DOC2
Downtown Retail Core	DRC
Downtown Mixed Commercial	DMC
Downtown Mixed Residential	DMR
Pioneer Square Mixed	PSM
International District Mixed	IDM
International District Residential	IDR
Downtown Harborfront 1	DH1
Downtown Harborfront 2	DH2
Pike Market Mixed	PMM
General Industrial 1	IG1
General Industrial 2	IG2
Industrial Buffer	IB
Industrial Commercial	IC
Maritime Manufacturing and Logistics	MML

Zones	Abbreviated
Industry and Innovation	II
Urban Industrial	UI

B. Suffixes—Height limits, letters, and mandatory housing affordability provisions. The zoning classifications for land subject to some of the designations in subsection 23.30.010.A include one or more numerical suffixes indicating height limit(s) or a range of height limits, or one or more letter suffixes indicating certain overlay districts or designations, or numerical suffixes enclosed in parentheses indicating the application of incentive zoning provisions, or letter suffixes and letter-with-numerical suffixes enclosed in parentheses indicating the application of mandatory housing affordability provisions, or any combination of these. Mandatory housing affordability suffixes include (M), (M1), and (M2). A letter suffix may be included only in accordance with provisions of this Title 23 expressly providing for the addition of the suffix. A zoning classification that includes a numerical or letter suffix or other combinations denotes a different zone than a zoning classification without any suffix or with additional, fewer, or different suffixes. Except where otherwise specifically stated in this Title 23 or where the context otherwise clearly requires, each reference in this Title 23 to any zoning designation in subsection 23.30.010.A without a suffix, or with fewer than the maximum possible number of suffixes, includes any zoning classifications created by the addition to that designation of one or more suffixes.

## Changes to 23.45 Multifamily

Section 4. Section 23.45.510 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127099, is amended as follows:

### 23.45.510 Floor area

*Note: This section is being updated to change FAR for LR3 zones outside urban centers and villages in order to support construction of apartments in these areas and to add standards for the new MR1 zone.*

A. ~~((Gross floor area. In multifamily zones, gross floor area includes exterior corridors, breezeways, and stairways that provide building circulation and access to dwelling units or sleeping rooms. Balconies, patios, and decks that are associated with a single dwelling unit or sleeping room and that are not used for common circulation, and ground-level walking paths, are not considered gross floor area.))~~ Gross floor area shall be measured in accordance with Section 23.86.007.

B. Floor area ratio (FAR) limits in LR and MR zones. FAR limits apply in LR and MR zones as shown in Table A for 23.45.510, provided that if the LR zone designation includes an incentive zoning suffix, then gross floor area may exceed the base FAR as identified in the suffix designation, up to the limits shown in Table A for 23.45.510, if the applicant complies with Chapter 23.58A, Incentive Provisions. The applicable FAR limit applies to the total chargeable floor area of all structures on the lot.

<b>Table A for 23.45.510 FAR limits in LR and MR zones</b>		
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Zones with an MHA suffix</b>	<b>Zones without an MHA suffix</b>
LR1	1.3	1.0
LR2	1.4 <sup>1</sup>	1.1
<del>((LR3 outside urban centers and urban villages</del>	1.8	1.2, except 1.3 for apartments))
<del>LR3 ((inside urban centers and urban villages))</del>	2.3	1.2, except 1.5 for apartments
<u>MR1</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>3.2</u>
<u>MR2</u>	4.5	3.2
Footnote to Table A for 23.45.510 <sup>1</sup> Except that the FAR is 1.6 for apartments that provide one or more outdoor		



<b>Table A for 23.45.510 FAR limits in LR and MR zones</b>		
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Zones with an MHA suffix</b>	<b>Zones without an MHA suffix</b>
amenity areas meeting the requirements of Section 23.45.522 and the following provisions are met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The total amount of outdoor amenity area is equal to at least 35 percent of the lot area;</li> <li>2. No part of such amenity area has a width or depth of less than 20 feet; and</li> <li>3. The outdoor amenity area is located at ground level or within 4 feet of finished grade.</li> </ol>		

\* \* \*

Section 5. Section 23.45.514 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126685, is amended as follows:

**23.45.514 Structure height**

*Note: This section is being updated to remove the lower height limit for LR3 outside of centers in order to encourage the building of apartments and to add a height limit for the new MR1 zone.*

A. Subject to the additions and exceptions allowed as set forth in this Section 23.45.514, the height limits for structures in LR zones are as shown on Table A for 23.45.514.

<b>Table A for 23.45.514 Structure height for LR zones (in feet)</b>				
<b>Housing type</b>	<b>LR1</b>	<b>LR2</b>	<b><del>((LR3 outside urban centers, urban villages, and Station Area Overlay Districts))</del></b>	<b>LR3 ((in urban centers, urban villages, and Station Area Overlay Districts))</b>
Cottage housing developments	22	22	<del>((22))</del>	22
Rowhouse and townhouse developments	30	40 <sup>1</sup>	<del>((40<sup>1</sup>))</del>	50 <sup>1</sup>
Apartments	30	40 <sup>1</sup>	<del>((40<sup>1</sup>))</del>	50 <sup>2</sup>
Footnotes for Table A for 23.45.514 <sup>1</sup> Except that the height limit is 30 feet in zones without a mandatory housing affordability suffix. <sup>2</sup> Except that the height limit is 40 feet in zones without a mandatory housing affordability suffix.				

B. The height limits for structures in MR and HR zones are as shown in Table B for 23.45.514, subject to the additions and exceptions allowed as set forth in this Section 23.45.514.

<b>Table B for 23.45.514 Structure height for MR and HR zones (in feet)</b>			
	<b><u>MR1</u></b>	<b><u>MR2</u></b>	<b>HR</b>
Height limit	<u>65</u>	<del>((80))</del> <u>85</u> <sup>1</sup>	440
Footnote to Table B for 23.45.514 <sup>1</sup> Except that the height limit is 60 feet in zones without a mandatory housing affordability suffix.			

\* \* \*

Section 6. Section 23.45.518 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126685, is amended as follows:

**23.45.518 Setbacks and separations**

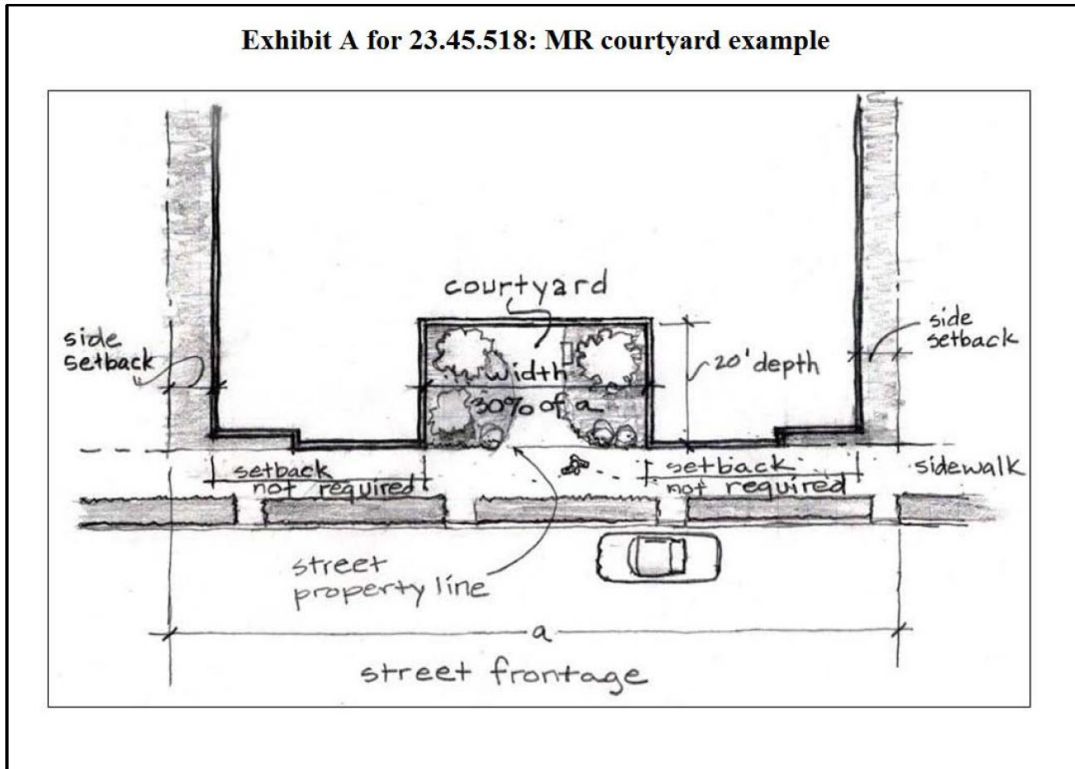
*Note: This section is being updating to modify setbacks for MR zones. The existing setbacks are very complex and almost every project in MR zones gets departures from the setbacks. The setbacks are also resulting in suboptimal open spaces.*

\* \* \*

B. MR zones. ~~((1-))~~ Minimum setbacks for the MR zone are shown in Table B for 23.45.518 ~~((and subsection 23.45.518.B.2)).~~

<b>Table B for 23.45.518 MR setbacks measured in feet</b>	
<b>Setback location</b>	<b>Required setback amount</b>
Front and side setback from street lot lines	7 average; 5 minimum No setback is required if a courtyard is provided that is at grade and abuts the street (see Exhibit A for 23.45.518), and the courtyard has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a minimum width equal to 30 percent of the width of the abutting street frontage or 20 feet, whichever is greater; and</li> <li>• a minimum depth of 20 feet measured from the abutting street lot line.</li> </ul>
Rear setback	<del>((15))</del> 10 from a rear lot line that does not abut an alley; or <del>((40))</del> 0 from a rear lot line abutting an alley.
Side setback from interior lot line	<del>((For portions of a structure:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42 feet or less in height: 7 average; 5 minimum</li> <li>• Above 42 feet in height: 10 average; 7 minimum))</li></ul></del> 5

**Exhibit A for 23.45.518  
MR courtyard example**



**((2. Upper-level setbacks in MR zones**

a. For lots abutting a street that is less than 56 feet in width, all portions of the structure above 70 feet in height must be set back 15 feet from the front lot line abutting that street.

b. Projections allowed in subsection 23.45.518.H are allowed in upper-level setbacks.

c. Structures allowed in subsection 23.45.518.I are not allowed in upper-level setbacks.

d. Rooftop features are not allowed in upper-level setback except as follows:

1) Open railings may extend up to 4 feet above the height at which the setback begins.

2) Parapets may extend up to 2 feet above the height at which the setback begins))

\* \* \*

Section 7. Section 23.45.528 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 127099, is repealed:

~~((23.45.528 Structure width and depth limits for lots greater than 9,000 square feet in Midrise zones))~~

*Note: This section is being repealed to remove the structure width and depth requirement for MR zones. The structure width requirement adds substantial cost to buildings by requiring them to be split up into multiple structures with redundant stairs and elevators while having minimum public benefit. The structure depth requirement is redundant with setback requirements and often results in very large rear yards even for projects that take access off an alley.*

~~((The width and depth limits of this Section 23.45.528 apply to lots greater than 9,000 square feet in MR zones.~~

~~A. The width of each principal structure shall not exceed 150 feet.~~

~~B. Structure depth~~

~~1. The depth of each principal structure shall not exceed 80 percent of the depth of the lot, except as provided in subsection 23.45.528.B.2.~~

~~2. Exceptions to structure depth limit. To allow for front setback averaging and courtyards as provided in Section 23.45.518, structure depth may exceed the limit set in subsection 23.45.528.B.1 if the total lot coverage resulting from the increased structure depth does not exceed the lot coverage that would have otherwise been allowed without use of the courtyard or front setback averaging provisions.))~~

Section 8. Section 23.45.530 of the Seattle Municipal Code, enacted by Ordinance 125791, is amended as follows:

### 23.45.530 Green building standards

*Note: This section is being updated to recognize proposed changes to LR3 zones and to add the new MR1 zones.*

For projects exceeding the floor area ratio (FAR) in Table A for 23.45.530, the applicant shall make a commitment that the proposed development will meet the green building standard and shall demonstrate compliance with that commitment, all in accordance with Chapter 23.58D.

<b>Table A for 23.45.530 Green building standard thresholds for multifamily zones</b>	
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>
LR1	1.1
LR2	1.2
<del>((LR3 outside urban centers and urban villages</del>	<del>1.6))</del>
<del>LR3 ((inside urban centers and urban villages))</del>	1.8
<u>MR1</u>	<u>2.3</u>
MR2	3.45
HR	7.0

Section 9. Section 23.45.536 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126682, is amended as follows:

## 23.45.536 Parking location, access, and screening

*Note: This section would be updated to clarify existing standards for screening of parking and to increase garage setback to avoid vehicles parking in driveways and blocking sidewalks.*

\* \* \*

### D. Screening of parking

1. Parking located within 40 feet of a street lot line shall be screened from direct street view by:

a. ~~((The street-facing facade of a))~~ A structure;

b. Garage doors;

c. A fence or wall; or

d. Landscaped areas, including bioretention facilities or landscaped berms (See Exhibit A for 23.45.536).

2. Screening is not required for parking spaces where the direct street view is through a driveway.

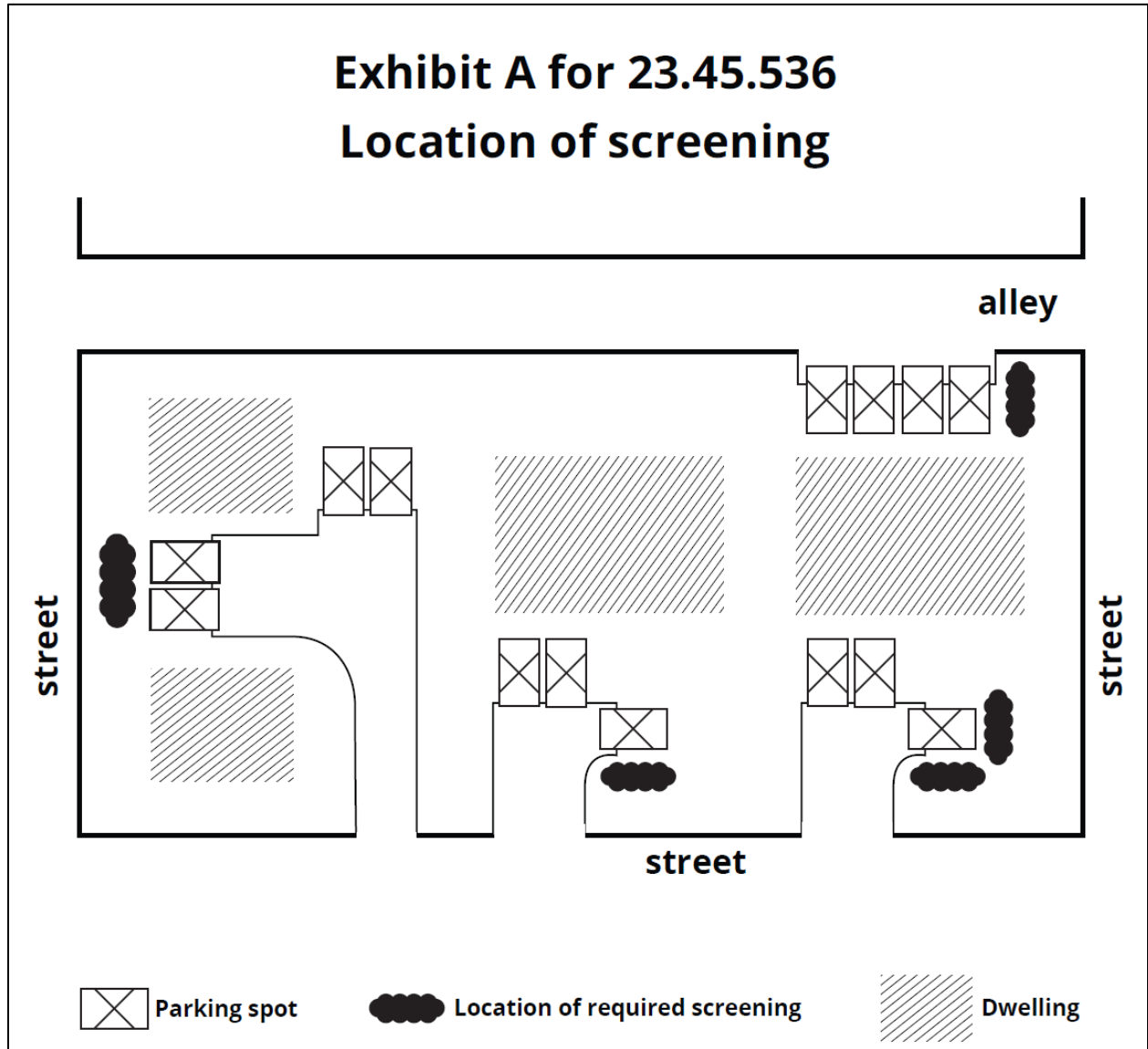
3. Screening provided by a fence, wall, or vegetation in a landscaped area shall not be located within any required sight triangle and shall meet the following conditions:

a. The fence, wall, or vegetation in the landscaped area shall be at least 3 feet tall measured from the elevation of the curb, or from the elevation of the street if no curb is present. If the elevation of the ground at the base of the fence, wall, or landscaped area is higher than the finished elevation of the parking surface, the difference in elevation may be measured as a portion of the required height of the screen, so long as the fence, wall, or vegetation in the landscaped area is at least 3 feet in height. If located in a setback, the fence or wall shall meet the requirements of subsection 23.45.518.1.7.

b. The fence, wall, or vegetation in the landscaped area shall be set back at least 3 feet from the lot line.

**Exhibit A for 23.45.536**

**Location of screening**



~~((3. Screening by garage doors))~~ E. Garage door size in LR zones. If parking is provided in a garage in or attached to a principal structure and garage door(s) face a street, the garage door(s) may be no more than 75 square feet in area.

~~((E. Other provisions))~~ F. Garage door setbacks. Garage doors in LR zones and MR zones facing the street shall be set back at least 18 feet from the street lot



line(~~, and shall be no closer to the street lot line than the street-facing facade of the structure~~)).

Section 10. Section 23.45.586 of the Seattle Municipal Code, enacted by Ordinance 123209, is repealed:

~~((23.45.586 Keeping of animals~~

~~The keeping of animals is regulated by Section 23.42.052, Keeping of Animals.))~~

Section 11. Section 23.45.590 of the Seattle Municipal Code, enacted by Ordinance 123209, is repealed:

~~((23.45.590 Home occupations~~

~~Home occupations are regulated by Section 23.42.050, Home Occupations.))~~

Section 12. Section 23.45.595 of the Seattle Municipal Code, enacted by Ordinance 123729, is repealed:

~~((23.45.595 Transitional encampments accessory use~~

~~Transitional encampments accessory to religious facilities or to principal uses located on property owned or controlled by a religious organization are regulated by Section 23.42.054, Transitional Encampments Accessory to Religious Facilities.))~~

## Measurements

Section 13. Section 23.86.007 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126855, is amended as follows:

## 23.86.007 Floor area and floor area ratio (FAR) measurement

*Note: This section is being updated to create consistent definitions for FAR measurement and to reflect new zone names.*

A. Gross floor area. Except where otherwise expressly provided in this Title 23, gross floor area shall be as defined in Chapter 23.84A and as measured in this Section 23.86.007. The following are included in the measurement of gross floor area in all zones:

1. Floor area contained in stories above and below grade;
  2. The area of stair penthouses, elevator penthouses, and other enclosed rooftop features;
  3. The area of motor vehicle and bicycle parking that is enclosed;
- ~~((and))~~
4. The area of motor vehicle parking that is covered by a structure or portion of a structure containing enclosed floor area, excluding motor vehicle parking in neighborhood residential and multifamily zones that is only covered by one of the following:
    - a. Projections containing enclosed floor area of up to 4 feet; or
    - b. Projections containing enclosed floor area of up to 6 feet for the area of parking accessed from an alley and located directly adjacent to an alley~~((-))~~ ; and
  5. Exterior corridors and stairways that provide building circulation and access to multiple dwelling units or sleeping rooms.

B. Net unit area. Where development standards refer to net unit area, net unit area shall be square feet of total floor area bounded by the inside surface of the perimeter walls of the unit, as measured at the floor line. Net unit area excludes spaces shared by multiple units and accessible to all building occupants such as common hallways or lobbies. Net unit area includes any walls internal to the unit.

C. Underground floor area. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Title 23, if gross floor area in stories, or portions of stories, that are underground is exempted from a calculation, the amount of underground gross floor area exempted is measured as follows:

1. A story or portion of a story is considered underground if the ceiling above, or the roof surface if there is no next floor above, is at or below the abutting existing or finished grade, whichever is lower (See Exhibit A for 23.86.007).

2. To determine the amount of gross floor area that is underground:

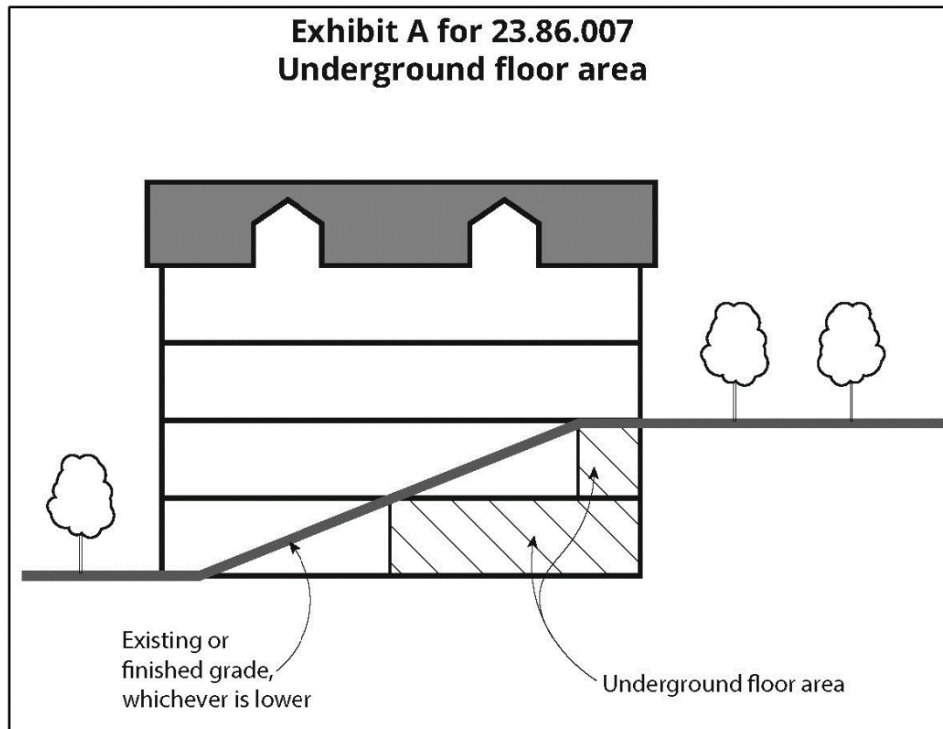
a. Determine the elevation of the ceiling of the underground story, or the roof surface if there is no next floor above the underground story;

b. Determine the points along the exterior wall of the story where the ceiling elevation or roof surface elevation above intersects the abutting corresponding existing or finished grade elevation, whichever is lower;

c. Draw a straight line across the story connecting the two points on the exterior walls;

d. The gross floor area in stories, or portions of stories, that are underground is the area that is at or below the straight line drawn in subsection 23.86.007.C.2.c.

**Exhibit A for 23.86.007  
Underground floor area**

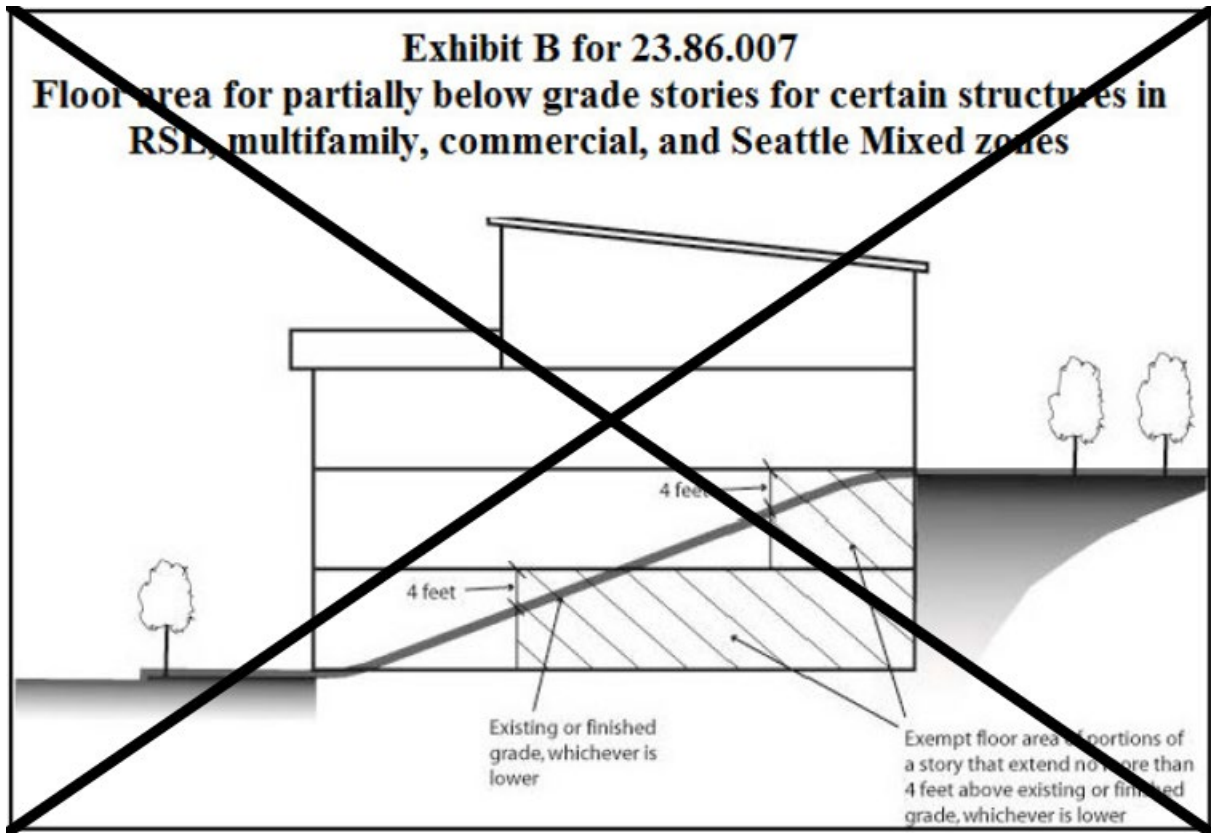


D. Pursuant to subsections ((~~23.44.011.C, 23.44.018.A~~) 23.44.010.C, 23.45.510.D, and 23.47A.013.B, and Section 23.48.020, for certain structures in ((~~neighborhood residential~~) Neighborhood Residential, multifamily, commercial, and Seattle Mixed zones, portions of a story that extend no more than 4 feet above existing or finished grade, whichever is lower, are exempt from calculation of gross floor area. The exempt gross floor area of such partially below-grade stories is measured as follows:

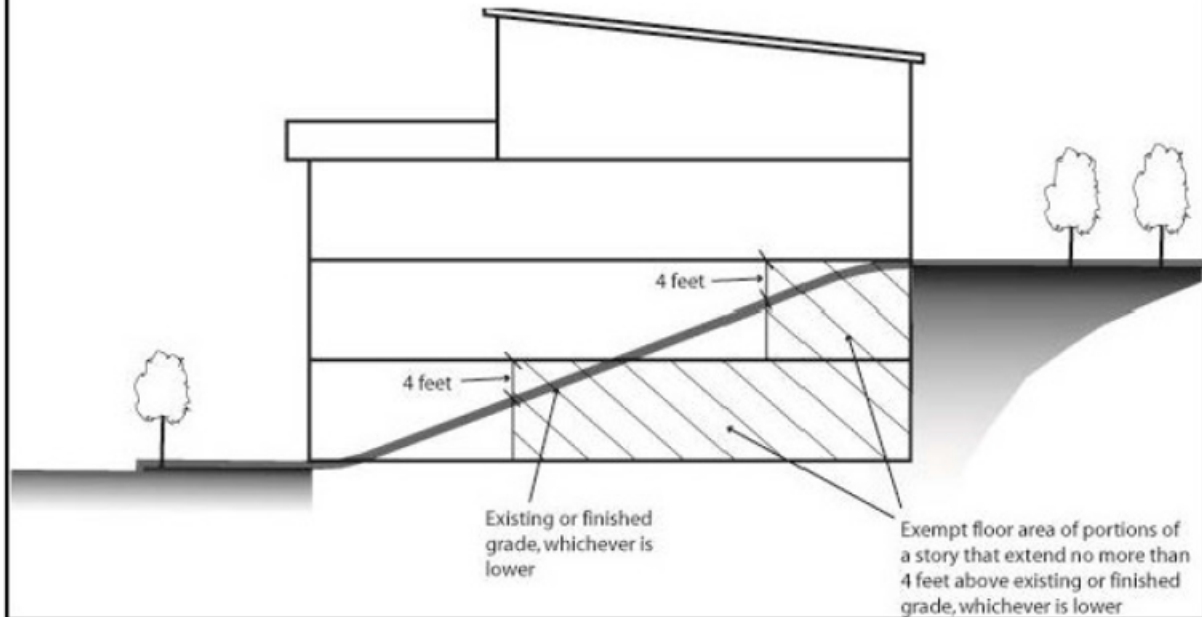
1. Determine the elevation 4 feet below the ceiling of the partially below-grade story, or 4 feet below the roof surface if there is no next floor above the partially below-grade story;
2. Determine the points along the exterior wall of the story where the elevation determined in subsection 23.86.007.D.1 intersects the abutting corresponding existing or finished grade elevation, whichever is lower;
3. Draw a straight line across the story connecting the two points on the exterior walls; and

4. The gross floor area of the partially below-grade story or portion of a partially below-grade story is the area of the story that is at or below the straight line drawn in subsection 23.86.007.D.3, excluding openings required by the Building Code for egress. (See Exhibit B for 23.86.007.)

**Exhibit B for 23.86.007**  
**Floor area for partially below grade stories for certain structures in ((RSL))**  
**Neighborhood Residential, multifamily, commercial, and Seattle Mixed**  
**zones**



**Exhibit B for 23.86.007**  
**Floor area for partially below grade stores for certian structures in**  
**Neighborhood Residential, multifamily, commercial and Seattle Mixed**  
**Zones**



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