

Amendment to Council Bill (CB) 117430

Green

Sponsor: Godden

Reduce proposed State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review thresholds for residential uses from 200 dwelling units (250 dwelling units for projects downtown) but still increase the thresholds by doubling current dwelling unit thresholds.

The Mayor’s proposal would raise SEPA environmental review thresholds for residential and mixed-use development projects in Urban Centers and Urban Villages with Station Area Overlay Districts from 30 dwelling units, for most zones, to 200 dwelling units for most zones. This is an approximately 545% increase in thresholds for environmental review. Downtown zones would have a 250 dwelling unit threshold.

This amendment would reduce the proposed increase to 12 units for the least intense multifamily zone, 60 units for most other zones, and 160 units for downtown zones. The proposed amendment would still increase current SEPA thresholds by doubling them.

Proposed Amendment Language

The proposed amendment to Table A in Section 21 of CB 117430 is shown below.

Table A for 25.05.800: Exemptions for Residential Uses			
Zone	Residential Uses		
	Number of Exempt Dwelling Units		
	<u>Outside of Urban Centers and Urban Villages Containing SAODs</u>	<u>Within Urban Centers or Urban Villages Containing SAODs</u>	<u>Within Urban Centers or Urban Villages Containing SAODs if Growth Targets Have Been Exceeded</u>
SF, RSL	4	4	4
LR1	4	((6)) 20012 ⁽¹⁾	2012
LR2	6	((30)) 20060 ⁽¹⁾	20
LR3	8	((30)) 20060 ⁽¹⁾	20
NC1, NC2, NC3, C1, C2	4	((30)) 20060 ⁽¹⁾	20
MR, HR, SM	20	((30)) 20060 ⁽¹⁾	20
Downtown zones	NA	((80)) 250160 ⁽¹⁾	20
Industrial zones	4	4	4

Notes for Table A for 25.05.800
 SAOD = Station Area Overlay District((s)).
 Urban centers and urban villages are identified in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.
 (1) Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.229, new residential development or the residential portion of new mixed-use development located in an urban center or in an urban village that contains a SAOD is categorically exempt from SEPA, unless the Department has determined that residential growth within the urban center or urban village has exceeded exemption limits for the center or village that the Department has established pursuant to subsection 25.05.800A.1.i.

The amendment would require a corresponding amendment to Table A in the new proposed Transportation Impact Mitigation program, which would be established by Section 13 of CB 117430. That corresponding amendment is shown below.

Table A for 23.52.008 Development Location and Size Ranges Where the Requirements of Section 23.52.008 Apply		
Applicable Zones, When Located Within an Urban Center or Urban Villages Containing a Station Area Overlay District	Applicable Size Ranges	
	Number of Dwelling Units	Amount of Non-Residential Space (square feet), When Located in a Mixed-Use Development ¹
LR1	7 to 200 <u>12</u>	4,001 to 30,000
LR2, LR3, NC1, NC2, NC3, C1, C2, MR, HR, SM	31 to 200 <u>60</u>	12,001 to 30,000
Downtown Zones	81 to 250 <u>160</u>	12,001 to 30,000

Footnote to Table A for 23.52.008

¹ This size range applies to a development that contains at least one dwelling unit.

Discussion

Based on Central Staff review of projects which received SEPA decisions between 2005 and 2010, if the thresholds proposed by this amendment were in place during that time period, about 50% of the total projects would have exceeded the residential threshold and been subject to SEPA review. The remaining 50% would have been categorically exempt from SEPA review. See the chart below.

Doubling existing SEPA thresholds – a 100% increase – will provide significant regulatory relief for many developers while retaining the protection of SEPA review for larger projects.

