



Legislative Department Seattle City Council Memorandum

Date: May 30, 2014
To: Planning, Land Use, and Sustainability (PLUS) Committee
From: Sara Belz, Council Central Staff
Subject: **Council Bill (CB) 118067 – Micro-Housing and Congregate Residence Regulations**

On June 3, 2014, the PLUS Committee will continue its review of CB 118067. The PLUS Committee received an initial briefing on the legislation at its April 18 meeting and held an associated public hearing on May 19. CB 118067 would make the following changes to the Land Use Code:

- Establish definitions for “micro-housing unit” and “micro” (the individually rented sleeping rooms with en suite private bathrooms located in a “micro-housing unit” would classify as a “micro”);
- Prohibit micro-housing development in single-family zones;
- Apply Design Review thresholds for micro-housing and congregate residences that are triggered by a project’s size (square feet of gross floor area) rather than the number of dwelling units it contains;
- Establish minimum size requirements for shared kitchens and common areas in micro-housing and congregate residence projects;
- Limit the kitchen components that can be installed in micro-housing and congregate residence sleeping rooms in order to more clearly differentiate them from dwelling units;
- Provide the Director of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) with the discretion to determine the amount of solid waste storage space required for micro-housing and congregate residence developments on a project-by-project basis;
- Establish new vehicle and bicycle parking requirements for micro-housing and congregate residence projects;
- Deepen the affordability levels required for very small studio apartments located in multifamily buildings and for sleeping rooms in micro-housing and congregate residence projects that participate in the City’s incentive zoning program; and

- Apply green factor landscaping requirements to micro-housing and congregate residence projects.

Identified Issues

After reviewing CB 118067 and comments and testimony submitted by the public, some members of the PLUS Committee have expressed interest in convening a stakeholder group that could provide input and advice on how micro-housing and congregate residences should be regulated and developed in Seattle. Below is a list of issues that have been raised in response to CB 118067 and could be presented to stakeholder group members for their consideration and feedback.

Development Standards

1. Design and layout of micro-housing units

Should the micro-housing units developed in Seattle continue to take the form of up to eight sleeping rooms surrounding a common kitchen, as proposed in CB 118067, or should other layout options be considered?

2. Development standards for congregate residences

Should congregate residence projects not associated with a major institution (e.g., a college dorm) or a special needs housing provider be regulated differently than those that are?

3. Minimum size requirements for sleeping rooms

CB 118067 would not establish a minimum size requirement for sleeping rooms in micro-housing and congregate residence projects. Is such a requirement needed? If so, what size options should the PLUS Committee consider?

4. Common area requirements

CB 118067 would require common kitchen areas in micro-housing projects to measure at least 120 square feet in area. In congregate residences, at least one on-site common kitchen would be required and the total amount of communal area provided, including the common kitchen space, would have to be equivalent in size to at least 10 percent of the total floor area of all the sleeping rooms in the project. Should alternative measures or features of common areas be considered?

5. Required kitchen components

Which kitchen components should be located in micro-housing and/or congregate residence sleeping rooms and which should be relegated to common areas?

6. Sink placement requirements

How should the City regulate the number and location of sinks installed in sleeping rooms and en suite private bathrooms in micro-housing and/or congregate residence projects?

7. Required storage space for solid waste containers

CB 118067 would provide the DPD Director with the discretion to determine the amount of solid waste storage space required for micro-housing and congregate residence developments on a project-by-project basis. Should specific square footage requirements based on the floor area or sleeping room count of such projects be established instead?

Design Review

8. Design Review thresholds

Under CB 118067, the following Design Review thresholds would apply to all micro-housing and congregate residence projects constructed in Seattle, regardless of zone:

Streamlined Design Review (SDR): Projects containing 6,000 to 11,999 square feet of gross floor area.

Administrative Design Review (ADR): Projects containing 12,000 to 19,999 square feet of gross floor area.

Full Design Review: Projects containing 20,000 or more square feet of gross floor area.

Should other threshold options be considered as well? If so, what should those options be?

Locational Requirements

9. Construction of micro-housing and/or congregate residences outside of Urban Centers and Urban Villages

Should the construction of micro-housing and/or congregate residences continue to be permitted outside of Urban Centers and Urban Villages?

10. Construction of micro-housing and/or congregate residences in Lowrise 1 and Lowrise 2 zones

Should the construction of micro-housing and/or congregate residences continue to be permitted in Lowrise 1 and Lowrise 2 zones?

Parking Requirements

11. Vehicle parking requirements

For micro-housing and congregate residence projects built outside of Urban Centers, Station Area Overlay Districts, and frequent transit service areas within Urban Villages, CB 118067 would require one parking space to be provided for every four sleeping rooms. Inside those areas, no residential parking requirements would apply per existing City policy. Should alternative parking policies be considered?

12. Bicycle parking requirements

CB 118067 would require future micro-housing and congregate residence projects to provide a minimum of one bicycle parking space for every four sleeping rooms. For all other multifamily residential structures, one bicycle parking space is required for every four

dwelling units. Given that residents of micro-housing and congregate residence projects are understood to commute by bicycle at a higher rate than the City's overall population (DPD analysis) and have limited storage space within their private sleeping rooms, should the provision of additional bicycle parking be required?

If a stakeholder group is convened to advise the PLUS Committee on micro-housing and congregate residence regulations, the individuals selected to participate could include developers, representatives from multiple neighborhood organizations, and residents of micro-housing and congregate residence projects, design professionals, and City staff. The stakeholder group could gather at scheduled meetings to be held over the next few weeks and be tasked with providing information and recommendations that could help guide the PLUS Committee's future deliberations on CB 118067.

Next Steps

Should the PLUS Committee assemble a micro-housing and congregate residence stakeholder group, the Committee's next discussion on CB 118067 will occur once the deliberations of that group are complete. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the legislation or the content of this memorandum, please feel free to contact me at any time (sara.belz@seattle.gov or 4.5382).