



# Regulatory Reform – How It Affects You

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## Overview

On July 23, 2012, the Seattle City Council adopted Mayor McGinn's regulatory reform package. The new legislation makes it easier to grow a business and to provide new housing with more design flexibility. The reforms will help improve and secure Seattle's quality of life, and help Seattle grow in ways consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's "urban village" principles.

## State Environmental Policy (SEPA) Changes

- In urban centers, and urban villages that contain light rail station areas, SEPA review thresholds will be raised to 200 dwelling units for residential and mixed-use development and 250 units in Downtown. This encourages building in designated growth centers where transportation is most available.
- Raises the threshold for non-residential uses in mixed-use development to 30,000 square feet.
- Other processes such as design review will continue to occur for many developments to encourage quality design.

## Parking Requirements

- Extends the no-minimum parking requirements to non-residential uses in urban villages where frequent transit service is available within ¼ mile.
- There are no minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses, except hospitals, in urban centers, and urban villages that have frequent transit service.
- Reduces minimum parking requirements up to 50 percent for development on properties outside of urban centers and villages where there is frequent transit service within ¼ mile.

## Commercial Uses

- Allows greater flexibility to include residential uses in street-levels of buildings in commercial zones along arterials.
- Retains emphasis on street-level commercial uses in "pedestrian" zoned areas, and in 60 other commercial districts.
- Promotes design flexibility that encourages new residential development in several areas.

## Home Occupation, Accessory Dwelling Unit, Temporary Use Permit

- Encourages home entrepreneurship with refined rules on home-based businesses to allow more opportunities to advertise, have an additional employee, and use any legal building on the property. Maintains a strong emphasis on preventing impacts to neighborhood residents.
- Clarifies and streamlines rules to encourage additional dwelling units within existing residences, as backyard cottages, and on properties that are "through lots" with streets on two opposite sides.
- Simplifies permit renewals for temporary use permits up to six months, as long as they are not impacting their neighbors.

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**Table A for 25.05.800: SEPA Exemptions for Residential Uses**

Zones	Residential Uses		
	Number of Exempt Dwelling Units		
	Outside of Urban Centers, and Outside of Urban Villages Containing SAODs	Within Urban Centers, or Urban Villages Containing SAODs	Within Urban Centers, or Urban Villages Containing SAODs if Growth Targets Have Been Exceeded
SF, RSL	4	4	4
LR1	4	200 <sup>(1)</sup>	20
LR2	6	200 <sup>(1)</sup>	20
LR3	8	200 <sup>(1)</sup>	20
NC1, NC2, NC3, C1, C2	4	200 <sup>(1)</sup>	20
MR, HR, SM	20	200 <sup>(1)</sup>	20
Downtown zones	NA	250 <sup>(1)</sup>	20
Industrial zones	4	4	4

SAOD = Station Area Overlay District. Urban centers and urban villages are identified in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. <sup>(1)</sup> The higher thresholds apply to identified areas that have not reached growth targets specified in the Comprehensive Plan.

**Table B for 25.05.800: SEPA Exemptions for Non-Residential Uses**

Zones	Non-Residential Uses		
	Exempt Area of Use (square feet of gross floor area)		
	Outside of Urban Centers and Urban Villages Containing SAODs	Within Urban Centers, or Urban Villages Containing SAODs	Within Urban Centers, or Urban Villages Containing SAODs if Growth Targets Have Been Exceeded
SF, RSL, LR1	4,000	4,000	4,000
LR2, LR3	4,000	12,000 <sup>(1)</sup> or 30,000	12,000
MR, HR, NC1, NC2, NC3	4,000	12,000 <sup>(1)</sup> or 30,000	12,000
C1, C2, SM zones	12,000	12,000 <sup>(1)</sup> or 30,000	12,000
Industrial zones	12,000	12,000	12,000
Downtown zones	Not Applicable	12,000 <sup>(1)</sup> or 30,000	12,000

<sup>(1)</sup> If a mixed-use development is in an eligible growth area, the SEPA threshold for commercial uses is 30,000. If it is single-use commercial development in these growth areas, there is a 12,000 square foot threshold.