



Planning Commission Agenda

March 3, 2026
5:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

The Planning Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The Commission primarily considers plans and regulations relating to the physical development of the city, plus other matters as assigned. The Commission is an advisory body to the City Council.

Members: Alyne Hansen (Chair), Bandhanjit Singh (Vice Chair), Andrew Barker, Damiana Merryweather, Dee Abasute, Karin Ellis, Tony Zuniga Sanchez.

Staff Coordinator: Kaelene Nobis, Interim Planning Manager

A quorum of the Council may be present.

ITEM	TOPIC	PROCESS	WHO	TIME
1	Call to Order / Roll Call		Chair	5:30 (2 min)
2	Approval of the minutes of February 17, 2026, meeting.	Review and Approve	Members	5:32 (3 min)
3	Public Comment on items <u>not</u> on the agenda. <i>Comments on agenda items occur after the staff presentation and Commission discussion on each item below.</i> <i>See Public Comment Process below.</i>		Chair	5:35 (5 min)
4	House Bill 1757 Introduction	Information Only	Kaelene Nobis	5:40 (30 min)
5	CED Staff Report	Briefing	Staff	6:10 (3 min)
6	Planning Commission Comments (including suggestions for next meeting agenda)	Discussion	Members	6:13 (2 min)
7	Adjourn			6:15

This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format with in-person and remote options for public participation. The meeting will be broadcast on SeaTV Government Access Comcast Channel 21 and live-streamed on the City's website <https://www.seatacwa.gov/seatvlive>.

Public Comment Process: The commission will hear in-person public comments and is also providing remote oral and written public comment opportunities. All comments shall be respectful in tone and content. Providing written comments and registering for oral comments must be done by 3:30 pm, the day of the meeting. Registration is required for remote comments and encouraged for in-person comments. Any requests to speak or provide written public comments which are not submitted following the instructions provided or by the deadline will not be included as part of the record.

- Instructions for providing remote oral public comments are located at the following link: [Council Committee and Citizen Advisory Committee Virtual Meetings](#).
- Submit email/text public comments to PCPublicComment@seatacwa.gov. The comment will be mentioned by name and subject and then placed in the committee handout packet posted to the website.

CITY OF SEATAC
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of February 17, 2026, Meeting

Members present: *Commissioner Andrew Barker, Vice Chair Bandhanjit Singh, Commissioner Damiana Merryweather, Commissioner Karin Ellis*

Members absent: *Chair Alyne Hansen, Commissioner Dee Abasute, Commissioner Tony Zuniga Sanchez*

Staff & Others Present: *Planning Manager (PM) Jenn Kester, Senior Planner (SP) Laura Stilwell, Admin Asst 3 (AA3) Barb Mailo, City Assistant Attorney (AA) Ha Dao*

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

- (5:32 pm) *Vice Chair Singh* called the meeting to order and roll call.

2. Approval of February 3, 2026, meeting minutes.

(Review and approve)

- (5:36 pm) *Commissioner Merryweather* motioned to approve the meeting minutes.
- (5:36 pm) Second by *Commissioner Ellis*.

Motion passed: 4-0

3. Public Comment on items not on the agenda.

None

4. Industrial and RBX Code Amendments

Public Hearing

Public Hearing Order:

1. Public Hearing Opened:

- (5:37 pm) *Vice Chair Singh* opened the Public Hearing.

2. Staff Presentation: Industrial and RBX Code Amendments

- Presented by *(SP) Stilwell*
- Discussion commenced with *Commissioner Barker, Commissioner Sanchez, and (PM) Kester*

3. Public Comment:

- In-person public comment by Dave Kaplan, Port of Seattle
- Discussion commenced with *(SP) Stilwell, (PM) Kester, and Dave Kaplan*

4. Planning Commissioner Questions

- No comments or questions

5. Public Hearing Closed:

- (6:04 pm) *Vice Chair Singh* closed the Public Hearing.

6. Direction to Staff or Recommendation:

- *Commissioner Merryweather* motioned to recommend this to the City Council. Second by *Commissioner Ellis*.

Motion passed: 4-0

5. CED Staff Report
(Briefing)

- **(PM) Kester** to reach out to Commissioners to confirm PC meeting attendance for March

6. Planning Commission Comments (including suggestions for next meeting agenda)
(Discussion)

None

7. Adjournment

- (6:07 pm) *Commissioner Merryweather* motioned to adjourn the meeting.
- (6:07 pm) Second by *Commissioner Ellis*.

Motion passed: 4-0

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm.

DRAFT



MEMORANDUM COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: 3/3/2026
To: Planning Commission (PC)
From: Kaelene Nobis, Interim Planning Manager
Subject: Proposed Amendments to Residential Conversions of Commercial Space

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present draft amendments to SeaTac Municipal Code by adding a new Section 15.465.700, Conversion or Addition of Dwelling Units in Existing Buildings. These amendments are intended to implement the requirements of House Bill 1757 and ensure compliance with state law, specifically HB 1757 and RCW 35A.21.440.

The proposed code establishes a clear and streamlined local framework to allow additional dwelling units within existing buildings while maintaining health, safety, and life safety standards.

Background

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature adopted a law requiring cities to allow conversion of existing commercial buildings to residential uses. During the 2025 legislative session, HB 1757 amended that law to further reduce regulatory barriers and expand its applicability.

According to bill testimony, the intent of HB 1757 is to make commercial to residential building conversions more cost-effective and easier to implement. The bill makes several key changes:

- Extends conversion allowances to residential zones in addition to commercial and mixed-use zones.
- Prohibits cities from requiring a change of use permit for qualifying conversions.
- Clarifies limitations on application of the State Energy Code to unchanged portions of buildings.
- Establishes a firm compliance deadline of June 30, 2026.

The Legislature's direction reflects a broader statewide housing strategy focused on increasing housing supply by facilitating reuse of existing buildings rather than relying solely on new construction.

Proposed Code Amendments Summary

The draft code has been structured to directly mirror and implement state requirements. A compliance matrix has been prepared and included in the packet materials.

Applicability and Density

The draft code applies in commercial, mixed-use, and residential zones that permit multifamily housing.

- Additional dwelling units may be added within existing buildings up to 50 percent more than what is otherwise allowed in the underlying zone.
- An "existing building" is defined as one that received a certificate of occupancy at least three years prior to the permit application.
- This language directly tracks state law requirements.

Building Envelope and Physical Limitations

To ensure conversions remain within the scope intended by the Legislature:

- New dwelling units must be constructed entirely within the existing building envelope.
- Modifications to meet energy, building, fire, or life safety code standards are permitted.
- The overall building volume and exterior wall locations may not change.
- This ensures that the provision facilitates adaptive reuse rather than functioning as a pathway for new building expansion.

Ground Floor Commercial Protections

The draft code maintains protection for pedestrian-oriented commercial areas:

- Existing ground floor commercial or retail spaces abutting a designated major pedestrian corridor may not be converted to dwelling units.
- This balances housing flexibility with preservation of active commercial frontage.

Parking

Consistent with state law:

- No additional parking is required for dwelling units added under this section.
- Existing required residential parking and required parking for remaining nonresidential uses must be retained.
- This provision removes a common barrier to adaptive reuse projects.

Energy Code

HB 1757 includes detailed direction regarding application of the State Energy Code:

- Only changed portions of new dwelling units must meet current energy code requirements.
- Unchanged portions of the building are not required to comply solely due to the addition of dwelling units.
- Energy code compliance is not required if:
 - The new units total no more than 2,500 square feet or 50 percent of the building square footage, whichever is greater;
 - The building owner demonstrates compliance with the Clean Buildings Performance Standard; or
 - The additional unit is created within an existing home in a residential zone.
- The draft code incorporates each of these statutory exemptions.

Exemptions from Design, Concurrency, and SEPA

To reduce regulatory barriers:

- Projects are exempt from dimensional and design standards except where necessary for health and safety or for designated historic properties.
- No transportation concurrency study is required.
- No environmental review under SEPA is required for qualifying projects.

Permitting and Change of Use

A significant change under HB 1757 is that:

- Cities may not require a change of use permit for qualifying conversions.
- No additional land use permits beyond those generally applicable to residential development may be required.
- Building permits remain required to ensure compliance with building, fire, and life safety standards.
- Staff notes that while this provision limits discretionary land use review, life safety review through the building permit process remains fully intact.

Nonconformities

The draft code reflects that:

- A building permit application may not be denied due to existing nonconformities related to parking, height, setbacks, elevator size, or modulation.
- Denial is only permitted if written findings demonstrate that nonconformity causes a significant detriment to the surrounding area.
- This provision is intended to prevent legacy nonconformities from blocking housing creation.

Key Policy Questions for Planning Commission

Staff is seeking Planning Commission feedback on the proposed code to help refine the draft standards prior to the public hearing.

Next Steps

Staff will use Planning Commission feedback to refine and finalize the code amendments.

PC Direction

Staff are seeking Planning Commission questions, comments, and concerns to continue preparing further code revisions for the Planning Commission public hearing on March 17, 2026.

Packet Materials

- Memo
- Presentation
- Proposed code amendments

House Bill 1757 Introduction

Planning Commission

March 3, 2026



PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

- Provide an overview of House Bill 1757 Code Update for Conversion of Existing Buildings into housing

WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT?

- Ensures compliance with state law and statewide goals to increase housing production and remove barriers.



POTENTIAL COMMISSION ACTION

ACTION REQUESTED: None. This is an informational briefing.

REVIEWS TO DATE:

- None



WHAT IS HB 1757?

The State adopted new requirements under HB 1757

- Amends RCW 35A.21.440
- Cities must adopt compliant regulations by **June 30, 2026**
- Today: overview of draft code + request for direction

HB 1757 is intended to:

- Increase housing supply
- Make commercial-to-residential conversions more cost effective
- Reduce regulatory barriers
- Encourage reuse of existing buildings

Key theme: adaptive reuse over new construction



WHAT IS REQUIRED

State law requires cities to:

- Allow conversions in **commercial, mixed-use, and residential zones** that permit multifamily
- Allow up to **50% more units** than zoning otherwise permits
- Prohibit requiring a **change of use permit**
- Prohibit additional parking requirements
- Limit energy code application
- Exempt projects from SEPA and concurrency



WHERE THIS APPLIES FOR SEATAC

Applies in zones that permit multifamily housing:

- Commercial zones
- Mixed-use zones
- Residential zones allowing multifamily

Building must:

- Have received a certificate of occupancy
- Be at least **3 years old**



Draft code allows in accordance with the minimum required:

- Up to **50% more dwelling units** than otherwise permitted

Example:

- 20 units allowed → up to 30 units permitted under this section

No Comprehensive Plan amendment required.



Conversions must:

- Occur entirely within the **existing building envelope**
- Not increase building volume
- Not move exterior walls

Allowed:

- Modifications needed to meet building, fire, or life safety codes

This is adaptive reuse, not expansion.



DRAFT CODE – GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL PROTECTION

Draft maintains protection for:

- Existing ground floor commercial
- Abutting designated major pedestrian corridors

Purpose:

- Preserve active street frontage
- Maintain walkability goals



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- Existing ground floor commercial
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State law requires:

- **No additional parking** for added dwelling units
- Existing required parking must be retained

Removes a common barrier to conversion projects.



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- **No additional parking** for added dwelling units
- Existing required parking must be retained

Removes a common barrier to conversion projects.



Only **changed portions** of new units must meet current energy code.

Unchanged portions are exempt.

Energy code exemptions apply if:

- Units \leq 2,500 sq ft or \leq 50% of building
- Clean Buildings Performance Standard met
- Unit created within existing home in residential zone



Cities may NOT:

- Require a change of use permit
- Require additional land use permits beyond standard residential permitting

Still required:

- Building permits
- Fire and life safety review

Life safety protections remain intact.



Permits may NOT be denied due to:

- Parking nonconformities
- Height
- Setbacks
- Elevator size
- Modulation

Unless written findings show significant detriment.

Intent: prevent legacy issues from blocking housing.



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WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SEATAC

This is largely a **compliance update**.

Local discretion is limited.

Our role:

- Clarify procedures
- Ensure clean administrative implementation



PLANNING COMMISSION ROLE

Many of the changes are required in order to adhere to best available science, what feedback are we looking for from planning commission?

- Review draft language
- Ask questions and raise community concerns
- Recommend revisions to the chapter that might also be needed
- Suggestions on ways we can communicate these changes to the public and make the application process smoother?



NEXT STEPS

- Conduct SEPA review
- Finalize Draft Amendments Based on conversation today
- Department of Commerce Notice
- Public Hearing – March 17, 2025

LATER STEPS

- Make recommendation to City Council
- Bring recommendation to PED – April 16, 2025
- Bring ordinance to City Council – May 19, 2025



COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS?



15.205.040 Use Chart

LAND USE	RL	RM	URM	MHP	RH	URH	URH-MU	CL	NVM (1)	NVH (1)	CB	CB-C	RBX	P	I	ADDITIONAL STANDARDS
Multi-Family					P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	C(2)	P(1) (2)	P(1) (2)	P(1) (2)	P(1) (2)	C(1) (2)			<p>(1) See SMC 15.520.400 for ground floor active use requirements in NVM and NVH zones.</p> <p>(1) For projects fronting International Blvd or S 188th St, at least 50% of the building's ground floor shall be a retail, service, or commercial use as described in SMC 15.520.300, Mixed Use in Residential Projects.</p> <p><i>(2) See SMC 15.465.700 for Conversion or Addition of Dwelling Units in Existing Buildings, for provisions for reuse and conversion of existing commercial, mixed-use, and residential buildings.</i></p>

15.465.700 Conversion or Addition of Dwelling Units in Existing Buildings.

A. Purpose and Authority.

1. Purpose. The purpose of this section is to implement RCW 35A.21.440, as amended, which requires code cities to allow additional dwelling units to be created within existing buildings. These provisions are intended to increase the supply and variety of housing by supporting the reuse and conversion of existing commercial, mixed-use, and residential buildings for residential purposes while ensuring compliance with health, safety, and life safety standards.
2. Authority. This section is adopted pursuant to RCW 35A.21.440 and related provisions of state law.

B. Regulations.

The following regulations apply to the creation of additional dwelling units within existing buildings as required by RCW 35A.21.440. In commercial, mixed-use, or residential zones that permit multifamily housing, dwelling units may be added within existing buildings up to a density of 50 percent more than what is allowed in the underlying zone. For the purpose of this section, an existing building means a building that received a certificate of occupancy at least three years prior to the permit application to add dwelling units. The following provisions apply:

1. Health and Safety. All applicable health and safety standards, including but not limited to building code and fire and life safety standards, shall be met.
2. Building Envelope. Dwelling units must be constructed entirely within the existing building envelope. Modifications to the envelope that are required to bring the additional units into compliance with applicable energy, building, fire, or life safety code standards are permitted so long as the volume of the building and the location of exterior walls do not change.
3. Ground Floor Uses. Dwelling units may be located in any part of the existing building except for existing ground floor commercial or retail spaces abutting a major pedestrian corridor as defined by the city.
4. Egress Windows. Windows required for egress may be added so long as they are the minimum size necessary to satisfy fire and life safety code requirements.

5. Parking. No additional parking shall be required for dwelling units added under this section. Existing required residential parking, and parking for nonresidential uses that remain, must be retained.
6. Energy Code. Changed portions of new dwelling units must meet the requirements of the current energy code. Unchanged portions of an existing building are not required to comply with the current energy code solely because of the addition of dwelling units. Energy code compliance is not required if:
 - a. The square footage of new dwelling units does not exceed 2,500 square feet or 50 percent of the total building square footage, whichever is greater;
 - b. The building owner demonstrates that the projected energy use intensity of the building's residential units is less than or equal to the clean buildings performance standard in RCW 19.27A.210; or
 - c. An additional housing unit is created within an existing home located in a residential zone.
7. Design Standards. Additional dwelling units under this section are exempt from dimensional standards, design standards, and design guidelines except as necessary for health and safety, or where the building is a designated landmark or is located within a historic district established by ordinance.
8. Transportation and Environmental Review. No transportation concurrency study under RCW 36.70A.070 or environmental review under chapter 43.21C RCW shall be required for the addition of dwelling units within an existing building under this section.
9. Permitting Requirements. No additional land use permitting requirements, including a change of use permit, shall be required for dwelling units added under this section beyond those generally applicable to residential development in the zone. Building permits required to demonstrate compliance with building, fire, and life safety standards shall continue to apply.
10. Nonconformities. A building permit application under this section may not be denied due to existing nonconformities related to parking, height, setbacks, elevator size, or modulation, unless the reviewing official makes written findings that the nonconformity is causing a significant detriment to the surrounding area.

RCW 35A.21.440 Compliance Chart

RCW 35A.21.440 Requirement	Draft Code Section 15.465.700 Provision
Adoption deadline: Cities must adopt regulations by June 30, 2026.	Covered in 15.465.700(A)(2) Authority – cites RCW 35A.21.440 as amended. Adoption timing handled via ordinance enactment.
Applies in commercial, mixed-use, or residential zones that allow multifamily housing.	15.465.700(B): specifies applicability to commercial, mixed-use, or residential zones permitting multifamily housing.
Density: Up to 50% more dwelling units than otherwise allowed.	15.465.700(B): permits dwelling units up to 50% more than underlying zoning allows.
Definition of existing building: must have certificate of occupancy at least 3 years old.	15.465.700(B): adopts 3-year certificate of occupancy requirement.
All applicable health and safety standards must be met.	15.465.700(B)(1) Health and Safety.
Dwelling units must be within existing building envelope. Modifications allowed only to meet code, not increase volume/footprint.	15.465.700(B)(2) Building Envelope.
Ground floor commercial abutting pedestrian corridor may not be converted.	15.465.700(B)(3) Ground Floor Uses.
Egress windows allowed if minimum size for life safety.	15.465.700(B)(4) Egress Windows.

No additional parking required. Existing required parking must be retained.	15.465.700(B)(5) Parking.
Energy code compliance only required for changed portions. Exemptions allowed if <2,500 sq ft or 50% of building, or clean buildings performance standard met, or unit in existing home.	15.465.700(B)(6) Energy Code. Matches statutory language with all three exemption options.
Exempt from dimensional standards, design standards, and guidelines (except health/safety or historic buildings).	15.465.700(B)(7) Design Standards.
No transportation concurrency or SEPA required.	15.465.700(B)(8) Transportation and Environmental Review.
No additional land use permits, including change of use, required. Building permits for health/safety still required.	15.465.700(B)(9) Permitting Requirements.
Cannot deny permit due to existing nonconformities (parking, height, setbacks, elevator, modulation) unless significant detriment findings made.	15.465.700(B)(10) Nonconformities.