



September 4, 2014

The Honorable Mike O'Brien  
Seattle City Councilmember  
Seattle City Hall  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025  
**Sent via email**

Re: Comments on the proposed changes to Council Bill (CB) 118067 regulating micro-housing in Seattle

Dear Councilmember O'Brien,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to CB 118067 which would alter the way that the City of Seattle regulates micro-housing developments.

Futurewise works throughout Washington State to create livable communities, protect our working farmlands, forests, and waterways, and ensure a better quality of life for present and future generations. Washington Bikes is statewide nonprofit organization working to grow bicycling through advocacy, education, and outreach, and striving to make bicycling accessible, convenient, safe, and fun. Our organizations have members throughout Washington State including many members in the City of Seattle.

We appreciate the City's work to develop effective micro-housing regulations. We believe that micro-housing is an essential housing type which can and should be supported by the City of Seattle. Allowing micro-housing units will assist the City in meeting its housing targets so that we can better address the increasing demand for housing in the city, as well as provide current and future residents of Seattle greater housing choice. Given Seattle's growing affordable housing needs, micro-housing units can also present a more affordable housing living option for residents.

Specifically, we support the following:

- **Clarifying standards to continue to allow micro-housing in all commercial and multi-family residential zones.** We believe that in this housing type, each rented bedroom—even with a shared kitchen—should be treated as an individual dwelling unit and that these units should be regarded in much the same way that other multifamily housing units are and should be allowed in all zones which allow multifamily development.

- **Reducing parking requirements for these units, especially when they are near transit hubs and corridors, bicycle infrastructure, bike or car sharing facilities, or offers increased bicycle parking space.** Reducing parking requirements can help reduce the cost of housing. The Council should reduce parking requirements, especially for developments: sited near high frequency bus lines, and all ages and abilities bicycle facilities; where there is a demonstrated capacity of available parking within the neighborhood; providing secure and high quality bike parking facilities; reaching shared parking agreements; or by providing bike or car sharing facilities, etc.
- **Having design review triggered by the scale of the building (measured by gross floor area) rather than the number of housing units,** which we believe is a more equitable application of the design review process. Triggering design review based on gross floor area better aligns with the intent of the process which seeks neighborhood input on those issues which will impact them, i.e. exterior building design, but not related to the interior layout or space allocation within the building envelope.
- **Decreasing the current minimum unit size and allowing the inclusion of kitchen or food preparation areas to be flexible to meet market demand.** Allowing for reduced minimum unit size allows for more housing choices for residents. With a growing demand for housing and a difference in the type of housing people are looking for, more housing choices with more housing price choices is a good thing.
- **Allowing micro-housing to participate in the City's incentive zoning program but requiring them to achieve a deeper level of affordability than standard size units.** The City should allow micro-housing to participate in the incentive zoning program; we support the income-restriction target proposed at 40% of the area-median income to help contribute to the existing gap of housing available at this rate.

Having an adequate supply of housing types is critical to improving housing affordability and to meeting Seattle's growing housing needs. Working people, young people, single people, and aging people are vital parts of the mix that makes our city and its neighborhoods vibrant. Coupled with other housing strategies, micro-housing can help Seattle go further in meeting its housing needs and the needs of the diverse people who currently live or will move here.

Again, thank you for the time and energy that you have spent working to ensure that micro-housing is a viable housing alternative in the City of Seattle. We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,  
Amy Gore, Sustainable Communities Director  
Futurewise  
[amy@futurewise.org](mailto:amy@futurewise.org) / 206-343-0681x112

Blake Trask, Statewide Policy Director  
Washington Bikes  
[blake@wabikes.org](mailto:blake@wabikes.org) / 206-310-4762