

# Dear Stakeholder:

The City of Seattle is committed to affordable and livable housing. Housing unit size directly impacts affordability and livability. The Seattle Construction Codes Advisory Board (CCAB) is conducting a review of the 2015 Seattle Building Code (SBC) Section 1208 Interior Space Dimensions & Director's Rule 7-2016 for Small Efficiency Dwelling Units. CCAB has been asked to explore whether Seattle's approach to minimum room and dwelling unit sizes, dimensions and total area can be more flexible without impacting the health and safety of residents.



We need your valuable perspective on this subject. Surveys can be submitted to [jenifer.gilliland@seattle.gov](mailto:jenifer.gilliland@seattle.gov) at the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections by November 26, 2016 by 5 pm. Please contact Jenifer Gilliland with any questions at (206) 233-2766.

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Here are terms commonly used in building codes that may have slightly different definitions than you are familiar with. Please read them carefully as they will help you understand the drawings and questions that are to come.

## Definitions:

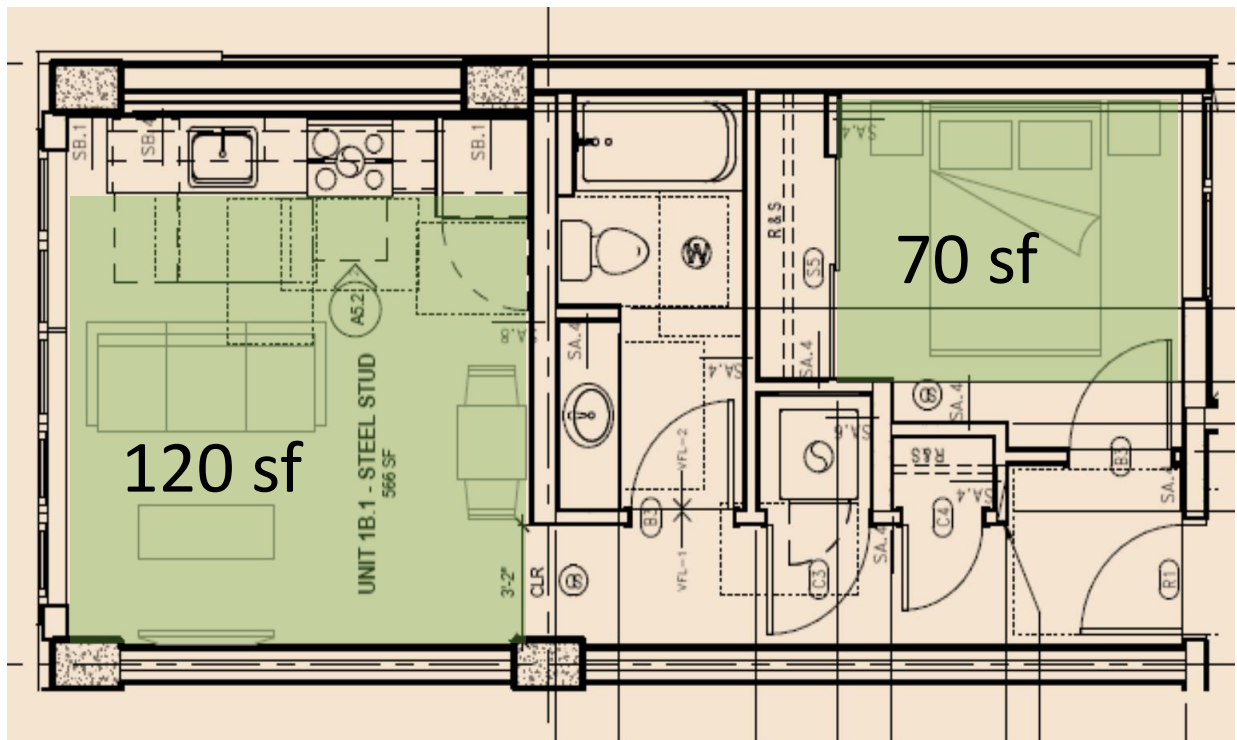
- Living room: The main room or space of a unit – see habitable space
- Gross unit size: measured from interior wall to wall
- Habitable space: A space in a building for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.
- Dwelling Unit: A single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.
- Small Efficiency Dwelling Unit: a single, independent, residential unit consisting of one habitable room (excluding kitchen, bath, storage rooms and built ins).

## Current Requirements:

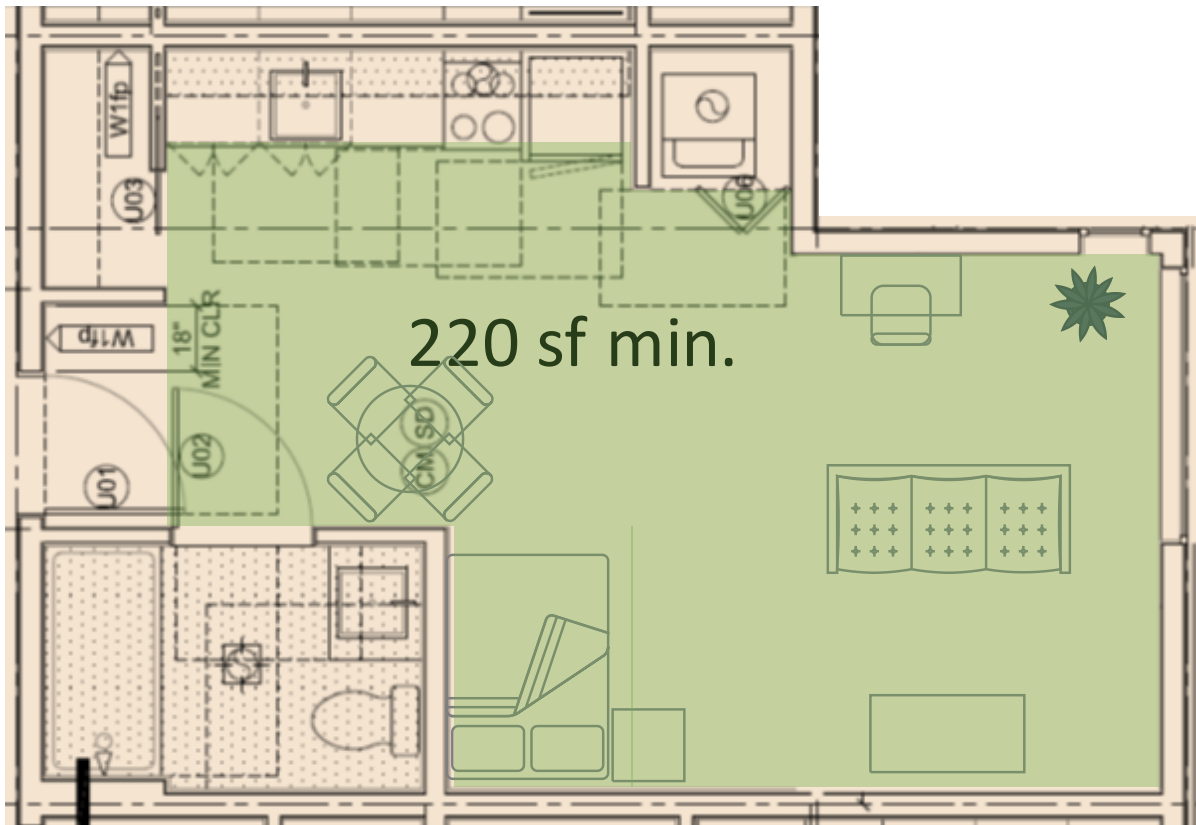
Developers have three dwelling unit types with differing minimum room and unit sizes to choose from when developing in Seattle:

### Option 1: Basic Dwelling Unit (apartments with one or more bedrooms)

- Must have at least one room greater than or equal to 120 sq. ft. in size
- Other habitable rooms must be at least 70 sq. ft. Habitable rooms include space where living, sleeping, eating or cooking take place (bathrooms are not included). These rooms are often used as dining, dens, bedrooms, etc.



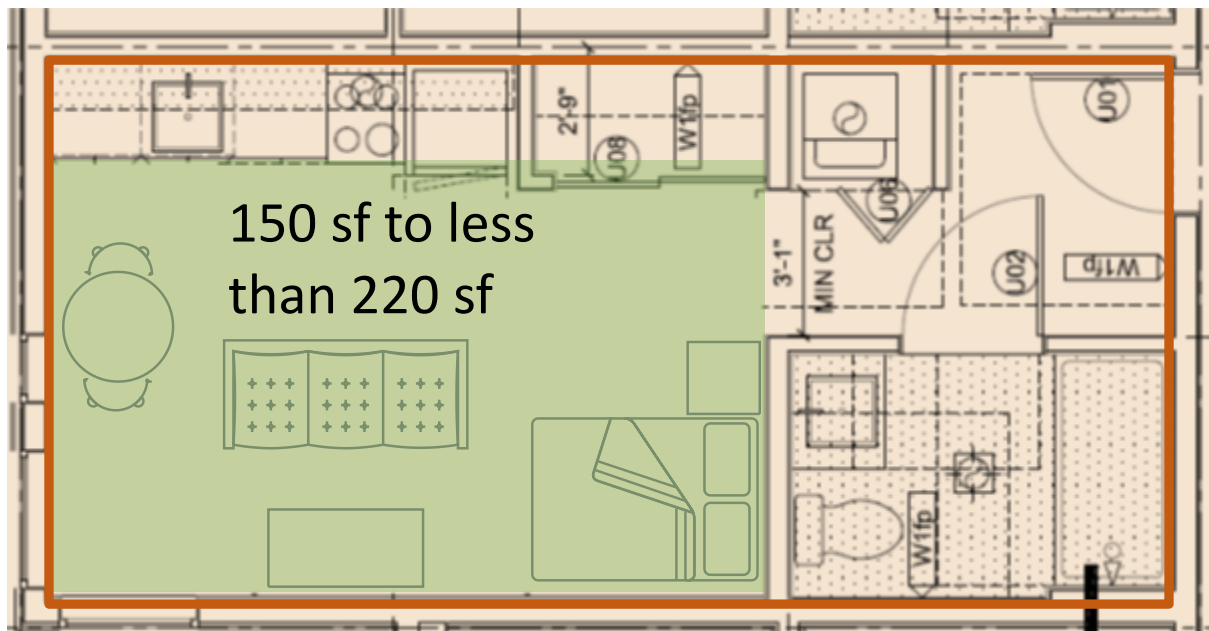
This option requires that a **“living room”** of at least 220 square feet be built. The sleeping area of the unit is part of this larger living room. The minimum “living room” dimensions do not include the kitchen, bath, storage rooms and built ins.



### Option 3: Small Efficiency Dwelling Unit (SEDU)

This option allows a developer to downsize the “living room” of the efficiency dwelling unit to a range between 150 to 220 square feet. Seattle also allows developers to reduce the 150 square feet minimum further to 120 square feet by use of an alternate. This is accomplished by allowing certain square footage in the kitchen area to be added to the 120 square feet to achieve the 150 square feet minimum.

These units are limited to a maximum size of 320 gross square feet as measured within the interior walls (red line in figure below).



### Survey Questions:

1. Could the area for a “habitable room” (currently 70 square feet in floor area) be reduced? If so, to what extent and why? (If you wish, please attach drawings with dimensions or any other supporting information)
2. Could the area for a “living room” (currently 220 sq. ft. in EDU’s, 150 sq. ft. in SEDU’s and 120 sq. ft. with the SEDU alternate – see diagrams above) be reduced? If so, to what extent and why? (If you wish, please attach drawings or any other supporting information)
3. Should built-in furnishings be included or excluded when considering the City’s minimum room dimension requirements?

- What do you define as built-in furnishings? (Desk? Cabinets? Bench?)
  
  - Would you limit the intrusion of built-in furnishings into the room to certain dimensions or would you recommend limiting built-in furnishings to a defined percentage of overall unit area?
4. All dwelling unit types require a bathroom, kitchen, natural lighting, heating, hot water, closets and storage, electrical outlets, operable windows, fresh air ventilation, fire sprinklers, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, fire alarms, and soundproofing. In your opinion, what are other minimum features that must be present to make a dwelling unit habitable by anyone on a long-term basis (more than 180 days)? Why?
5. Should Seattle lower the current minimum gross unit sizes? Would reducing minimum unit sizes create an unsafe or unhealthy situation for the resident of the unit? If so, what size and why? (If you wish, please attach drawings or any other supporting information)

Dwelling Unit:

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Why: \_\_\_\_\_

Efficiency Dwelling Unit:

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Why: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Efficiency Dwelling Unit:

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Why: \_\_\_\_\_

Surveys can be submitted to [jenifer.gilliland@seattle.gov](mailto:jenifer.gilliland@seattle.gov) at the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections by November 23, 2016 by 5 pm.