



December 13, 2021

Dear Seattle City Councilmembers,

We are writing on behalf of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and our 2,500 members, to encourage you to pass CB 120214, updating Seattle Municipal Code to change the name of Single-family zones to Neighborhood Residential zones.

We thank Seattle City Council for passing Ordinance 126456 in October, and we thank Councilmember Strauss for introducing this legislation to take the next step in changing the name of Single-family zones to Neighborhood Residential zones. This bill would update the names of Seattle zones from Single-family Residential 9600, Single-family Residential 7200, Single-family Residential 5000, and Residential Small Lot to Neighborhood Residential 1, Neighborhood Residential 2, Neighborhood Residential 3, and Neighborhood Residential Small Lot, respectively.

The name “single-family” area is not representative of Seattle’s neighborhoods today. Many single-family areas were misnamed when single-family zoning regulations were passed, because single-family areas already had multi-family dwellings that were constructed before single-family zoning codes were put in place. Then, in 2019, Seattle passed legislation to make it easier for property owners to create AADUs (Attached Accessory Dwelling Units) and DADUs (Detached Accessory Dwelling Units) in single-family zones, making the term “single-family” more of a misnomer.

Zoning standards that only allow detached units for individuals or families drive up the cost of land, making housing more unaffordable and inaccessible. Further, the evidence is clear that at its core, homelessness is a housing problem. In a city facing the twin challenges of a homelessness crisis and a lack of housing affordability, increasing density, promoting housing affordability, and eliminating exclusionary zoning are essential actions.

It is true that this legislation is only a simple name change. But Seattle must take this next step of passing CB 120214, as well as continue to address the historic and ongoing harmful impacts of exclusionary zoning through changes to existing policies. The Seattle Metro Chamber is ready and eager to collaborate with the City to ensure that we have more housing of all types for all people at all affordability levels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rachel Smith'.

Rachel Smith  
President & CEO