



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Planning Commission

Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

February 23, 2006

Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck
City Hall, 600 Fourth Avenue
P.O. Box 94749
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Southeast Seattle Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Legislation

Dear Councilmember Steinbrueck:

The Planning Commission has consistently been a strong advocate for adopting policies that encourage affordable housing throughout the City. Through our work on the Housing Choices Initiative with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and community groups, it has become clear that the City must use all available tools to reduce or minimize the cost of housing. The proposal currently before City Council to allow detached accessory dwelling units (DADU's) in southeast Seattle is one such tool and we strongly encourage the Council to approve the proposal.

The Commission believes that increasing the variety of housing types in all single family residential zones can lead to more affordable housing options. DADUs generally provide lower cost rental housing options, an opportunity for homeowners to augment the cost of their homeownership, and housing for extended family members. Since July, 2003 the Planning Commission has been on record urging the City to move forward with legislation permitting Detached Accessory Dwelling Units in single family zones throughout the entire city. While the Commission still believes that this housing type should be permitted citywide we support its application in Southeast Seattle as a critical first step.

In 2004 we prepared a white paper on DADU's in an effort to synthesize steps taken to develop the concept of DADU's (copy attached). The paper addresses issues that emerged during trial efforts at DADU's (as well as cottage housing) and provided recommendations on how the City could move forward with a package that could be supported in the community.

One important idea is to develop a City-sponsored, fee-supported implementation program to include standard plans as well as technical assistance. The goals of such a program would be, to simplify the process of developing a DADU and reducing its cost in time and money for the homeowner, to assure the community high-quality design that fits the character of the neighborhood, and to provide homeowners with the training to successfully manage a DADU. We have already begun working with DPD and the Office of Housing to develop such a program in anticipation of this legislation.

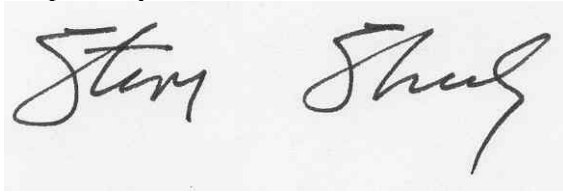
The Commission strongly supports the DADU legislation and we would be glad to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this important issue.

Steve Sheehy,
Chair
Jerry Finrow
Vice Chair
Hilda Blanco
George Blomberg
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Tom Eanes
Chris Fiori
Martin H. Kaplan
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Joe Quintana
Mimi Sheridan
Carl See
Tony To

Barbara Wilson,
Executive Director
Scott Dvorak,
Analyst

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Steve Sheehy".

Steve Sheehy, Chair
Seattle Planning Commission

CC:
Mayor Greg Nickels
Seattle City Council Members
Diane Sugimura, Department of Planning and Development
Adrienne Quinn, Office of Housing
John Rahaim, Department of Planning and Development
John Skelton, Department of Planning and Development
Mike Podowski, Department of Planning and Development
Traci Ratzliff, Council Central Staff
Ketil Freeman, Council Central Staff