

SEATTLE EMERGENCY LEGISLATION: DESIGN REVIEW AND HISTORIC REVIEW PERMIT PROCESSES

INTRODUCTION

On April 27, 2020, the Seattle City Council passed Council Bill 119769, which is emergency legislation that temporarily modifies several aspects of the City's permit processes to allow permit review to move forward while minimizing in-person contact and to give the City more time to resolve technical issues with conducting virtual public hearings. The legislation was passed today after the City Council reconsidered a vote against it last week.

PERMIT PROCESS CHANGES

The legislation makes several major permit process changes, which are effective immediately:

- **Full Design Review:** Projects that are typically subject to the full design review process with one of the City's Design Review Boards may elect to proceed with administrative design review by City staff. Projects are eligible for the election when they've had a cancelled Design Review Board meeting, or are ready to proceed to a Design Review Board meeting. Applicants will be able to make this election to administrative review for the next six months, or until the City places in operation a system for virtual meetings or in-person meetings resume, if those full design review options become available within six months.
- **Design Review for Publicly-Funded Affordable Housing Projects:** Affordable housing projects that receive public funding or federal tax credits that are typically subject to administrative review are exempted from design review if they file a building permit application in the next six months.
- **Early Community Outreach:** Projects that initiate the early community outreach process in the next six months may complete an additional high-impact electronic/digital outreach method in lieu-of in-person outreach.
- **Pioneer Square Preservation District, International Special Review District, Other City Historic Districts (Ballard Avenue, Columbia City, Fort Lawton, Harvard-Belmont, Pike Place Market, Sand Point):** Administrative approvals are allowed for some limited changes to buildings under the jurisdiction of the Preservation Boards for these Districts.
- **Landmarks Preservation Board:** Administrative approvals are allowed for some limited changes to City Landmark buildings under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Preservation Board. Controls and Incentives Agreements regarding historic features may also be approved administratively.

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Based on the Governor's recent opening of construction, the legislation also requests the City's Department of Construction and Inspections explore creating a rule establishing construction workplace safety standards to mitigate COVID-19 transmission.

The Department of Construction and Inspections must report back to the City Council on progress toward virtual solutions for Design Review Board and Preservation Board in-person meetings within 60 days.

The City Council must also hold a public meeting on the legislation within 60 days. No date is currently set for that meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Best regards,



Abigail Pearl DeWeese | Attorney

abigail.deweese@hcmp.com

206.470.7651

[Click here to learn more about Abigail.](#)



Holly Golden | Attorney

holly.golden@hcmp.com

206.470.7660

[Click here to learn more about Holly.](#)

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