

Building More Affordable Housing Using Surplus Public Land



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda

The Problem



Often surplus city property is sold to the highest bidder, permanently removing public land

from public ownership and shrinking available spaces for affordable housing. And in the midst of an affordability crisis, Seattle needs to use every available tool at its disposal to create affordable housing.

Seattle's Opportunity



Rep. Cindy Ryu, a legislator from Shoreline, shepherded a bill (SHB 2382) through the legislature in 2018, granting authority to cities to sell surplus property for below fair-market value – all the way to \$0 – as long as the land is used for

permanently affordable housing.

This means Seattle could repurpose surplus property for community-driven development of affordable housing. And it would create opportunities to develop site control - where to place housing - for more community-driven affordable housing development.

What Are the Benefits?

Discounted affordable housing



Land alone can add 15% to the cost of developing permanently affordable housing. **By reducing or eliminating this cost, more homes can be built either on-site or throughout the city.** This also means your taxpayer dollars can be stretched further for production of permanently affordable homes for working families, retirees, students, artists, small business owners and others.

Community-Driven Development



In addition, this will give the city an opportunity to evaluate underutilized properties and find mixed-use construction to expand affordable housing throughout Seattle. Mixed-use can include homes situated above child care facilities, libraries, small and micro businesses, community meeting spaces, and so much more!

What's Next?

2018

City Light Policies



The first set of policies addressed City Light specifically. These are distinct from other parcels, and set the stage for the broader policies for the rest of the City!

July

Finance & Administrative Services Policies

Covering all other parcels, these policy changes will be considered in the Finance & Neighborhoods Committee in September, prioritizing housing for disposition for the next five years and explicitly setting rules to give notice to community groups.



Sept

The Enterprise Map



Coming this fall, a map will be available that highlights available surplus and underutilized properties for all local governments and nonprofit organizations (including churches) for everyone to review. It will be an important tool to identify opportunities and maximize production of affordable homes!

Oct

Engage Other Governments

SHB 2382 allowed all local governments to adopt similar policies. Our office will be working with our colleagues at the County, the Port and neighboring jurisdictions to set similar rules, ensuring we are taking a regional approach to producing affordable housing!



Nov

Examples of Mixed-Use Housing

Mixed use housing can combine housing with commercial space on the ground floor as well as public amenities like open space and childcare.



Plaza Roberto Maestas



Filipino Community Center