



AIA
Seattle

January 15, 2021

Select Committee on Homelessness Strategies and Investments
Seattle City Council
600 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98102

RE: CB 119975, land-use legislation to promote the construction of permanent supportive housing (support)

Dear Chair Lewis and Committee Members,

The American Institute of Architects Seattle supports CB 119975 to remove development barriers and lower costs related to the construction of permanent supportive housing (PSH). PSH has a proven track record in Seattle and beyond as the most effective way to prevent the people it serves from returning to homelessness.

AIA Seattle specifically supports the following elements:

Exempt permanent supportive housing from the city's design review process
Architects are frequently engaged in the design review process and recognize that it significantly delays construction timelines and adds to overall project costs. While we will be the first to herald the importance of good design, quickly and safely housing our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness is a much more important priority.

Allow supportive housing in Commercial 2 zones

AIA Seattle supports zoning reform throughout the city to accommodate more housing. We specifically support this revision of zoning regulations to permit the building of permanent supportive housing in Commercial 2 zones, where residential uses are not currently allowed. Given the magnitude of our homelessness crisis, we need to expand the potential locations for PSH.

Allow SDCI to waive or modify development standards for PSH under certain conditions

AIA Seattle supports giving SDCI the authority to waive or modify development standards to accelerate permitting and construction timeframes to deliver more PSH units.

Exempt supportive services space from FAR requirements

AIA Seattle supports exempting supportive services space within PSH developments from floor area ratio (FAR) requirements (or modifying the FAR requirements for such spaces) to allow more room for housing units.

CB 119975 would also exempt PSH buildings from long- and short-term **bicycle parking requirements**. On this issue AIA Seattle members could not come to

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agreement. Some argue that bicycle parking is an important transportation option for residents and staff and positively impacts Seattle's efforts to address climate change, while others argue that the benefits of additional housing and related services outweigh these considerations.

PSH is the best solution to chronic homelessness that we have. AIA Seattle strongly supports this important legislation to facilitate more PSH units for our most vulnerable neighbors as outlined above.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Brendan Connolly, AIA
President



Lisa Richmond
Executive Director