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Program could lead to 12 new living buildings

By [JOURNAL STAFF](#)

The Seattle City Council approved Monday a pilot program to encourage the creation of living buildings. The full council also approved a series of design changes for midrise and highrise developments.

The pilot project will allow up to 12 unique “living buildings” to be developed in Seattle over the next three years. The new law lets the Department of Planning and Development grant exceptions to Seattle’s land use code to help developers meet living building standards.

Buildings taking advantage of the pilot program will compete in the Living Building Challenge, sponsored by the International Living Building Institute, and must meet at least 60 percent of the challenge’s prerequisites. The first living building project, proposed for Capitol Hill, could be built in 2010.

Council also adopted a comprehensive update to development standards in Seattle’s mid-rise and high-rise zones. The update includes changes for building design, landscaping and environmental standards in the areas of Seattle zoned for mid-rise or high-rise development, including properties in First Hill, Queen Anne, Alki, Ballard, University District, Northgate and Lake City.

Height and density bonuses for affordable housing and green building are included. The plan also aims to create more amenity space for residents – encouraging the inclusion of building elements like common areas, patios, garden space and ground-level retail – and to encourage greater flexibility in building design. Also included are reduced parking requirements and the allowance of wind-powered electricity generators.

Read the Living Building Ordinance, Council Bill 116740, and the Multifamily Code Update, Council Bill 116749 online at the City Clerk website at clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us by clicking on “Council Bills/Ordinances” and then entering the bill number and hitting “Submit Query.”