

# What is an EIS?

**An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a tool to inform decision makers about the positive and negative effects of a proposal.** The proposal might be a project, like construction of a new building or road, or a new policy or plan that could affect the environment. Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires Environmental Impact Statements so that the public, tribes, and other public agencies can help identify a proposal's environmental impacts, as well as strategies for reducing or avoiding them. Decision-makers can then approve, modify, or deny the proposal as appropriate.

## EIS PROCESS

### ISSUE DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE & SCOPING NOTICE

We issued a Determination of Significance (DS) and Scoping Notice for the ADU EIS on October 2, 2017.

### CONDUCT SEPA SCOPING

We extended the comment period 15 days to close on November 16, 2017. We also held two public scoping meetings on October 17 and 26.

### PREPARE DRAFT EIS

We reviewed scoping comments and prepared the Draft EIS.

### ISSUE DRAFT EIS

We issued the Draft EIS on May 10, 2018.

### DRAFT EIS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Draft EIS comment period will close on June 25, 2018. The comment period includes the May 31 public hearing.

### PREPARE FINAL EIS

The Final EIS will address comments received during the comment period.

### ISSUE FINAL EIS

Tentatively scheduled to be issued in late summer or early fall 2018.

### CITY ACTION

The City Council will discuss and vote on proposed legislation to amend the Land Use Code.

## HOW CAN I COMMENT?

**The Draft EIS comment period is from May 10 to June 25, 2018.** All comments received will be published in the Final EIS.

You can sign up to comment at tonight's hearing or in one of the following ways:

- Complete our online comment form, available at [seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS](http://seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS)
- Send an email to: [ADUEIS@seattle.gov](mailto:ADUEIS@seattle.gov)
- Write to Aly Pennucci, PO Box 34025 Seattle, WA 98124-4025

## MAKING A DRAFT EIS COMMENT

A Draft EIS provides an opportunity for the public to review the environmental analysis and make comment about how to improve its adequacy and completeness. Later this year, we will prepare a Final EIS that responds to Draft EIS comments and includes a preferred alternative.

An effective Draft EIS comment focuses on the EIS. The purpose is to comment on the analysis and alternatives, not issues outside the proposal, and not about support of or opposition to ADUs in general.

Written comments carry the same weight as verbal comments and are being accepted until June 25, 2018. We encourage you to consider submitting a written comment because a written comment:

- Ensures the comment is captured in your own words
- Can include more detailed and specific information than a brief verbal comment
- Allows you more time to review the content of DEIS before commenting

There is no additional weight to your verbal comment if it duplicates a written comment you submit. All verbal comments received at the hearing are recorded and part of the official record.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS](http://seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS).

# Proposal Overview

**We are proposing to change regulations in the Land Use Code to remove regulatory barriers to the creation of ADUs in single-family zones.** The proposal involves several Land Use Code changes, including allowing two ADUs on some lots, changing the existing off-street parking and owner-occupancy requirements, and changing some development standards that regulate the size and location of DADUs.

## WHAT IS AN ADU?

ADUs are small, secondary units on a single-family lot. A detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU), often called a backyard cottage, is a secondary unit located in a separate structure from the the main house. An attached accessory dwelling unit (AADU), often caled a basement apartment or in-law unit, is a secondary unit located within or connected to the main house.

ADUs have been allowed citywide as part of a main house or in the backyard of lots in single-family zones since 1994 and 2010, respectively. Our proposal would modify the rules that regulate when and where a property owner can create an ADU to make it easier for property owners to permit and build AADUs and DADUs. Currently, about two percent of Seattle’s roughly 135,000 lots in single-family zones have an ADU. Since their legalization citywide in 2010, about 579 DADUs have been constructed or permitted.



Victoria Carter Architecture

## WHAT’S THE GOAL?

The objectives of this proposal of are to:

- Remove regulatory barriers to make it easier for property owners to permit and build AADUs and DADUs
- Increase the number and variety of housing choices in single-family zones

This proposal aims to implement Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan policies related to development of ADUs:

### Land Use Policy 7.5

Encourage accessory dwelling units, family-sized units, and other housing types that are attractive and affordable, and that are compatible with the development pattern and building scale in single-family areas in order to make the opportunity in single-family areas more accessible to a broad range of households and incomes, including lower-income households.

### Land Use Policy 7.12

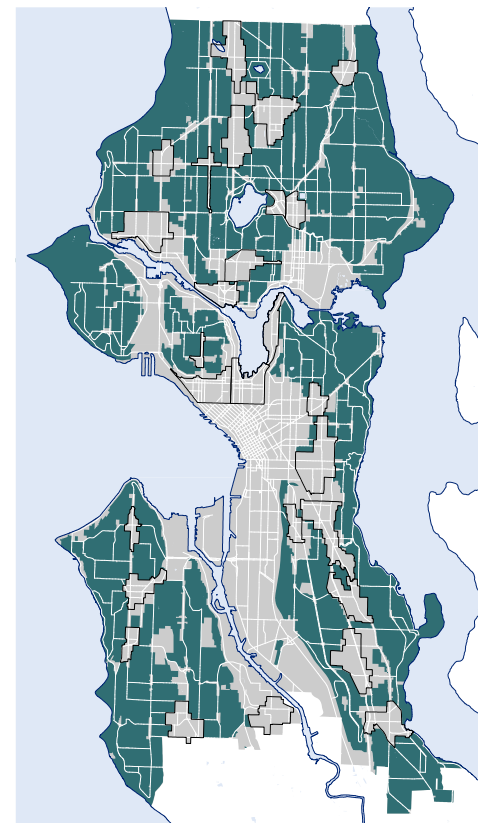
Emphasize measures that can increase housing choices for low-income individuals and families when considering changes to development standards in single-family areas.



microhouse

## STUDY AREA

The study area for this EIS includes land zoned single-family outside existing urban villages and urban village expansion areas studied in the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) EIS.



EIS study area
  Outside study area
  Urban village



live-work-play

# Alternatives

	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
<b>Number of ADUs allowed on a lot</b>	Lots in single-family zones can have one AADU or one DADU, but not both.	Lots in single-family zones can have an AADU and a DADU.	Lots in single-family zones can have an AADU and a DADU or two AADUs.
<b>Off-street parking requirements</b>	One off-street parking space is required for an AADU or a DADU unless the lot is in an urban village.	No off-street parking required.	No off-street parking required for lots with one ADU. One off-street parking space is required for lots adding a second ADU.
<b>Owner-occupancy requirements</b>	An owner must occupy either the main house or the AADU/DADU for six months of the year.	No requirement for an owner to occupy the house, AADU, or DADU.	No change from Alternative 1 (No Action).
<b>Minimum lot size</b>	4,000 square feet	3,200 square feet	
<b>Maximum gross floor area</b>	<b>AADU</b> 1,000 square feet, including garage and storage areas. <b>DADU</b> 800 square feet, including garage and storage areas.	<b>AADU</b> 1,000 square feet, excluding garage and storage areas. <b>DADU</b> 1,000 square feet, excluding garage and storage areas.	<b>AADU</b> 1,000 square feet, including garage and storage areas. <b>DADU</b> 1,000 square feet, including garage and storage areas.
<b>Maximum height</b>	No change from existing height limits, which vary by lot width and range from 15 to 23 feet.	Height limits are 1 to 3 feet higher than existing limits, depending on lot width. Allow 1 to 2 additional feet for a DADU that meets green roof standards.	Height limits are 1 to 3 feet higher than existing limits, depending on lot width.
<b>Lot coverage</b>	No change from current regulations. <b>Lots greater than 5,000 square feet</b> 35 percent of lot area. <b>Lots less than 5,000 square feet</b> 15 percent of lot area plus 1,000 square feet.		
<b>Rear yard coverage</b>	40 percent of a rear yard can be covered by a DADU and other accessory structures (like a garage).	60 percent of a rear yard can be covered by a DADU and other accessory structures, if the DADU is 15 feet or less in height. Rear yard coverage for structures other than a DADU cannot exceed 40 percent.	
<b>Roof features</b>	No exceptions for roof features on accessory structures are allowed.	Height limit exceptions are allowed for projections like dormers that add interior space, subject to the provisions applicable to single-family houses.	
<b>Location of DADU entry</b>	DADU entrances cannot face the nearest side or rear lot line unless that lot line abuts an alley or other public right-of-way.	DADU entrances can be on any façade if they are 10 feet from the lot line and if located on the façades facing the nearest side or rear lot line (unless abutting right-of-way).	
<b>Maximum household size</b>	Any number of related people, or up to eight unrelated people, can live on lots in single-family zones including in an AADU or a DADU.	Any number of related people, or up to eight unrelated people, can live on lots in single-family zones with an AADU or a DADU. If the lot has an AADU and a DADU, the limit is 12.	No change from Alternative 1 (No Action).
<b>MHA requirements</b>	Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) does not apply to creation of ADUs on lots in single-family zones.	No change from Alternative 1 (No Action).	MHA requirements apply when a property owner applies for a permit to construct a second ADU on a lot that already has one ADU. The MHA requirements for zones with an (M) suffix would apply. For purposes of analysis, this equates to an affordability contribution of \$13 per square foot of gross floor area in the second ADU.
<b>Predevelopment costs</b>	No change.	Contemplates a 10-percent reduction in predevelopment costs.	No change from Alternative 1 (No Action).
<b>Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) limit</b>	No FAR limit for single-family zones. The maximum size for the main house is effectively set by the yard requirements, height limit, and lot coverage limit. ADUs are subject to the maximum size limits described above.	No change from Alternative 1 (No Action).	<b>New construction</b> FAR limits apply to development in single-family zones. New houses are subject to a FAR limit of 0.5 or 2,500 square feet, whichever is greater. Below-grade floor area and floor area in DADUs is exempt. ADU size limits apply. <b>Existing houses</b> Existing lots in single-family zones exceeding the FAR or 2,500-square-foot limits can convert existing space to an AADU and add a DADU subject to the size limit above.

# Approach to the Analysis

In May 2016, we prepared an environmental checklist evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the proposed changes to the Land Use Code and made a determination of non-significance. The determination made in the checklist was appealed in June 2016. In December 2016, the Seattle Hearing Examiner determined that a more thorough review of the potential environmental impacts of the proposal was required.

The December 2016 Hearing Examiner decision identified several issues of concern for additional analysis in this EIS. These include evaluating and focusing the impacts discussion on:

- Housing and Socioeconomics
- Land Use
- Aesthetics
- Parking and Transportation and
- Public Services and Utilities

No additional elements of the environment were identified as a result of the City's subsequent EIS scoping process.

In the scoping notice for this EIS, we presented two potential alternatives: Alternative 1 (No Action) and Alternative 2 (the proposed Land Use Code changes). However, based on comments received during the scoping period, we added a second action alternative for evaluation in the Draft EIS (Alternative 3).

Alternative 3 considers more modest adjustments to the Land Use Code that emphasize allowing a variety of housing types while maintaining a scale compatible with existing development in single-family zones.

Based on the scoping comments received, the specific parameters considered under Alternative 3 include retaining the owner-occupancy requirement and eight-person maximum household size limit, adding MHA requirements, requiring an off-street parking space for lots with a second ADU, and incorporating maximum floor area ratio (FAR) limits.

EIS Section	Approach
<b>Housing and Socioeconomics</b>	The analysis of housing and socioeconomics considered how proposed Land Use Code changes could alter the underlying real-estate economics in single-family zones. We considered the impacts the proposal could have on housing affordability and displacement.
<b>Land Use</b>	We evaluated the potential land use impacts by considering whether the proposed Land Use Code changes would result in changes to building density, population density, or scale that would be incompatible with existing development in Seattle's single-family zones.
<b>Aesthetics</b>	We consider aesthetic impacts by evaluating how the proposed Land Use Code changes would affect the visual character of single-family zones. We analyzed the potential aesthetic impacts using three-dimensional visual modeling to illustrate the potential changes to the scale and form of development in the study area.
<b>Parking and Transportation</b>	<p><i>Parking.</i> We compared the existing availability of on-street parking with the expected increase in demand for on-street parking under each alternative. We assumed that on-street parking utilization would not become an issue until parking utilization exceeded 85 percent.</p> <p><i>Transportation.</i> We considered how the overall changes in population anticipated under each alternative would affect the service levels of existing transportation networks in the context of the growth and impacts considered in the Comprehensive Plan EIS (Seattle 2016b).</p>
<b>Public Services and Utilities</b>	We evaluated potential impacts to public services and utilities by considering the overall changes in population anticipated under each alternative relative to the existing service levels for each public service and utility.