

## 2 Alternatives

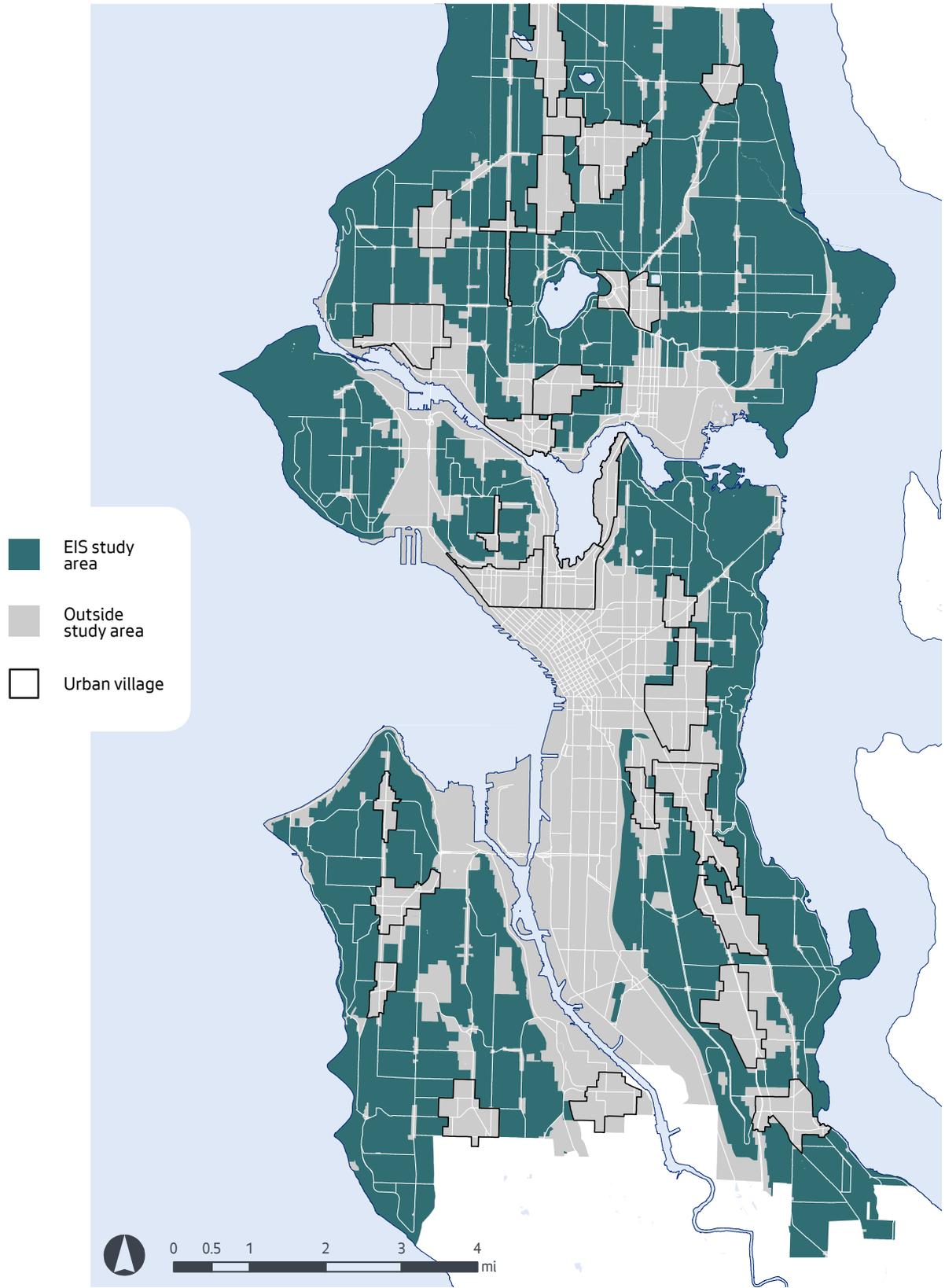
The City of Seattle (City) proposes to change regulations in the Land Use Code to remove barriers to the creation of ADUs in single-family zones. The objectives of the proposal evaluated in this EIS are to:

- 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

### 2.1 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 (Exhibit 2-1).

Exhibit 2-1 Map of the EIS Study Area



## 2.2 Development of Alternatives

In the scoping notice (Seattle City Council 2017), we initially proposed to study two alternatives: Alternative 1 (No Action) and one action alternative that considered changes to the Land Use Code. During the scoping comment period, we received several comments encouraging us to add a second action alternative. Some comments suggested this third alternative should consider a more aggressive scenario that allows duplexes, triplexes, and small apartments in the study area and considers smaller minimum lot sizes for subdivision in single-family zones. Others requested that we study an alternative whose intensity is between the two alternatives we initially proposed by excluding certain changes intended to spur ADU production, or that we study an alternative that further restricts ADU production compared to current policies. However, the objective of the proposal is to increase the production of ADUs in single-family zones. Changes that would allow lots in single-family zones to be subdivided for separate ownership of principal units, or that would allow traditional duplexes or triplexes, are outside the scope of this proposal. Similarly, changes to zoning designations for land in the study area, such as rezoning areas to the Residential Small Lot (RSL) zone, are outside the scope of this proposal.

While some policies suggested during scoping do not meet the project's objectives, based on scoping comments we propose to evaluate three alternatives in this Draft EIS. Alternative 1 (No Action) assumes that the City makes no changes to the Land Use Code related to ADUs. Alternatives 2 and 3 both assume implementation of Land Use Code changes that would increase the number of ADUs produced in Seattle's single-family zones. Both action alternatives address regulations and policies frequently cited as barriers to creation of ADUs. Alternatives 2 and 3 differ in the scale and focus of the proposed changes. Alternative 2 represents the broadest range of changes to the Land Use Code, similar to the draft proposal analyzed in May 2016 prior to the Hearing Examiner's decision. Alternative 3 considers more modest adjustments to the Land Use Code that emphasize maintaining the scale of existing development in single-family zones.

### PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

This EIS analyzes three alternatives. Under Alternative 1 (No Action), no changes would be made to the existing ADU regulations. Alternatives 2 and 3 consider several Land Use Code changes to meet the objectives of the proposal. Exhibit 2-2 outlines the current regulations under Alternative 1 (No Action) and the proposed changes under Alternatives 2 and 3. We then describe the individual regulations and how they would apply under each alternative.

**Exhibit 2-2** Existing and Proposed Land Use Code Regulations for ADUs

	<b>Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>	<b>Alternative 3</b>
<b>Number of ADUs allowed on lots in single-family zones</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.  An AADU or a DADU may exceed 1,000 square feet if the portion of the structure in which the ADU is located existed on December 31, 2017, and if the entire ADU is located on one level.	<b>AADU</b> 1,000 square feet, including garage and storage areas.  <b>DADU</b> 1,000 square feet, including garage and storage areas.  An AADU may exceed 1,000 square feet if the portion of the structure in which the AADU is located existed on December 31, 2017, and if the entire AADU is located on one level.
<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). This limit applies in addition to the overall lot coverage limit.	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.	

	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
<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.  For development of a second ADU, the MHA requirements for zones with an (M) suffix would apply, as outlined in Section 23.58C of the Land Use Code. 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.	Reduces predevelopment costs by 10 percent. This could result from reducing permitting costs by streamlining project review, reducing permitting and design costs by providing pre-approved plans, or other actions.	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 (i.e., principal structures) 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.

## EXISTING AND PROPOSED ADU REGULATIONS

### Number of ADUs on Lots in Single-Family Zones

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Under current regulations, lots in single-family zones can have one AADU or one DADU, but not both.

**Alternative 2.** The proposed code changes would allow lots in single-family zones to have both an AADU and a DADU. On its own, this change maintains the maximum building envelope currently allowed in single-family zones and modifies only the number of units allowed within that envelope. The maximum lot coverage limit would continue to regulate the footprint of structures on these lots, and other development standards would apply as described further below.

**Alternative 3.** The proposed code changes would allow lots in single-family zones to have both an AADU and a DADU or two AADUs. Like Alternative 2, this does not change the building envelope allowed currently on lots in single-family zones.

### Off-Street Parking Requirements

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Current regulations require property owners to provide an off-street parking space when establishing an accessory dwelling unit. This requirement can be waived only if the topography of or location of existing structures on the lot make providing the parking space infeasible. This requirement is in addition to the off-street parking space required for main houses on lots in single-family zones.

**Alternative 2.** The proposed Land Use Code changes under Alternative 2 would remove the off-street parking requirement for lots with one or two ADUs. This would not alter the existing provision that prohibits removal of an existing required parking space for the main house unless replaced elsewhere on the lot.

**Alternative 3.** Under Alternative 3, the proposed changes would remove the parking requirement for lots with one ADU but require parking when a second ADU is established on the same lot, in addition to the parking space required for the main house.

## Owner-Occupancy Requirement

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Current regulations require that a property owner occupy either the main house or the ADU for six months of the year.

**Alternative 2.** Alternative 2 would remove the owner-occupancy requirement. Property owners would not be required to occupy the main house, AADU, or DADU. This would allow property owners who no longer want or are able to live on their property to move and rent their house, AADU, and DADU. It would also allow property owners who currently rent out their house to create an AADU and/or a DADU on their lot.

**Alternative 3.** Under Alternative 3, the current requirement that a property owner occupy either the main house or ADU for six months of the year would remain.

## Minimum Lot Size

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Under current regulations, DADUs can be constructed only on lots 4,000 square feet and larger. Converting an existing accessory structure into a DADU is allowed on lots smaller than 4,000 square feet.

**Alternatives 2 and 3.** The proposed code changes under Alternatives 2 and 3 would reduce the minimum lot size for a DADU to 3,200 square feet. Approximately 7,300 lots in single-family zones that currently do not have but otherwise meet the criteria for a DADU would become eligible for one due to this change.

## Maximum Gross Floor Area

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Under current regulations, AADUs are limited to 1,000 square feet, including garage and storage space. An AADU located entirely on one level can exceed the 1,000-square-foot limit if the structure in which it is located existed on June 1, 1999. DADUs are limited to 800 square feet, including garage and storage space.

**Alternative 2.** Under Alternative 2, the maximum size limit would increase to 1,000 square feet for DADUs, and garage and storage space would no longer count toward the allowance for AADUs or DADUs. An AADU or a DADU may exceed the 1,000-square-foot limit if the portion of the structure in which the ADU is located existed on December 31, 2017, and if the entire ADU is located on one level.

**Alternative 3.** Under Alternative 3, the maximum size limit would be 1,000 square feet for both AADUs and DADUs, but garage and storage space would continue to count toward the allowance. An AADU may exceed the 1,000-square-foot limit if the portion of the structure in which the AADU is located existed on December 31, 2017, and if the entire AADU is located on one level.

**Maximum Height**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Currently, the maximum height of a DADU depends on the width of the lot and ranges from 12 to 23 feet (Exhibit 2-3).

**Exhibit 2-3**  
 Current Height Limits  
 for DADUs

	Lot width				
	Less than 30 feet	30 to 35 feet	36 to 40 feet	41 to 50 feet	Greater than 50 feet
<b>Maximum height limit (feet)</b>	12	14	15	16	16
<b>Additional height for a pitched roof (feet)</b>	3	7	7	6	7
<b>Additional height for a shed or butterfly roof (feet)</b>	3	4	4	4	4

**Alternative 2.** As shown in Exhibit 2-4, Alternative 2 would create three lot width categories to calculate the height limit for a DADU: less than 30 feet, between 30 and 50 feet, and greater than 50 feet in width. The proposed changes would add, at most, three feet to the current height limits. On the narrowest lots, a DADU with a pitched roof could be up to 17 feet tall. On the widest lots — those more than 50 feet wide — a DADU with a pitched roof could be up to 25 feet tall. No change is proposed to the maximum height limit for principal dwellings in single-family zones, which is 30 feet plus five additional feet for a pitched roof.

The proposed Land Use Code changes would also allow two additional feet in height for all lots and roof types if the proposed roof meets the green roof standards that currently apply for main houses in single-family zones, outlined in [Section 23.44.012.C.2](#). This additional height would be allowed to accommodate the structural requirements, roofing membranes, and soils required for a green roof.

**Exhibit 2-4**  
Proposed Height Limits  
for DADUs under  
Alternatives 2 and 3

	Lot width		
	Less than 30 feet	30 to 50 feet	Greater than 50 feet
<b>Maximum height limit (feet)</b>	14	16	18
<b>Additional height for a pitched roof (feet)</b>	3	7	7
<b>Additional height for a shed or butterfly roof (feet)</b>	3	4	4

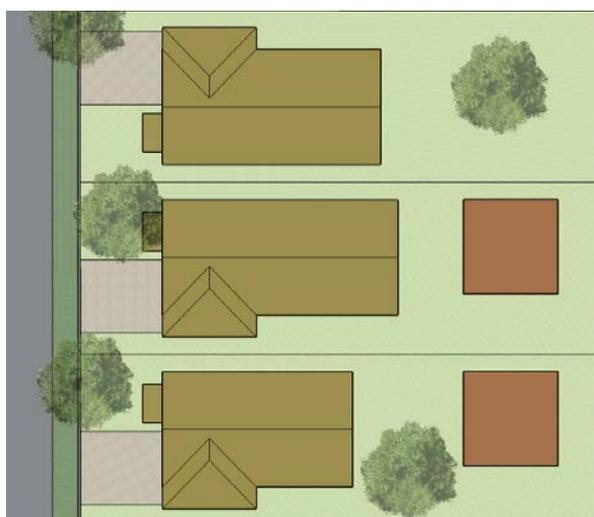
Under Alternative 2, up to two additional feet would be allowed for a DADU that meets green roof standards.

**Alternative 3.** Under Alternative 3, the proposed height limit changes would be the same as described for Alternative 2, but additional height for a green roof would not be included.

### Lot Coverage

**All Alternatives.** Current regulations for lot coverage limits would not change. As illustrated in Exhibit 2-5, This existing standard limits the amount of a lot that all structures can cover:

- Lots less than 5,000 square feet: 1,000 square feet plus 15 percent of lot area
- Lots larger than 5,000 square feet: 35 percent of lot area



Footprint of House	1,250 sq. ft.
Footprint of DADU	n/a
<b>Total lot coverage</b>	<b>1,250 sq. ft. / 25%</b>
Footprint of House	1,350 sq. ft.
Footprint of DADU	400 sq. ft.
<b>Total lot coverage</b>	<b>1,750 sq. ft. / 35%</b>
Footprint of House	1,000 sq. ft.
Footprint of DADU	500 sq. ft.
<b>Total lot coverage</b>	<b>1,500 sq. ft. / 30%</b>

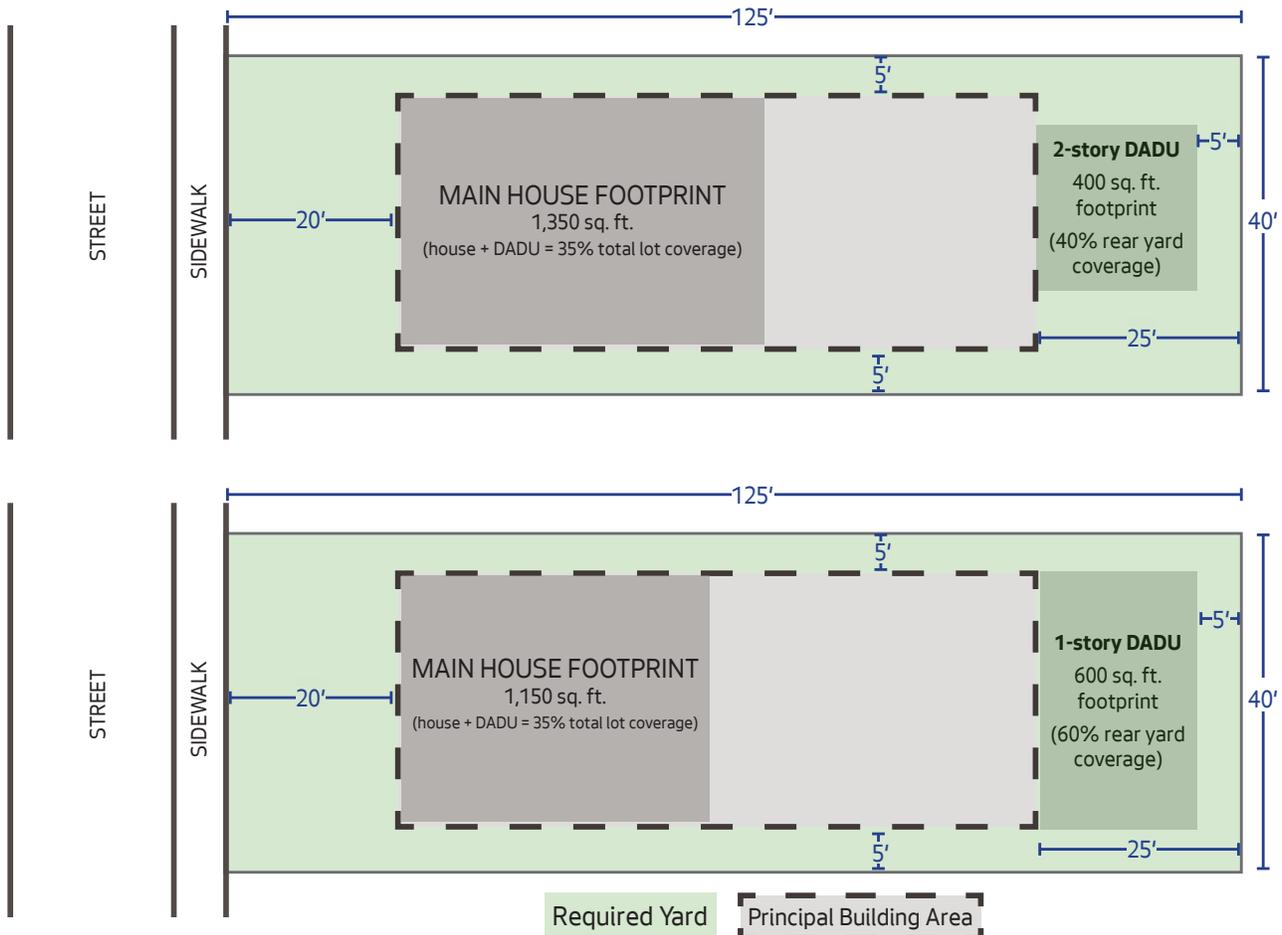
**Exhibit 2-5**  
Illustration of Lot  
Coverage

### Rear Yard Coverage

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Current regulations allow up to 40 percent of a rear yard to be covered by a DADU and other accessory structures (like a garage). The rear yard is the area between the side lot lines extending from the rear lot line a distance of 25 feet or 20 percent of the lot depth. When the rear yard abuts an alley, the rear yard is calculated from the alley centerline.

**Alternatives 2 and 3.** As illustrated in Exhibit 2-6, the proposed code changes would allow a DADU with a height of up to 15 feet to cover 20 percent more of the rear yard, as long as rear yard coverage for all structures other than the DADU does not exceed 40 percent. This change would allow flexibility for the design of a DADU without stairs to accommodate occupants with limited mobility or disability. The rear yard coverage limit for DADUs taller than 15 feet would not change.

**Exhibit 2-6** Illustration of required yards and rear yard coverage



## Location of DADU Entry

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Current regulations state that a DADU entrance cannot face the nearest side or rear lot line unless that lot line abuts an alley or other public right-of-way.

**Alternatives 2 and 3.** The proposed code changes would allow an entrance on any façade provided that the entrance is no closer than 10 feet to side or rear lot line, unless that lot line abuts a public right-of-way.

## Roof Features

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Current regulations do not allow DADUs to have roof features like dormers, clerestories, and skylights that accommodate windows and add interior space (Exhibit 2-7).

**Alternatives 2 and 3.** The proposed code changes would allow these roof features subject to the provisions applicable to single-family houses. None of these features can project above the ridge of a pitched roof. Similar provisions to what exist in the regulations for main houses in the standards for lots in single-family zones would limit the size and location of such roof features on DADUs. Features that project from a roof would be limited to 30 percent of the roof area, for example, and be subject to width and separation requirements.



**Exhibit 2-7**  
Illustration of Roof  
Features

### **Alternative 1**

Dormers and other roof  
features prohibited

### **Alternatives 2 and 3**

Dormers and other roof  
features allowed on a DADU

## Maximum Household Size

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Current regulations allow any number of related people or up to eight unrelated people to live on a lot in a single-family zone, including occupants of an AADU or a DADU.

**Alternative 2.** Alternative 2 would allow any number of related people or up to eight unrelated people to live on a lot in a single-family zone, including those living in an AADU or a DADU. However, up to 12 unrelated people could live on a lot that has both an AADU and a DADU.

**Alternative 3.** Under Alternative 3, the current household size limit would remain in place.

## Mandatory Housing Affordability

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MHA requires multifamily and commercial development to support affordable housing. The City has implemented or is in the process of implementing MHA in certain zones using three levels of affordable housing requirements identified by an (M), (M1), or (M2) suffix added to the zone name. These levels correspond to the scale of zoning changes and the corresponding affordability contribution required. Alternative 3 contemplates applying MHA requirements for zones with an (M) suffix when a property owner establishes a second ADU on a lot in a single-family zone.

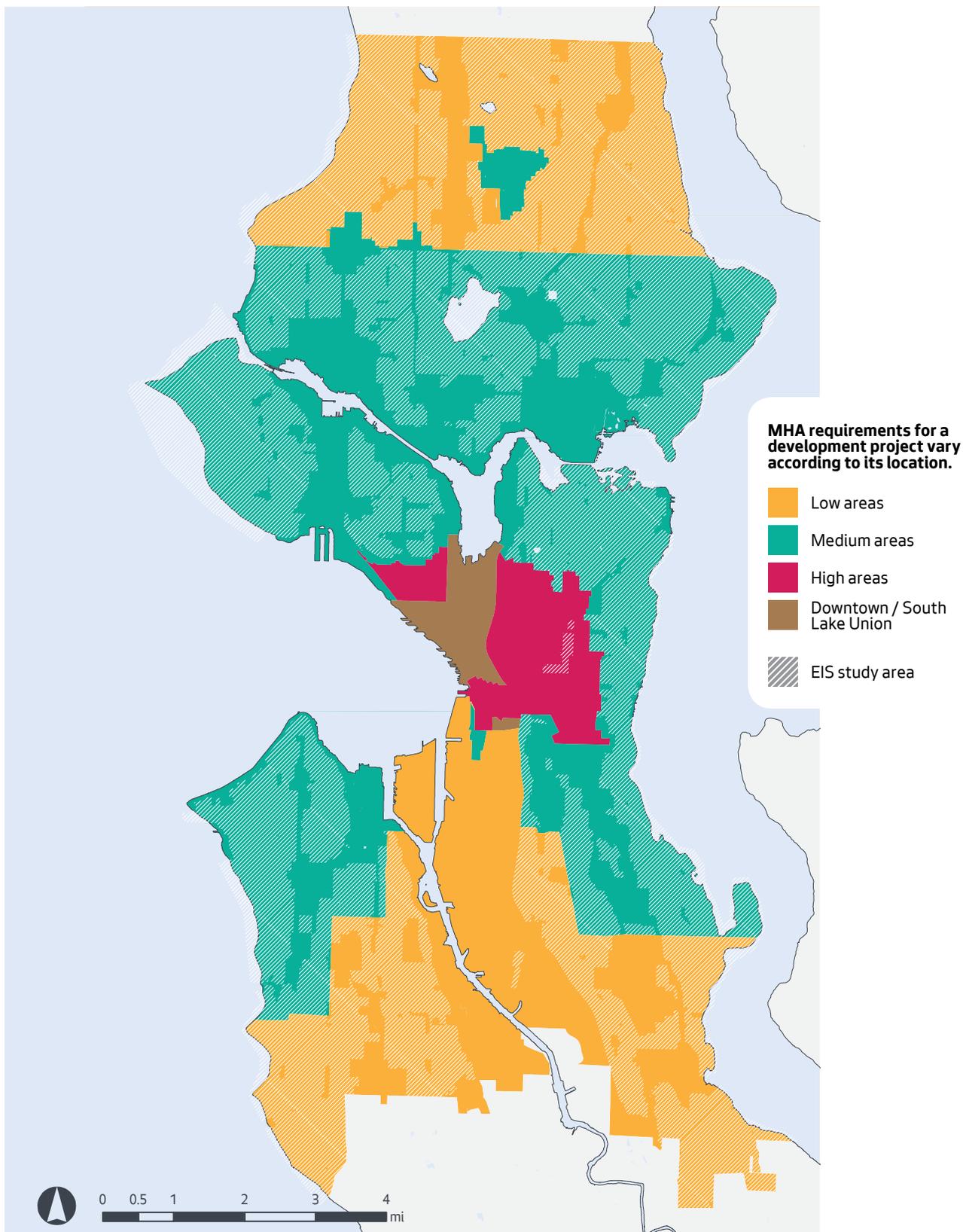
## Mandatory Housing Affordability Requirements

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** MHA requirements do not apply to the creation of ADUs in single-family zones.

**Alternative 2.** Like Alternative 1 (No Action), MHA requirements would not apply to the creation of ADUs in single-family zones.

**Alternative 3.** Under Alternative 3, MHA requirements would apply when a property owner applies for a permit to construct a second ADU on a lot that already has one ADU. In this case, the MHA requirements for zones with an (M) suffix would apply, as outlined in [Section 23.58C](#) of the Land Use Code. Section 23.58C also establishes that MHA requirements vary geographically according to whether a development project is in a low, medium, or high area. As shown in Exhibit 2-8, the study area includes land in the low and medium areas. For purposes of analysis, Alternative 3 contemplates an affordability contribution of \$13 per square foot of gross floor area in the second ADU, a requirement equivalent to a zone with an (M) suffix in a medium area. While some locations in the study area are in low areas and therefore would have lower required affordability contributions, applying a per-square-foot payment of \$13 provides adequate analysis of the MHA requirement for ADU development in the study area.

Exhibit 2-8 MHA Areas



## Predevelopment Costs

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Under current regulations, the cost of obtaining permits, surveys, and utility hook-ups would not change.

**Alternative 2.** Alternative 2 considers a scenario wherein the City provides incentives to reduce predevelopment costs by 10 percent. This could include reducing permitting costs by streamlining the review process and/or providing pre-approved plans that would reduce permitting time and costs and would save money on developing the design.

**Alternative 3.** Alternative 3 analyzes predevelopment costs similar to current conditions, as evaluated under Alternative 1 (No Action).

## Floor Area Ratio

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FAR is the ratio of a building's total square footage (floor area) to the size of the piece of land on which it is constructed. For example, if a building is subject to an FAR limit of 0.5, then the total square footage of the constructed building must be no more than half the area of the parcel itself.

In other words, if the lot is 5,000 square feet, then the square footage of the building cannot exceed 2,500 square feet. Exhibit 2-9 presents examples of FAR limits.

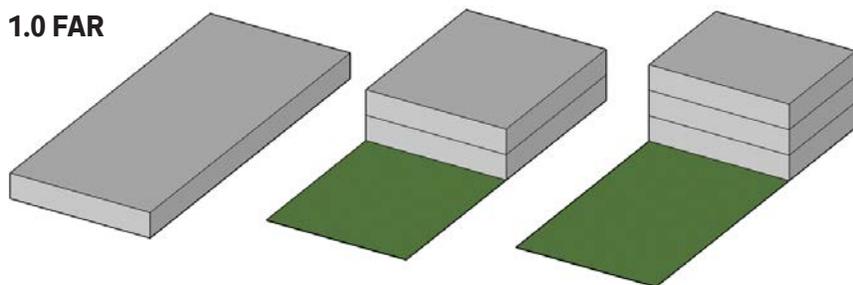
## Maximum Floor Area Ratio Limit

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Under current regulations, no maximum floor area ratio (FAR) limit applies to development in single-family zones. The maximum size of a principal structure (i.e., the main house) is effectively set by the yard requirements, height limit, and lot coverage limit.

**Alternative 2.** Like Alternative 1 (No Action), no FAR limit would apply in Alternative 2.

**Alternative 3.** The proposed code changes under Alternative 3 include a maximum FAR limit for development in single-family zones. Lots in single-family zones would be subject to a maximum floor area limit of 0.5 FAR or 2,500 square feet, whichever is greater. Below-grade floor area (e.g., basements) and floor area in a DADU would be exempt from the floor area calculations.

**1.0 FAR**



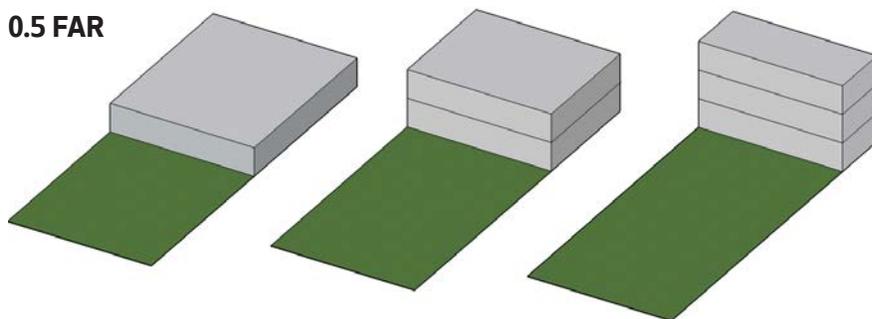
**1 story**  
(100% lot coverage)

**2 stories**  
(50% lot coverage)

**3 stories**  
(33% lot coverage)

**Exhibit 2-9**  
Illustrations of  
FAR Limits

**0.5 FAR**



**1 story**  
(50% lot coverage)

**2 stories**  
(25% lot coverage)

**3 stories**  
(17% lot coverage)

On some lots, existing development exceeds these limits. On a lot exceeding the floor area limit (0.5 FAR or 2,500 square feet), existing floor area could be converted into an AADU or a DADU, and a DADU could be constructed in a new accessory structure, subject to the previously described size limits for ADUs.

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