

Accessory Dwelling Units

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Seattle Planning Commission

February 14, 2019



City of Seattle

What are ADUs?

small, secondary units associated with a single-family home

backyard cottages



carriage house



**garden apartments
basement suite**



Why encourage ADUs?

New rental housing choices in single-family zones.

More affordable than single-family homes, which most people cannot afford.

Allow homeowners to generate supplemental income and adapt to their changing household needs.

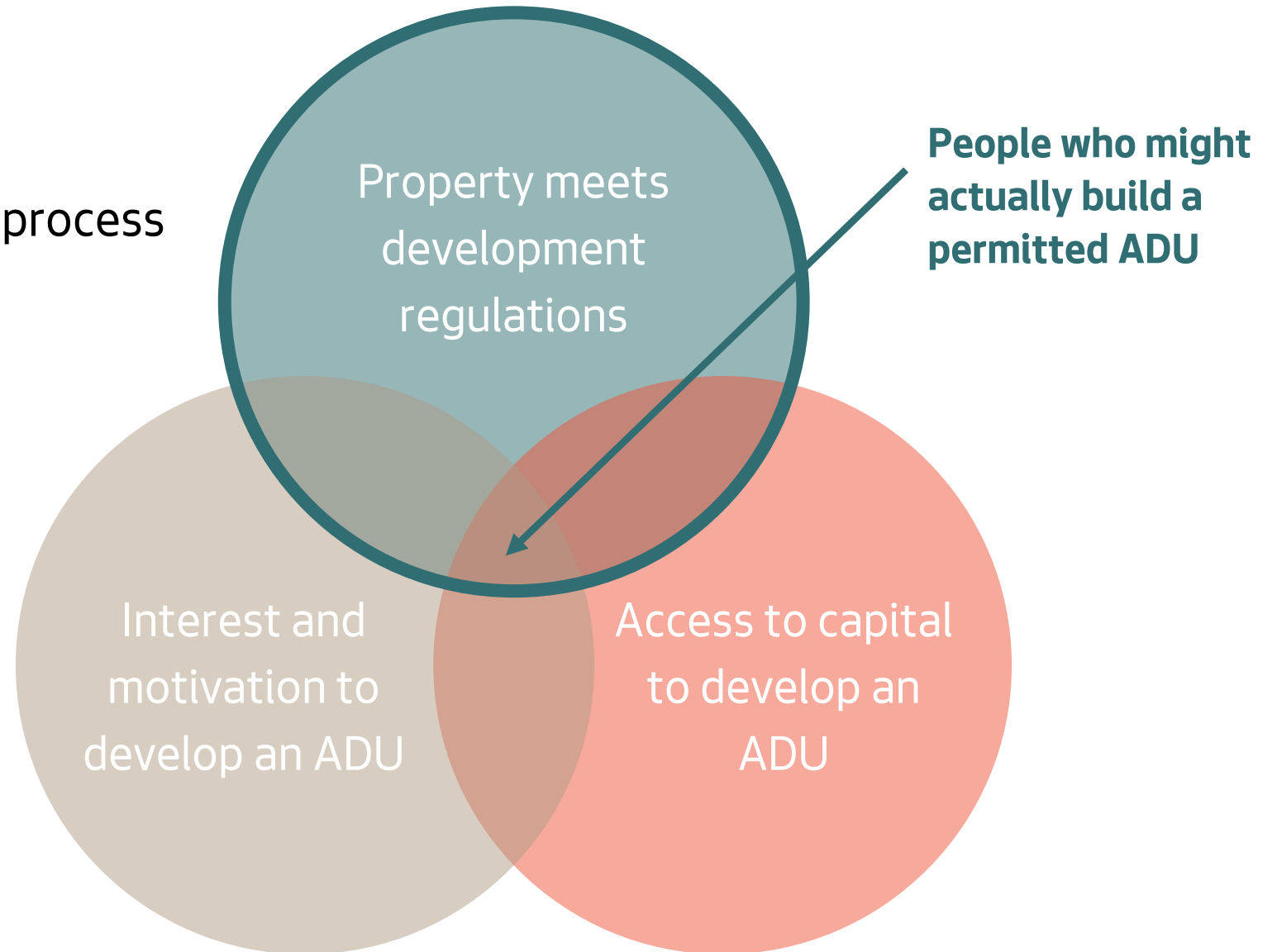
ADUs allowed since 1994,
but **less than two percent**
of Seattle properties
have an ADU.



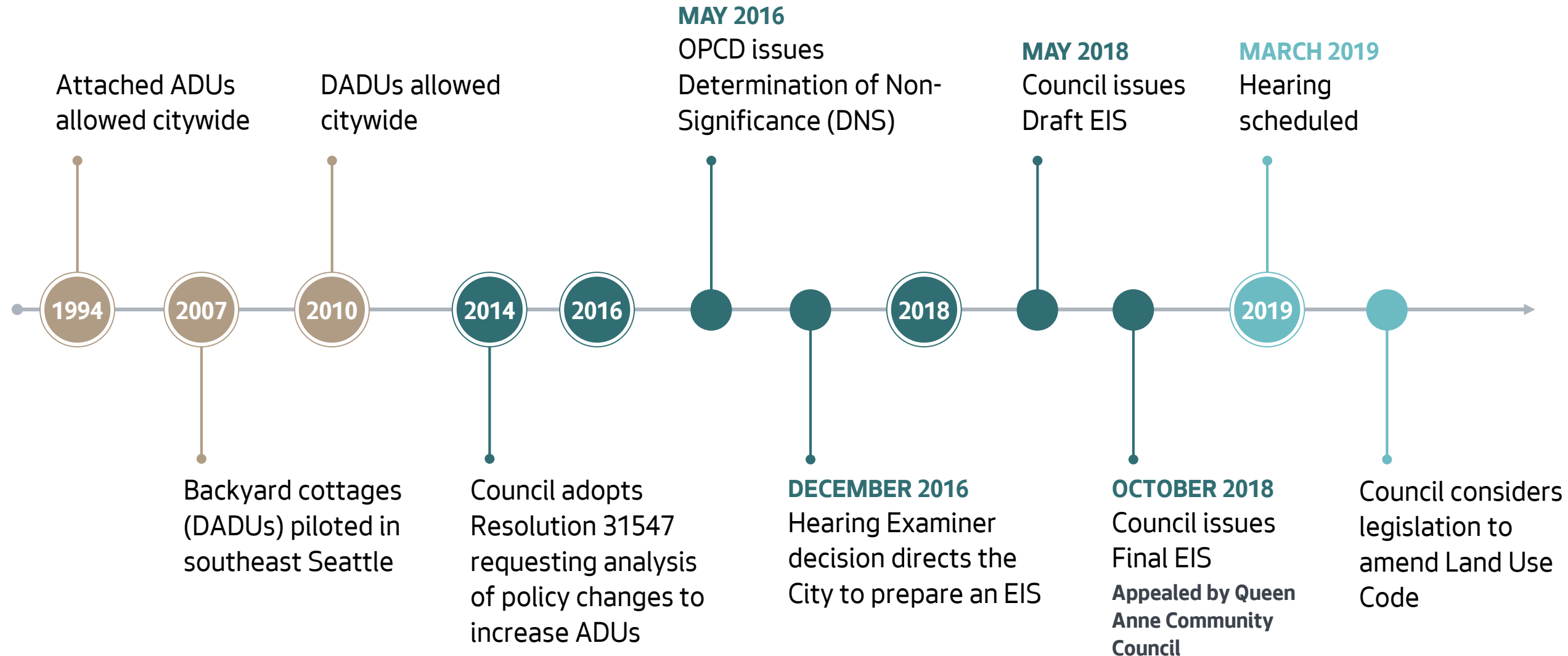
579 backyard cottages and **1,592**
in-law units among **135,000** lots in
single-family zones.

Why don't we have more ADUs?

- ▶ Regulatory barriers
- ▶ Complex design and permitting process
- ▶ Capital cost and financing



Removing regulatory barriers to ADUs



ADU EIS objectives

1

Remove regulatory barriers to make it easier for property owners to permit and build AADUs and DADUs

2

Increase the number and variety of housing choices in single-family zones

EIS alternatives

	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Preferred Alternative
Number of ADUs allowed per lot	1 AADU or 1 DADU	1 AADU and 1 DADU	1 AADU and 1 DADU, or 2 AADUs	1 AADU and 1 DADU, or 2 AADUs A second ADU can be added if a lot has been in the same ownership for at least one year
Parking requirements	1 off-street parking space required for an ADU	No off-street parking required	Same as Alternative 1	No off-street parking required
Owner-occupancy requirements	An owner must occupy the house or ADU for six months of the year	No requirement	Same as Alternative 1	No requirement One year of continuous ownership required to establish a second ADU
Min. lot size for a DADU	4,000 sq. ft.	3,200 sq. ft.	3,200 sq. ft.	3,200 sq. ft.
Maximum ADU size	AADU 1,000 sq. ft. DADU 800 sq. ft. includes garage & storage areas	AADU 1,000 sq. ft. DADU 1,000 sq. ft. excludes garage & storage areas	AADU 1,000 sq. ft. DADU 1,000 sq. ft. includes garage & storage areas	AADU 1,000 sq. ft. DADU 1,000 sq. ft. excludes garage & storage areas
Maximum DADU height	Maximum height limits vary by lot width and range from 15 to 23 feet	1-3 feet higher, depending on lot width 1-2 additional feet for green roof	1-3 feet higher, depending on lot width	1-3 feet higher, depending on lot width 1-2 additional feet for a DADU that incorporates green building strategies
Rear yard coverage	40 percent	60 percent if the DADU is 15 feet or less in height Rear yard coverage for other structures cannot exceed 40 percent		60 percent if the DADU is 15 feet or less in height, subject to limitations on tree removal
Maximum household size	8 unrelated people	8 unrelated people If the lot has 2 ADUs, the limit is 12	Same as Alternative 1	8 unrelated people If the lot has 2 ADUs, the limit is 12
Maximum FAR limit	No FAR limit applies to development in single-family zones	Same as Alternative 1	Development limited to 0.5 FAR or 2,500 square feet, whichever is greater Floor area below grade or in a DADU is exempt	Development limited to 0.5 FAR or 2,500 square feet, whichever is greater Floor area below grade or in an ADU is exempt

Planning Commission comment

- ▶ Do not apply Code requirements to ADUs at this time
- ▶ Apply FAR limits to development in single-family zones
- ▶ Remove the owner-occupancy requirement
- ▶ Reduce pre-development costs to encourage ADU production, especially for lower-income homeowners
- ▶ Reduce minimum lot size
- ▶ Support providing potential ADU owners with additional resources to facilitate development of AADUs and DADUs throughout Seattle. Some ideas for resources include:
 - ▶ Slightly increase height limit for DADUs on certain lots
 - + A step-by-step guide to the permitting process for an ADU;
 - ▶ Increase the rear yard coverage limit for ADU owners, DADUs, and builders;
 - ▶ Encourage flexibility in the allowed household size on lots with an AADU and/or DADU
 - + Additional options to reduce the financial barriers to building ADUs, including access to financing for lower-income homeowners



June 20, 2018

Ms. Aly Pennucci
Seattle City Council Central Staff
via E-mail

Dear Ms. Pennucci:

The Planning Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide our comments on the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). ADUs support many of the housing goals and policies in the City's Comprehensive Plan. We have been consistent supporters of ADUs as a means to increase housing supply while providing a mix of housing that is accessible to a variety of household types. The Planning Commission strongly supports proposals that would incentivize production of ADUs as we continue our work to provide greater diversity and supply of housing options in neighborhoods currently zoned Single-family throughout the city. This includes changing regulations in the Land Use Code to remove barriers to the permitting and construction of ADUs in Single-family zones.

In March 2016, we submitted a preliminary comment letter to Councilmembers Rob Johnson and Mike O'Brien with our guidance and recommendations to encourage increased production of ADUs. In October 2017, we submitted a scoping comment letter with our input on issues to be studied in the EIS. With the recent publication of the DEIS, we commend the analysis of the three alternatives and appreciate the responsiveness to our suggestions, especially in the Land Use, Housing & Socioeconomics, and Transportation chapters.

The purpose of this letter is to identify components of the alternatives studied in the DEIS that the Planning Commission recommends be included with the preferred alternative. We would like to reiterate our recommendations to modify the Land Use Code and add flexibility to development standards to encourage increased production of ADUs. These recommendations are:

- **Modify the Code to allow more than one ADU per lot.** Current City code states that a lot with or proposed for a single-family house may have only one accessory unit. Regulatory changes studied under Alternatives 2 and 3 would modify the Land Use Code to allow more than one ADU, either both an attached ADU (AADU) and a detached ADU (DADU) or two AADUs, on suitable lots with a single-family home as the primary unit. The Planning Commission supports allowing two ADUs to maximize opportunities for housing within the allowable

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Changes in real estate economics

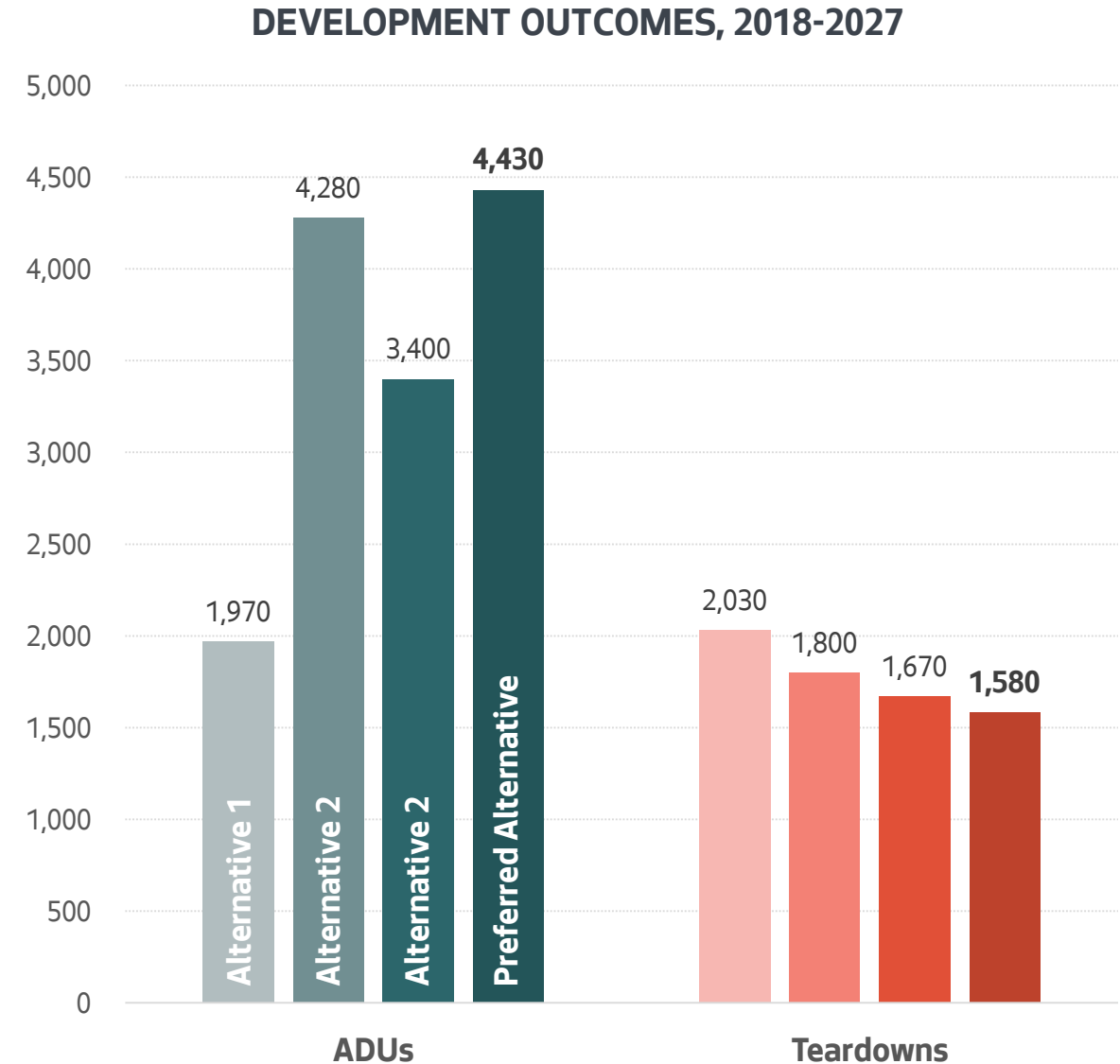
Could the proposed changes make property in single-family zones more attractive as rental investments than owner-occupied assets?

Highest and best use analysis identifies the most economically productive use of property.

- 1** What can you build on a lot in a single-family zone?
- 2** After it is built, what can you do with it? Sell it? Rent it?
- 3** Based on market conditions, how much rental or sales income can you expect?
- 4** Which combination of steps 1-3 maximizes the profitability of the project?

Estimating ADU production and single-family teardowns

- 1 Analyze historical data on single-family development
- 2 Create a baseline forecast of 2018-2027 development in Alternative 1 (No Action)
- 3 Develop forecasts for action alternatives, accounting for effects of policy changes



Elements of the environment

Housing and socioeconomics

Land use

Aesthetics

Parking and transportation

Public services and utilities

Other ADU efforts

- ▶ Racial Equity Toolkit (RET)
- ▶ Pre-approved DADU plans
- ▶ Better resources for future ADU owners
- ▶ Opportunities to support / deliver affordable ADUs

Thank you

More information available at seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS.

Aly Pennucci

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City of Seattle