



# Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

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backyard cottages and in-law apartments

Urban Forestry  
Commission  
June 13, 2018

# Agenda

1. Background on accessory dwelling units
2. Draft EIS overall approach
3. Findings related to tree canopy
4. Discussion

# What is an accessory dwelling unit?

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A detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU) is a secondary unit located in a separate structure from the principal dwelling unit (i.e., the main house). DADUs are often called **backyard cottages**.

An attached accessory dwelling unit (AADU) is a secondary unit located within or connected to the main house. AADUs are often called **basement apartments**.



# Why do we want to encourage ADUs?

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Increase ADU production as just one part of our overall housing strategy

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Create new rental housing choices in single-family zones, where new housing options are few and housing is unaffordable to most residents

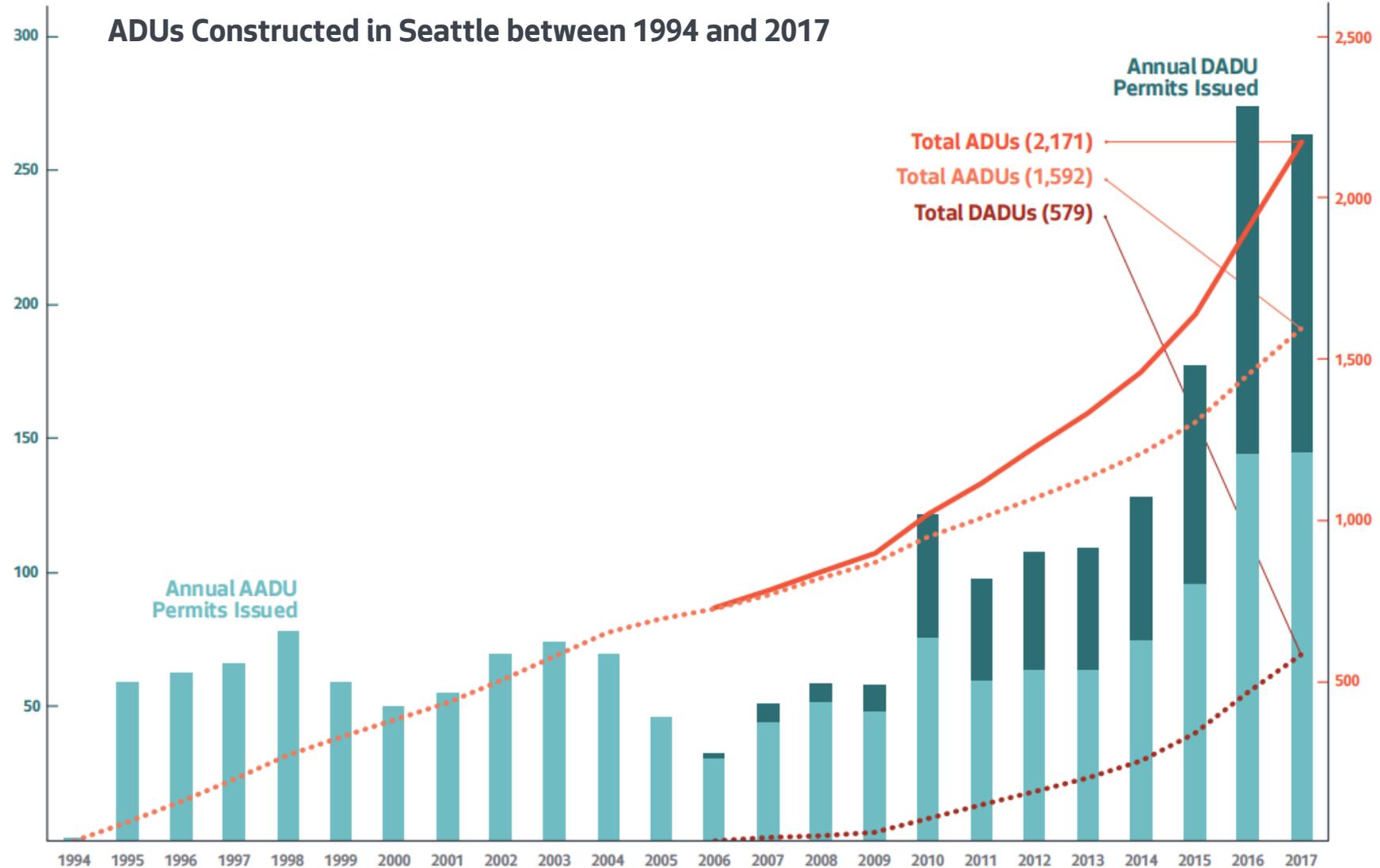
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Make it easier for homeowners to generate supplemental income and adapt to their changing household needs

# ADUs in Seattle

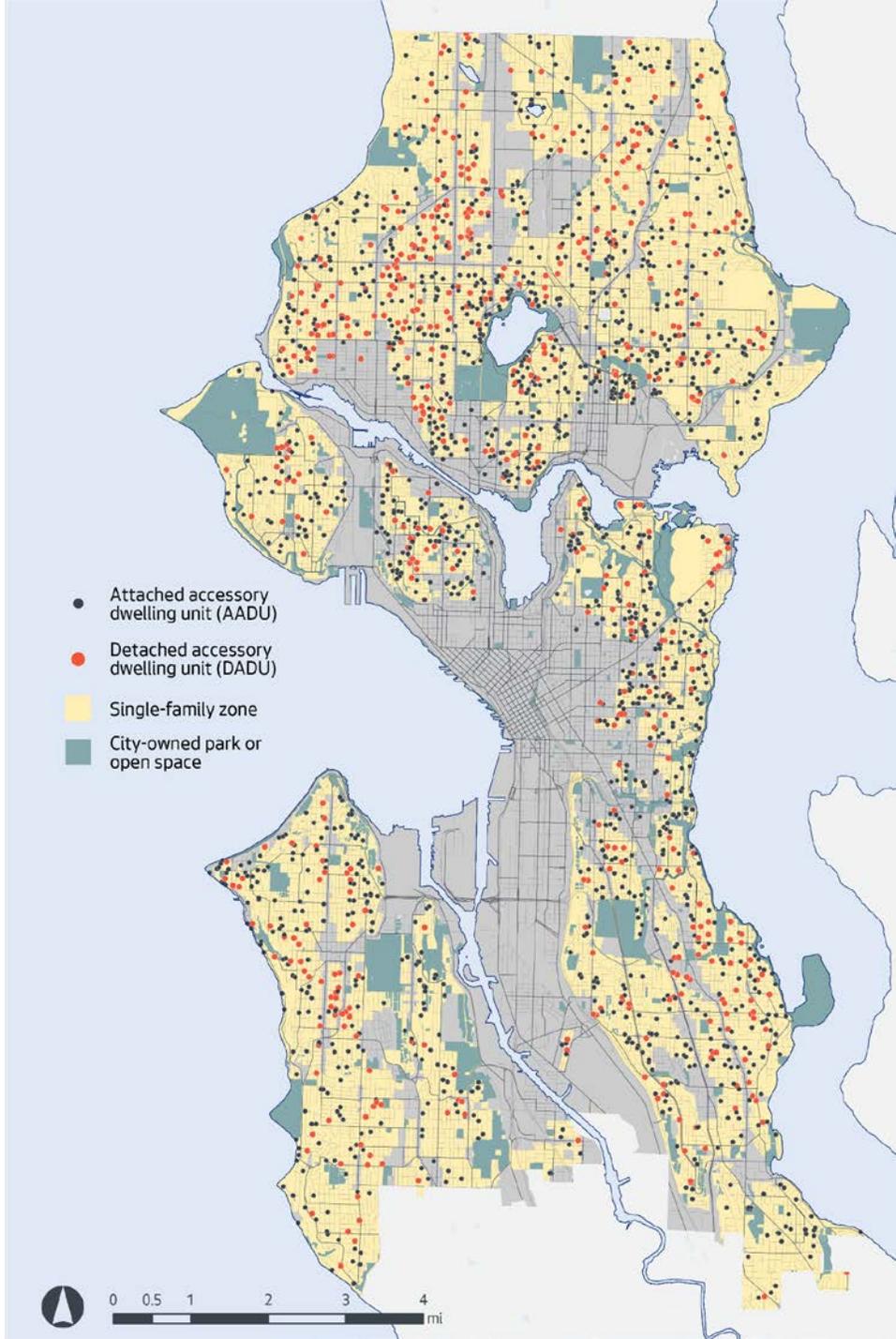
**ADUs have been allowed** within a single-family house since 1994 and in backyard since 2010

**Less than two percent** of Seattle's 135,000 single-family lots have an ADU



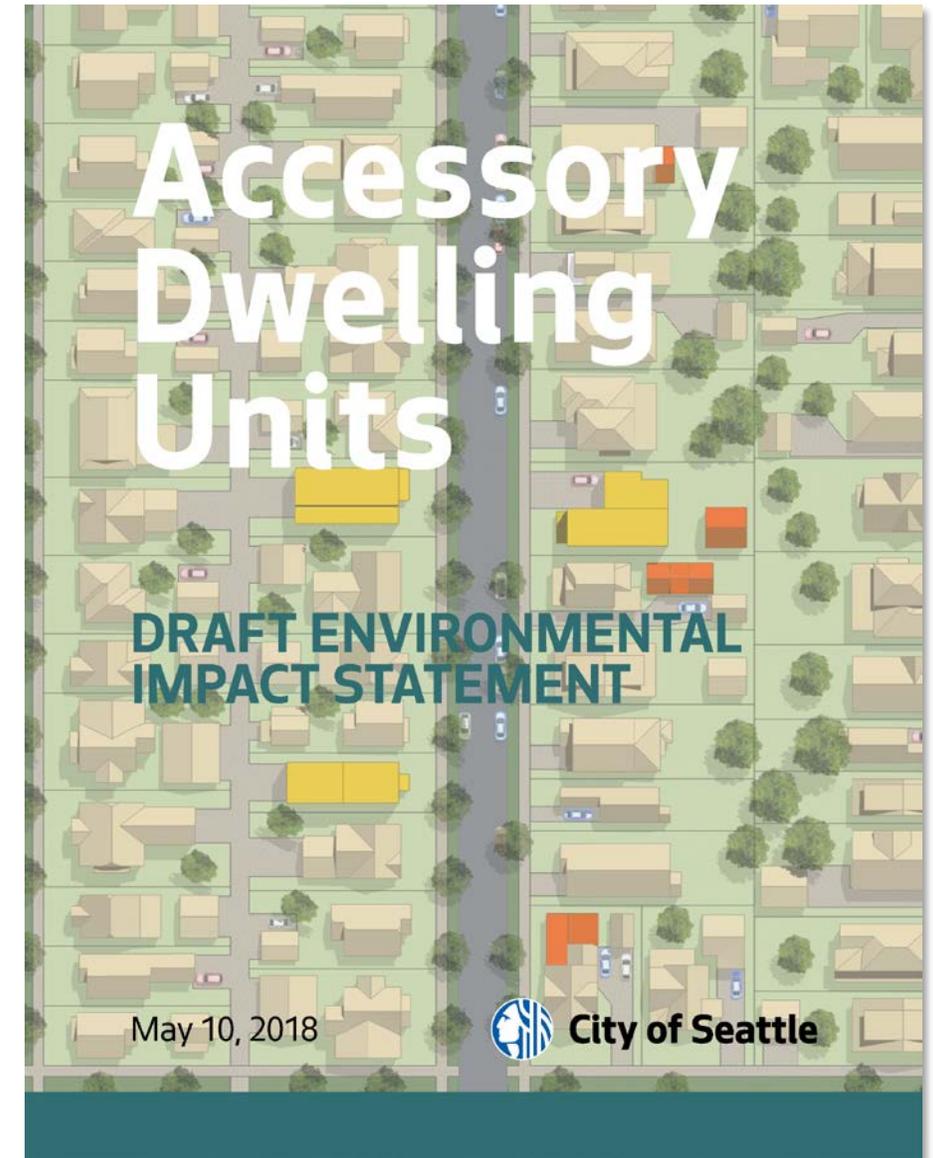
# ADUs in Seattle

- ▶ Since their legalization citywide in 2010, about 550 DADUs have been permitted (average of 69 per year)
- ▶ Dispersed throughout Seattle's single-family zones



# Removing barriers to ADUs

- ▶ In 2014, City Council Resolution 31547 directed us to study ways to remove code barriers to ADUs
- ▶ On May 10, 2018, we issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluating proposed code changes
  - + removing off-street parking requirement
  - + removing owner-occupancy requirement
  - + allowing 2 ADUs on one lot
  - + allowing slightly larger/taller DADUs to facilitate family-size units
- ▶ Comments welcome through June 25, 2018



# Draft EIS alternatives

Key features	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
<b>Owner-occupancy requirements</b>	Owner must live on site	No owner-occupancy requirement	Same as Alternative 1 (No Action)
<b>Parking</b>	1 parking space required	No off-street parking requirement	Same as Alternative 1 (No Action)
<b>ADUs allowed per lot</b>	1 ADU per lot maximum	1 DADU + 1 AADU	1 DADU + 1 AADU or 2 AADUs
<b>Maximum gross floor area</b>	AADUs 1000 sf DADUs 800 sf including garage/storage	AADUs 1000 sf DADUs 1000 sf excluding garage/storage	AADUs 1000 sf DADUs 1000 sf including garage/storage
<b>Maximum lot coverage</b>	<b>No change from current regulations</b> <i>35% (for lots ≥ 5,000 sf) or 15% + 1000 sf (for lots &lt; 5,000 sf)</i>		
<b>Maximum rear yard coverage</b>	40%	60 percent if DADU is 15 feet in height or less	Same as Alternative 2

# What have we learned in the Draft EIS?

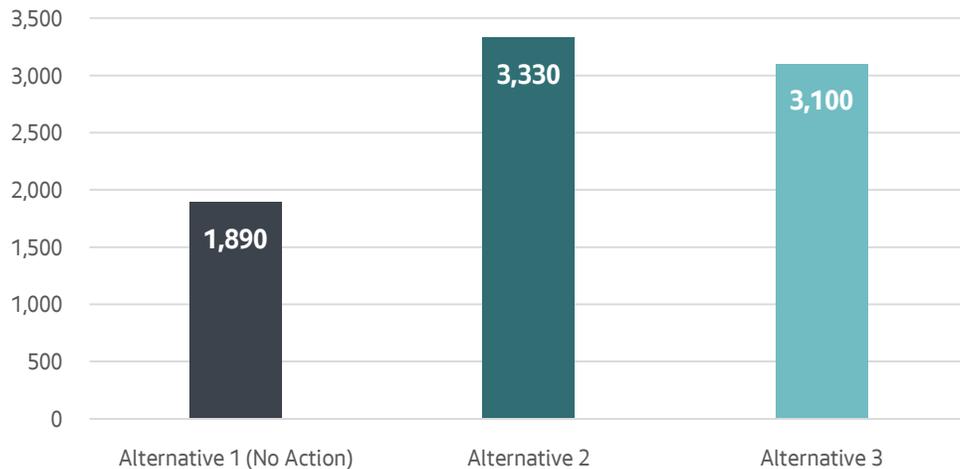
- ▶ The proposal would result in about 1,400 more ADUs across Seattle over 10 years

- + This could reduce economic displacement by creating new housing choices

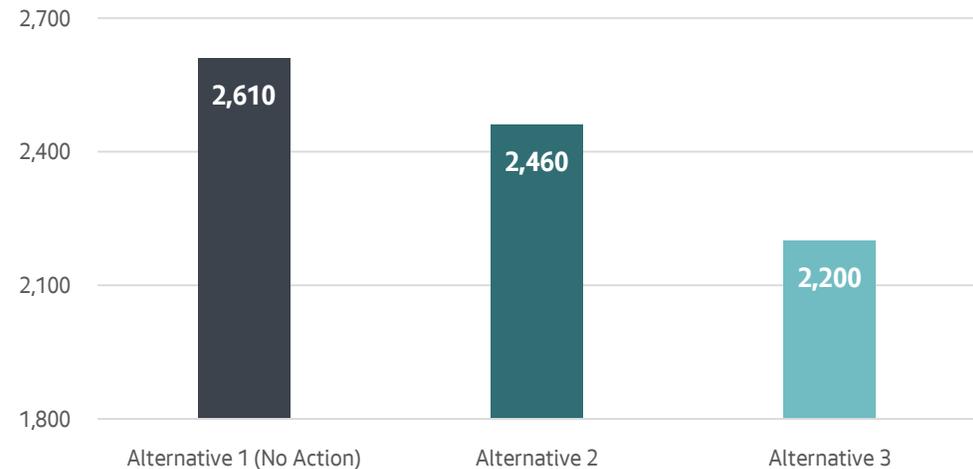
- ▶ It would also decrease the number of homes torn down by about 16 percent

- + This could reduce physical displacement by decreasing demolitions

Estimated Citywide ADU Production over 10 Years



Estimated Homes Torn Down and Rebuilt over 10 Years



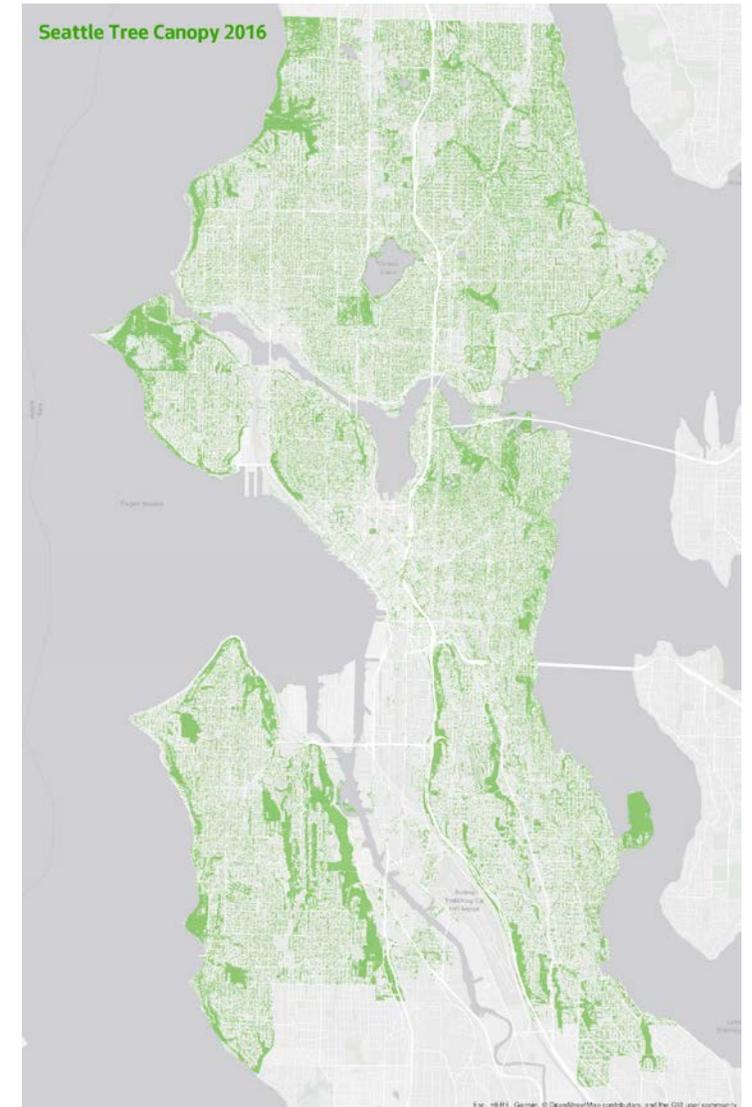
# What have we learned in the Draft EIS?

**We used residual land value (RLV) analysis to identify highest and best use for different lot types in different market areas.**

- ▶ In most cases, the most profitable option is to build the largest possible house
  - + In some cases, a new house with no ADU
  - + In other cases, a new house with 1 or 2 ADUs
- ▶ In all scenarios, short-term rental is less profitable than long-term rental
- ▶ Proposal would decrease the feasibility of tearing down existing houses

# What does the Draft EIS say about trees?

- ▶ Typical single-family houses are 1-2 stories, surrounded by yards and open space that support the growth of large trees. This open space provides much of the city's tree canopy.
- ▶ Comp Plan goal: increasing canopy coverage to 30% by 2037.
- ▶ 2016 LiDAR data shows:
  - + Overall, Seattle has 28% tree canopy cover.
  - + Single-family residential areas account for 63% of Seattle's canopy cover.
  - + 72% of Seattle's tree canopy is deciduous and 28% is coniferous. Most conifers are in single-family residential areas (52 percent).



# What does the Draft EIS say about trees?

- ▶ 340-390 additional DADUs under the action alternatives could result in more vegetation and tree removal than under Alternative 1 (No Action) as more property owners would use some of their rear yard for the footprint of a DADU.
- ▶ Single-family residential areas currently provide 9,574 acres of tree canopy cover. If all 390 additional DADUs maximize the size limit of 1,000 square feet, the total footprint of DADUs would be just under nine acres, or less than 0.1 percent of the total tree canopy.

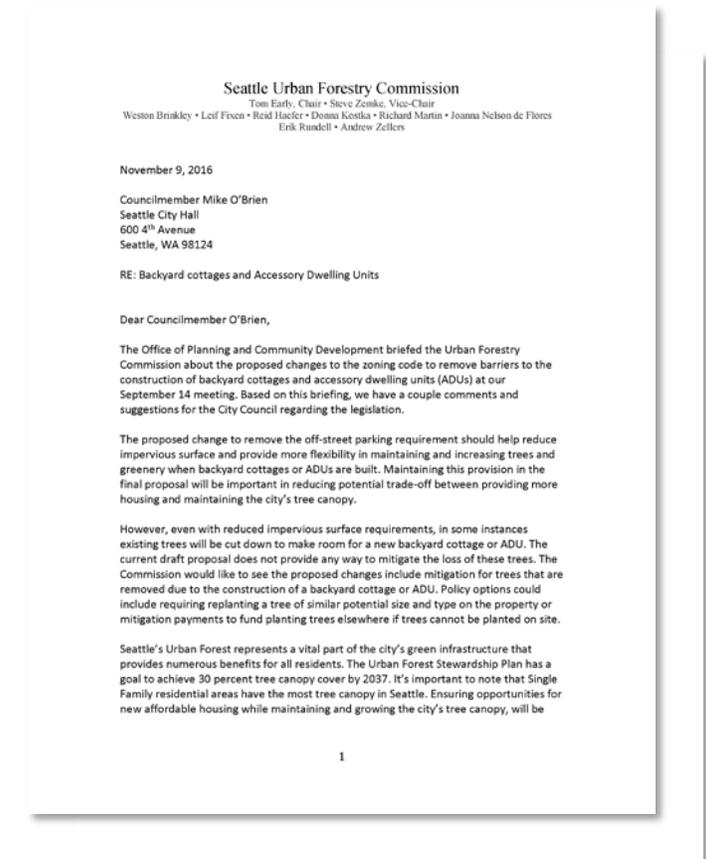
Number of DADUs, 2018-2027	
Alt 1 (No Action)	990
Alt 2	1,380
Alt 3	1,330

# What does the Draft EIS say about trees?

- ▶ Removing the off-street parking requirement in Alternative 2 reduce the amount of vegetation and tree removal otherwise needed for off-street parking.
- ▶ The proposed FAR limit in Alternative 3 would tend to reduce the footprint of new houses, which would also reduce the potential for impacts to tree canopy and vegetation.
- ▶ Under Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance (SMC 25.11) the City would review tree removal required for constructing a DADU as part of the permit application. Exceptional trees could be removed only if protecting the tree during construction would prevent use of the maximum allowed lot coverage.
- ▶ CM Johnson is leading an effort to update the City's Tree Protection Ordinance to create stronger protections for existing trees and introduce new mitigation measures.

# Urban Forestry Commission letter (Nov 2016)

Recommendation	ADU Environmental Impact Statement
<p>Remove the off-street parking requirement to reduce the trade-off between more housing and maintaining canopy.</p>	<p>Included in Alternative 2</p>
<p>Include mitigation for trees removed due to the construction of an ADU. Policy options could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• requiring replanting a tree of similar potential size and type on the property</li> <li>• mitigation payments to fund planting trees elsewhere if trees cannot be planted on site</li> </ul>	<p>Proposed tree policy framework would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply in single-family zones</li> <li>• require a permit to remove trees &gt; 12" or otherwise designated</li> <li>• require replanting or offset fund payment</li> </ul>



# Thank you

- ▶ Review and comment on the Draft EIS at [seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS](https://seattle.gov/council/ADU-EIS).
- ▶ For more information or if you have questions:

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