4.3 Aesthetics

This section analyzes the scale and form of existing development in single-family zones in Seattle. We identify the potential aesthetic impacts to height, bulk, and scale that could occur under each alternative for the proposed action. Aesthetic impacts are defined by how the Land Use Code changes contemplated under Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative would affect the visual character of single-family zones. We have prepared and analyzed three-dimensional visual simulations to illustrate potential impacts of continued development of ADUs under Alternative 1 (No Action) and the proposed Land Use Code changes under Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative.

4.3.1 Affected Environment

As described in Section 4.2 Land Use, zoning and development regulations govern development in Seattle. These regulations determine the allowed uses and physical form of new buildings, which together influence urban form. This section describes the existing urban form and regulations that currently govern development in single-family zones in the study area.

SEATTLE MUNICIPAL CODE

The City regulates the form of development to achieve several goals, including aesthetic quality, transitions in scale and intensity, and environmental protection. The City's SEPA policies for regulating the height, bulk, and scale of development are as follows (SMC 25.05.675.G.2.a):

> It is the City's policy that the height, bulk, and scale of development projects should be reasonably compatible with the general character of development anticipated by the goals and policies set forth in the Land Use Element, Growth Strategy Element, and Shoreline Element of

the Seattle Comprehensive Plan; the procedures and locational criteria for shoreline environment redesignations set forth in Sections 23.60A.060 and 23.60A.220; and the adopted land use regulations for the area in which they are located, and to provide for a reasonable transition between areas of less intensive zoning and more intensive zoning.

CURRENT URBAN FORM

The form of existing development varies widely across single-family zones in Seattle; therefore, a comprehensive summary is not possible. However, because the proposed Land Use Code changes would affect infill development in already developed neighborhoods, documenting common built form conditions provides a baseline for analyzing the aesthetic impacts of each alternative.

The study area consists of neighborhoods with homes of varying size and age. Generally, older homes are one- or two-story structures (Exhibit 4.3-1) and are smaller than the allowed three-dimensional space new single-family development can occupy (called the "zoning envelope"). Many recently built homes are three stories and fill the allowed zoning envelope (Exhibit 4.3-2). Most areas with single-family zoning in Seattle have an established pattern of development that spans several decades; a typical block has houses with an age of 50 years or older. Houses set back 10 to 15 feet from the street and front yards planted with grass or other ornamental landscaping characterize many single-family-zoned areas in Seattle.

Building Setbacks

Building setbacks are the minimum distance that zoning regulations require between two structures or between a structure and the property line.

Exhibit 4.3-1
Typical Existing Houses in Seattle ~~(Seattle 2018)~~

Exhibit 4.3-2
Recently Constructed Houses in Seattle that Maximize the Allowed Zoning Envelope ~~(Seattle 2018)~~

Incremental redevelopment in Seattle's single-family zones is ongoing and expected. Existing regulations allow construction of new detached single-family residences in single-family zones. New single-family residences that replace existing older ones typically maximize the size allowed under current Land Use Code regulations, which results in many new houses being larger than surrounding older residences. Newer houses often exhibit modern designs and different architectural characteristics than older structures. This type of development influences the aesthetic character of a neighborhood. The City does not require new development in single-family zones to go through Design Review.

By regulating the overall bulk of buildings through minimum setback requirements and limits on building height, density, floor area ratio (FAR), and lot coverage, the City can influence the overall aesthetic quality in a given location.

Maximum height and FAR limits both directly influence how intensive a development appears. We often describe this perceived intensity in terms of bulk and scale. Increases in FAR and height together create greater "bulk." For example, a tall, skinny building will occupy less of its building site and appear less "bulky" (although taller) than a relatively short building with the same FAR, even though both contain the same volume. Bulk is the qualitative visible composition and perceived shape of a structure's volume. Which form is preferable or perceived as more attractive is both subjective and dependent on the surrounding context. Visual scale, meanwhile, is the relationship of a building in terms of its size, height, and bulk to its surroundings. A building's scale is contextual in nature and affects how well it blends in with the neighborhood. Changes in scale can create aesthetic impacts if new development differs in bulk and scale from the surrounding neighborhood.

ADUs have been allowed citywide as part of a single-family residence or in the rear yard of a single-family-zoned lot since 1994 and 2010, respectively. ADUs exist throughout the study area and are compatible with the scale and urban form of Seattle's single-family zones. Exhibit 4.3-3 shows photographs of DADUs in Seattle. Exhibit 4.3-4 shows a visual representation of a typical existing single-family area, including detached single-family houses, ADUs, and other accessory structures.

Floor Area Ratio

Floor area ratio (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 must adhere to 0.5 FAR, 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 4.3-3
DADUs in Seattle
Source: Sheri Newbold of live-work-play architecture (top). CAST Architecture (bottom).

Exhibit 4.3-4 Visual Representation of Existing Conditions in a Single-Family Zone

TREE CANOPY

Tree canopy provides aesthetic and health benefits to residents and contributes to the overall livability of communities. The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies for the preservation and expansion of Seattle's tree canopy (Seattle 2017). See Section 4.2, Land Use, for a discussion of existing tree canopy cover and vegetation and potential impacts resulting from the alternatives.

4.3.2 Impacts

This section describes the potential aesthetic impacts from Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 and the Preferred Alternative in the study area. Given the large size of the study area, we primarily discuss aesthetic impacts qualitatively; however, we also developed and analyzed three-dimensional models to help visualize and evaluate the potential impacts of Land Use Code changes. We recognize that evaluating aesthetic impacts is subjective and can vary depending on an individual's perspectives and preferences. This section analyzes the potential visual impacts from changes to the form of new development under each alternative in terms of height, bulk, and scale.

~~Alternatives 2 and 3~~ The action alternatives differ in the degree and focus of the proposed changes. Alternative 2 and the Preferred Alternative represent~~s~~ the broadest range of Land Use Code changes, which would allow the greatest flexibility for constructing ADUs and potentially create more extensive aesthetic impacts. Compared to Alternative 2 and the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 3 represents more modest Land Use Code changes that would result in fewer ADUs constructed and marginally fewer potential aesthetic impacts overall.

In general, the proposed Land Use Code changes under the action alternatives would result in creation of more ADUs compared to Alternative 1 (No Action). As described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, when compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2 could add about ~~1,440~~ 2,310 additional ADUs~~. and~~ Alternative 3 could add about ~~1,210~~ 1,430 additional ADUs, and the Preferred Alternative could add about 2,460 additional ADUs throughout the study area between 2018 and 2027. This additional ADU production would result in a minor increase in the scale and intensity of development.

Under any alternative, development of new buildings could contribute new sources of light and glare from additional night lighting, higher

visibility of interior lighting through windows at night, and reflection from windows. Although these light sources would increase, none of these sources is expected to cause adverse aesthetic impacts because many of these types of lights already exist in the study area. As such, we do not discuss light and glare further in this document.

The specific elements of the proposed Land Use Code changes that would affect the aesthetic character of the study area include:

- Number of ADUs allowed on a lot
- Minimum lot size for a DADU
- Off-street parking requirements
- Maximum size
- Maximum height
- Rear yard coverage limit
- Location of entries
- Roof features
- Maximum FAR limits

We did not consider the following proposed Land Use Code changes in our analysis of aesthetic impacts because they do not affect the aesthetic character of the study area: owner-occupancy requirements, household size, ~~MHA requirements~~ incentives for affordable housing, and ~~predevelopment~~ reduced development costs. No alternative contemplates a change to the overall lot coverage limit; therefore, we did not discuss it in this analysis.

METHODOLOGY

As described in more detail in Appendix C, we used three-dimensional visual modeling to illustrate the potential changes to the scale and form of development in the study area. The simulations provide representative views of potential development changes under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 and the Preferred Alternative on lots in single-family zones. For each alternative, we included multiple viewpoints using one representative neighborhood type (see the following exhibits).

To illustrate a range of typical conditions found across the study area, we created a hypothetical two-block scene consisting of 60 lots with seven distinct lot types. These lot types are based on actual lots found in representative locations in the study area and illustrate various lot sizes (ranging from 3,200 to 6,000 square feet), lot widths (ranging from 28 to 60 feet), and lot depths (ranging from 86 to 120 feet). One block includes

an alley, while the other does not, to illustrate varied frontage and vehicle access conditions. We also illustrate a corner lot condition where a rear yard abuts a side yard.

As a baseline for comparison, we illustrated the existing conditions in the model. While the two-block scene is hypothetical, the existing houses modeled are closely based on actual houses found in study area neighborhoods. We chose houses with a range of sizes and parking access conditions (e.g., detached and attached garages with alley access; detached and attached garages with front driveway access; driveway parking; or lots without off-street parking) to represent a realistic variety of conditions that are more or less conducive to adding ADUs. The baseline scenario shows ADUs at the approximate density they exist today.

For each alternative, we modeled two future scenarios: a 10-Year Scenario and a Full Build-Out Scenario. The 10-Year Scenario is based on the ADU production estimates described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, and is intended to illustrate realistic outcomes 10 years after implementing each alternative.[1] The 10-Year Scenario consists of lots with no changes, lots with new ADUs and no change to the main house, lots where a house is torn down and rebuilt without an ADU, and lots with both a new house and new ADU(s). The number of redeveloped lots and/or ADUs varies by alternative. The Full Build-Out Scenario is hypothetical and depicts the complete redevelopment of all lots with the largest possible main house and the maximum number of ADUs allowed. We do not expect this scenario to occur but include it here to illustrate the maximum scale of development allowed under each alternative. See Appendix C for additional details.

We included parked vehicles in the visual representations to illustrate approximately how the availability of on-street parking could vary across alternatives in the 10-Year and Full Build-Out scenarios. The vehicles shown are representative and does not directly correspond to the results of the parking analysis in Section 4.4 Parking and Transportation.

1 See Section 1.8 for a discussion of how we updated the methodology for calculating estimates of new ADUs and single-family demolitions since issuance of the Draft EIS.

MODEL RESULTS

Alternative 1 (No Action)

Under Alternative 1 (No Action), no Land Use Code changes would occur. Residential development would unfold over time that is consistent with the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations (as amended) (Seattle 2017). Existing houses on single-family lots would continue to be torn down and rebuilt and new ADUs would be constructed at their current rates.

However, Alternative 1 (No Action) would not result in significant aesthetic impacts beyond those analyzed in the Comprehensive Plan EIS (Seattle 2016). The current trajectory for the development of ADUs would continue, as would construction of new detached single-family houses under existing regulations. As described in Section 4.1 Housing and Socioeconomics, Alternative 1 (No Action) could result in about ~~1,890~~ 1,970 ADUs constructed and ~~2,610~~ 2,030 existing houses ~~being~~ torn down and rebuilt throughout the study area between 2018 and 2027. In our hypothetical two-block scene, this would result in the following development outcomes under the 10-Year Scenario:

- 2 lots with no ADUs where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 1 lot with a DADU where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 2 lots with an AADU where the main house is retained
- 1 lot with a DADU where the main house is retained
- 54 lots with no changes

Under the Full Build-Out Scenario, all lots in the two-block scene would redevelop based on the following assumptions:

- Maximized footprint of the main house on all lots based on allowed lot coverage while accommodating a DADU (where lot size allows) or an AADU and required off-street parking
- Maximized square footage of the main house on all lots, fully utilizing allowed building height
- Largest feasible DADU, where applicable

Exhibit 4.3-5 through Exhibit 4.3-7 show a plan view of development outcomes under Alternative 1 (No Action) under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Built-Out scenarios. Exhibit 4.3-8 through Exhibit 4.3-13 are visual representations of Alternative 1 (No Action) under each scenario. Newly constructed ADUs are highlighted with orange roofs.

Exhibit 4.3-5 Plan View of Development of Alternative 1 (No Action) under Existing Conditions

Exhibit 4.3-6 Plan View of Development Outcomes of Alternative 1 (No Action) in the 10-Year Scenario

Exhibit 4.3-7 Plan View of Development Outcomes of Alternative 1 (No Action) in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

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Exhibit 4.3-8 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 1 (No Action) under Existing Conditions

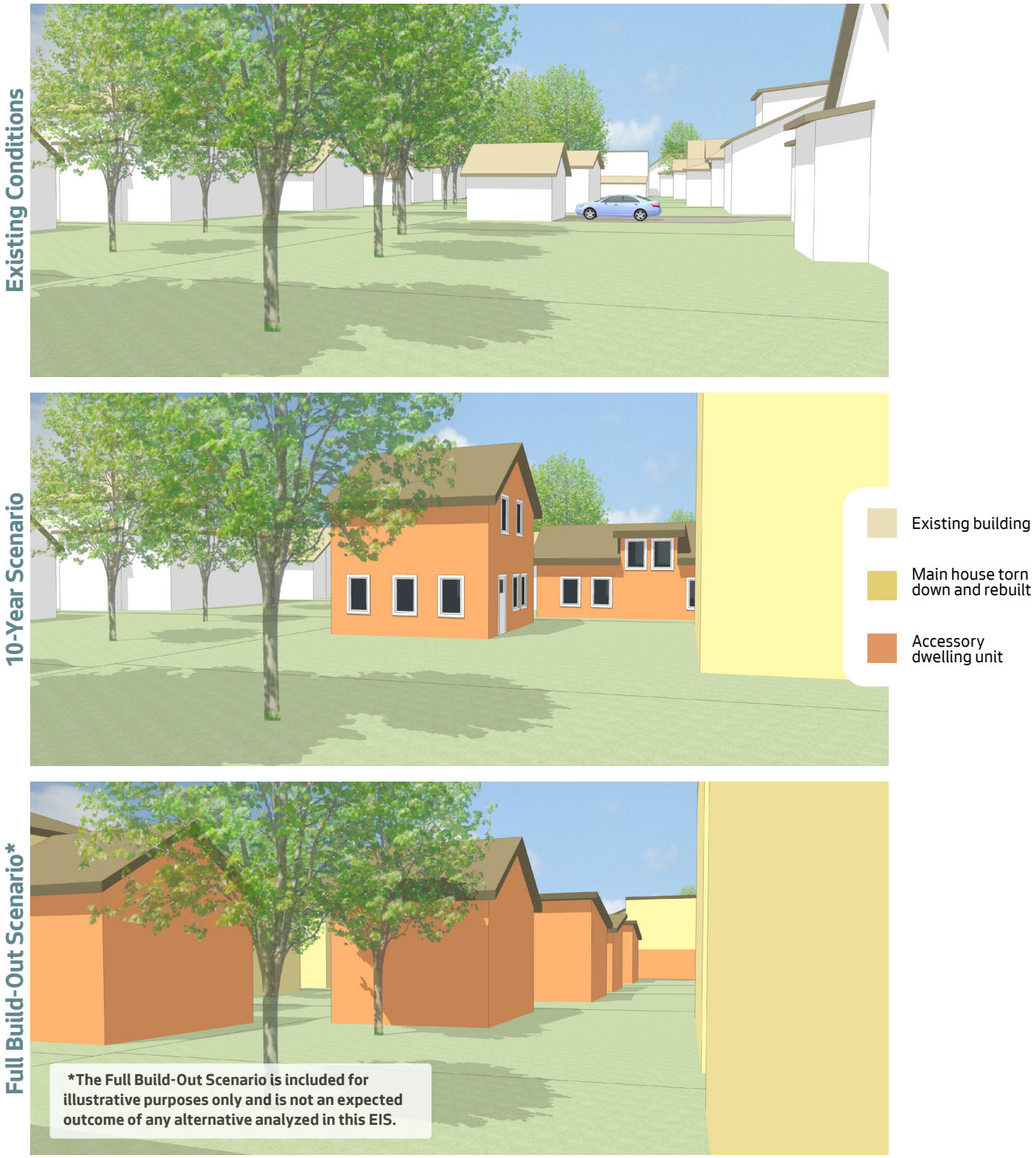
Exhibit 4.3-9 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 1 (No Action) in the 10-Year Scenario

Exhibit 4.3-10 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 1 (No Action) in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

Exhibit 4.3-11 Visual Representation of Alternative 1 (No Action) under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Exhibit 4.3-12 Visual Representation of Alternative 1 (No Action) under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Exhibit 4.3-13 Visual Representation of Alternative 1 (No Action) from a Rear Yard under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios



Alternative 2

As described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, Alternative 2 would result in about ~~3,330~~ 4,280 ADUs constructed and ~~2,460~~ 1,800 existing main houses torn down and rebuilt throughout the study area between 2018 and 2027. Compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2 could result in ~~1,440~~ 2,310 additional ADUs constructed and ~~150~~ 230 fewer houses torn down and rebuilt. In the two-block scene, Alternative 2 would result in the following development outcomes under the 10-Year Scenario:

- 2 lots with no ADUs where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 1 lot with a DADU where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- ~~1~~ 2 lots with an AADU where the main house is retained
- ~~1~~ 3 lots with a DADU where the main house is retained
- 1 lot with an AADU and a DADU where the main house is retained
- ~~54~~ 51 lots with no changes

Under the Full Build-Out Scenario, all lots in the two-block scene would redevelop based on the following assumptions:

- Maximized footprint of main house on all lots based on allowed lot coverage while accommodating a DADU
- Maximized square footage of the main house, with an AADU on its ground floor,[2] fully utilizing allowed building height
- Largest feasible DADU on all lots

Exhibit 4.3-14 through Exhibit 4.3-16 show a plan view of the development outcomes under Alternative 2 under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out scenarios. Exhibit 4.3-17 through Exhibit 4.3-22 are visual representations of Alternative 2 under each scenario. Newly constructed ADUs are highlighted with orange roofs

2 Although we concluded in the housing analysis that most AADUs would be constructed in the basements of existing houses, we assume in this aesthetics analysis that any AADU would be constructed as an addition to the main house. This allows us to consider scenarios with the highest level of anticipated change to the visual environment.

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Exhibit 4.3-14 Plan View of Development of Alternative 2 under Existing Conditions

Exhibit 4.3-15 Plan View of Development Outcomes of Alternative 2 in the 10-Year Scenario

Exhibit 4.3-16 Plan View of Development Outcomes of Alternative 2 in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

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Exhibit 4.3-17 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 2 under Existing Conditions

Exhibit 4.3-18 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 2 in the 10-Year Scenario

Exhibit 4.3-19 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 2 in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

Exhibit 4.3-20 Visual Representation of Alternative 2 under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Exhibit 4.3-21 Visual Representation of Alternative 2 under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Exhibit 4.3-22 Visual Representation of Alternative 2 from a Rear Yard under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Alternative 3

In general, Alternative 3 seeks to encourage various housing types, including ADUs and smaller principal structures similar in scale to many existing houses in the study area. As a result, Alternative 3 would have fewer aesthetic impacts overall than Alternative 2 and the Preferred Alternative.

As described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, Alternative 3 could result in about ~~3,100~~ 3,400 ADUs constructed and ~~2,200~~ 1,670 existing houses torn down and rebuilt throughout the study area between 2018 and 2027. Compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 3 could result in ~~1,210~~ 1,430 additional ADUs constructed and ~~410~~ 360 fewer houses torn down and rebuilt. In the two-block scene, this would result in the following development outcomes in the 10-Year Scenario:

- 1 lot with no ADUs where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 1 lot with a DADU where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 2 lots with AADUs where the main house is retained
- 2 lots with DADUs where the main house is retained
- 1 lot with both an AADU and a DADU where the main house is retained
- 53 lots with no changes[3]

Under the Full Build-Out Scenario, all lots in the two-block scene would redevelop based on the following assumptions:

- Maximized footprint of main house on all lots based on allowed lot coverage while accommodating a DADU and required off-street parking
- Maximized square footage of main house on all lots up to the maximum FAR limit, utilizing allowed building height as applicable
- Largest feasible AADU on the ground floor of the main house
- Largest feasible DADU on all lots

Exhibit 4.3-23 through Exhibit 4.3-25 shows a plan view of the development outcomes of Alternative 3 under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out scenarios. Exhibit 4.3-26 through Exhibit 4.3-31 are visual representations of Alternative 3 under each scenario. Newly constructed ADUs are highlighted with orange roofs.

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3 When we apply our ADU production estimates to the two-block scene, Alternative 3 results in ~~two~~ one additional lot~~s~~ with an ADU~~s~~ compared to Alternative 2 and one fewer teardown. This reflects changes in profitability of different development outcomes under Alternative 3, partly because of the FAR limit that would apply to new development.

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Exhibit 4.3-23 Plan View of Development of Alternative 3 under Existing Conditions

Exhibit 4.3-24 Plan View of Development Outcomes of Alternative 3 in the 10-Year Scenario

Exhibit 4.3-25 Plan View of Development Outcomes of Alternative 2 in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

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Exhibit 4.3-26 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 3 under Existing Conditions

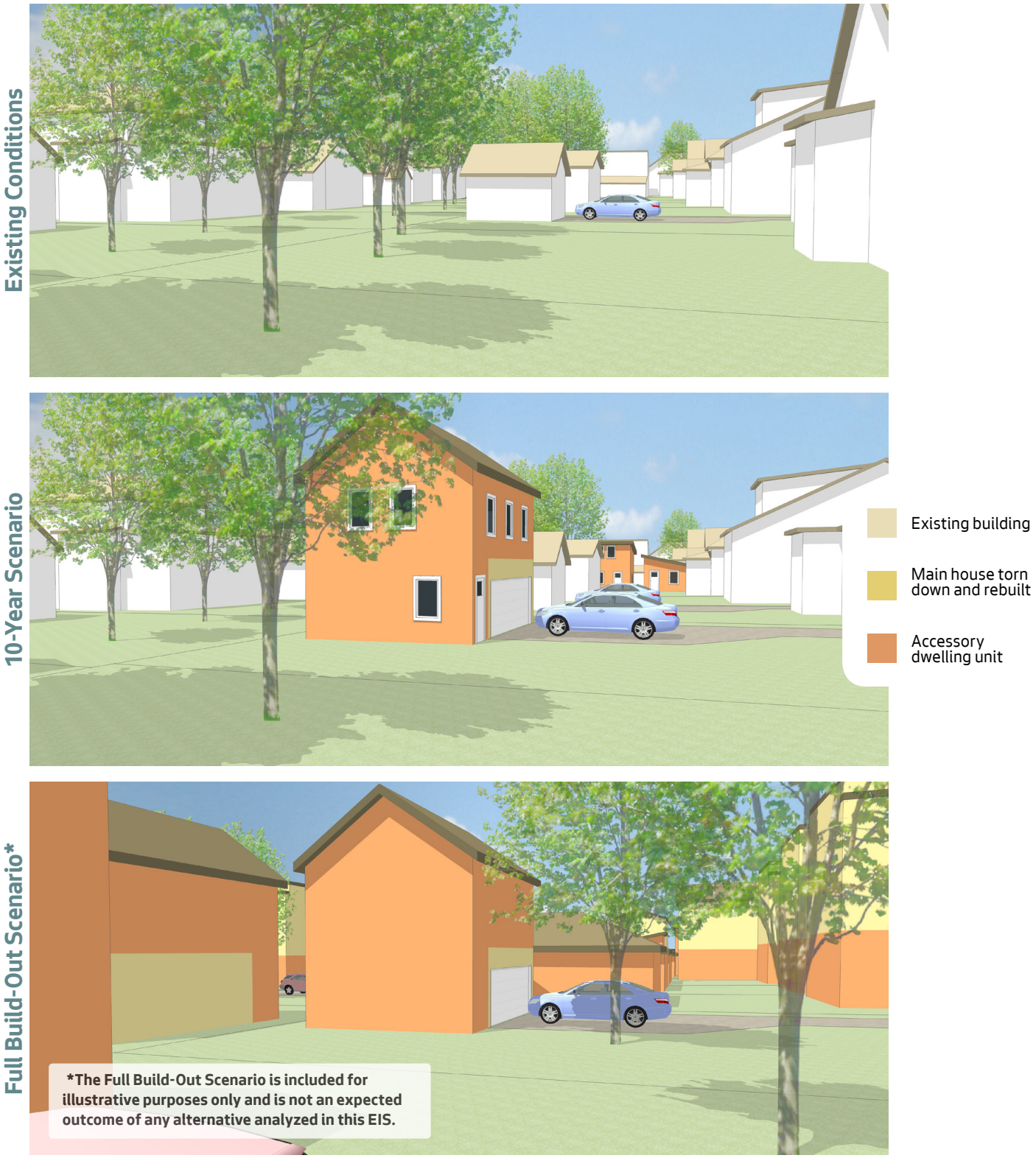
Exhibit 4.3-27 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 3 in the 10-Year Scenario

Exhibit 4.3-28 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in Alternative 3 in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

Exhibit 4.3-29 Visual Representation of Alternative 3 under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Exhibit 4.3-30 Visual Representation of Alternative 3 under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

Exhibit 4.3-31 Visual Representation of Alternative 3 from a Rear Yard under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios



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PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

As described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, the Preferred Alternative would result in about 4,430 ADUs constructed and 1,580 existing main houses torn down and rebuilt throughout the study area between 2018 and 2027. Compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2 could result in 2,460 additional ADUs constructed and 450 fewer houses torn down and rebuilt. In the two-block scene, Alternative 2 would result in the following development outcomes under the 10-Year Scenario:

- 1 lot with no ADUs where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 1 lot with a DADU where the main house is torn down and rebuilt
- 2 lots with an AADU where the main house is retained
- 3 lots with a DADU where the main house is retained
- 1 lot with an AADU and a DADU where the main house is retained
- 52 lots with no changes

Under the Full Build-Out Scenario, all lots in the two-block scene would redevelop based on the following assumptions:

- Maximized footprint of principal building on all lots, based on allowed lot coverage while accommodating a DADU and all required off-street parking
- Maximized square footage of principal unit on all lots or maximum allowed FAR, using allowed building height as applicable
- Largest feasible AADU on ground floor of the principal building on all lots
- Largest feasible DADU on all lots

Exhibit 4.3-32 through Exhibit 4.3-35 show a plan view of the development outcomes under the Preferred Alternative under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out scenarios. Exhibit 4.3-36 through Exhibit 4.3-41 are visual representations of the Preferred Alternative under each scenario. Newly constructed ADUs are highlighted with orange roofs.

Exhibit 4.3-32 Plan View of Development of the Preferred Alternative under Existing Conditions

New in the FEIS

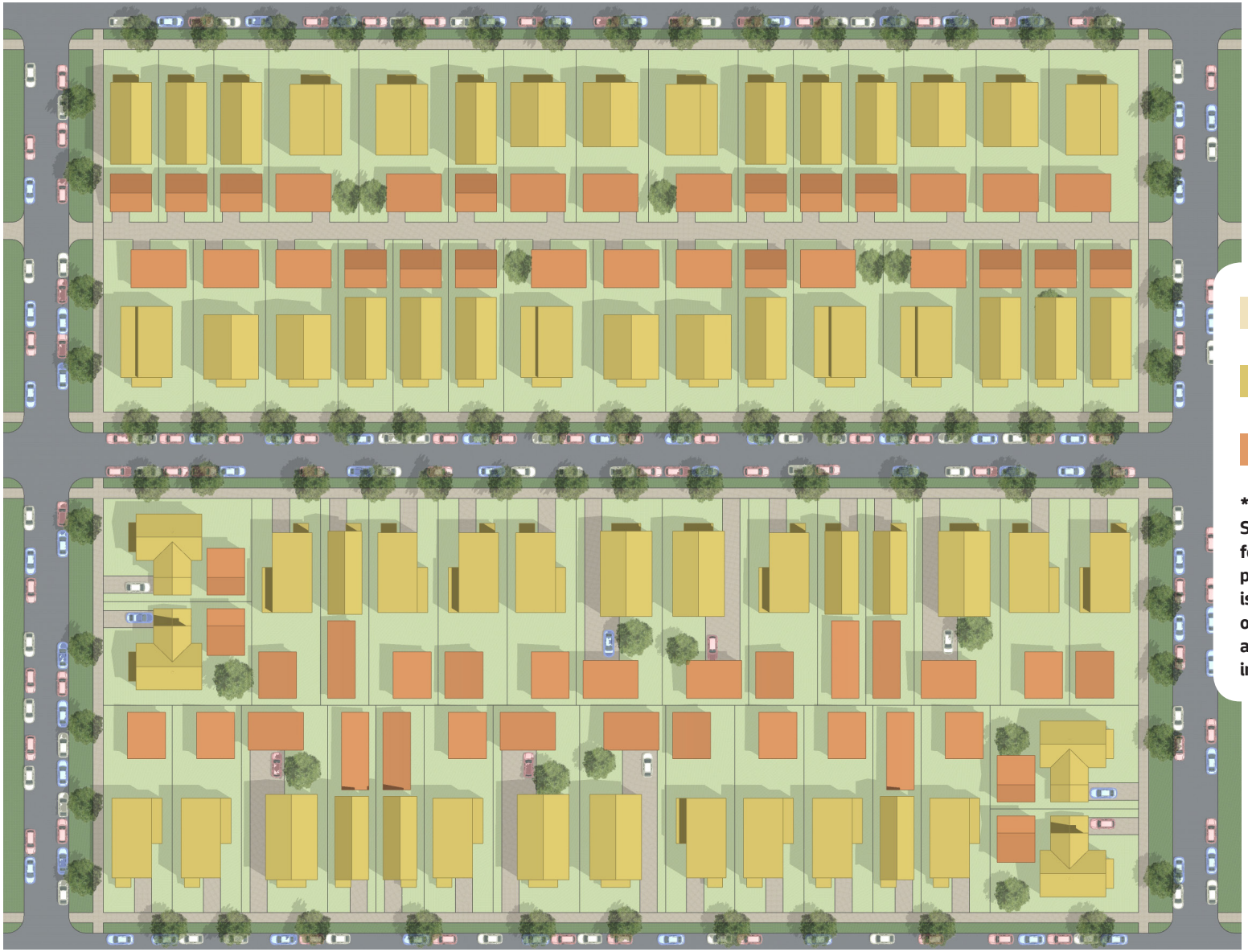
Exhibit 4.3-32 is new in the Final EIS.

Exhibit 4.3-33 Plan View of Development Outcomes of the Preferred Alternative in the 10-Year Scenario

New in the FEIS

Exhibit 4.3-33 is new in the Final EIS.

Exhibit 4.3-34 Plan View of Development Outcomes of the Preferred Alternative in the Full Build-Out Scenario*



New in the FEIS

Exhibit 4.3-34 is new in the Final EIS.

*** The Full Build-Out Scenario is included for illustrative purposes only and is not an expected outcome of any alternative analyzed in this EIS.**

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Exhibit 4.3-35 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in the Preferred Alternative under Existing Conditions

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-35 is new in the Final EIS.

Exhibit 4.3-36 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in the Preferred Alternative in the 10-Year Scenario

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-36 is new in the Final EIS.

Exhibit 4.3-37 Visual Representation of Development Outcomes in the Preferred Alternative in the Full Build-Out Scenario*

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-37 is new in the Final EIS.

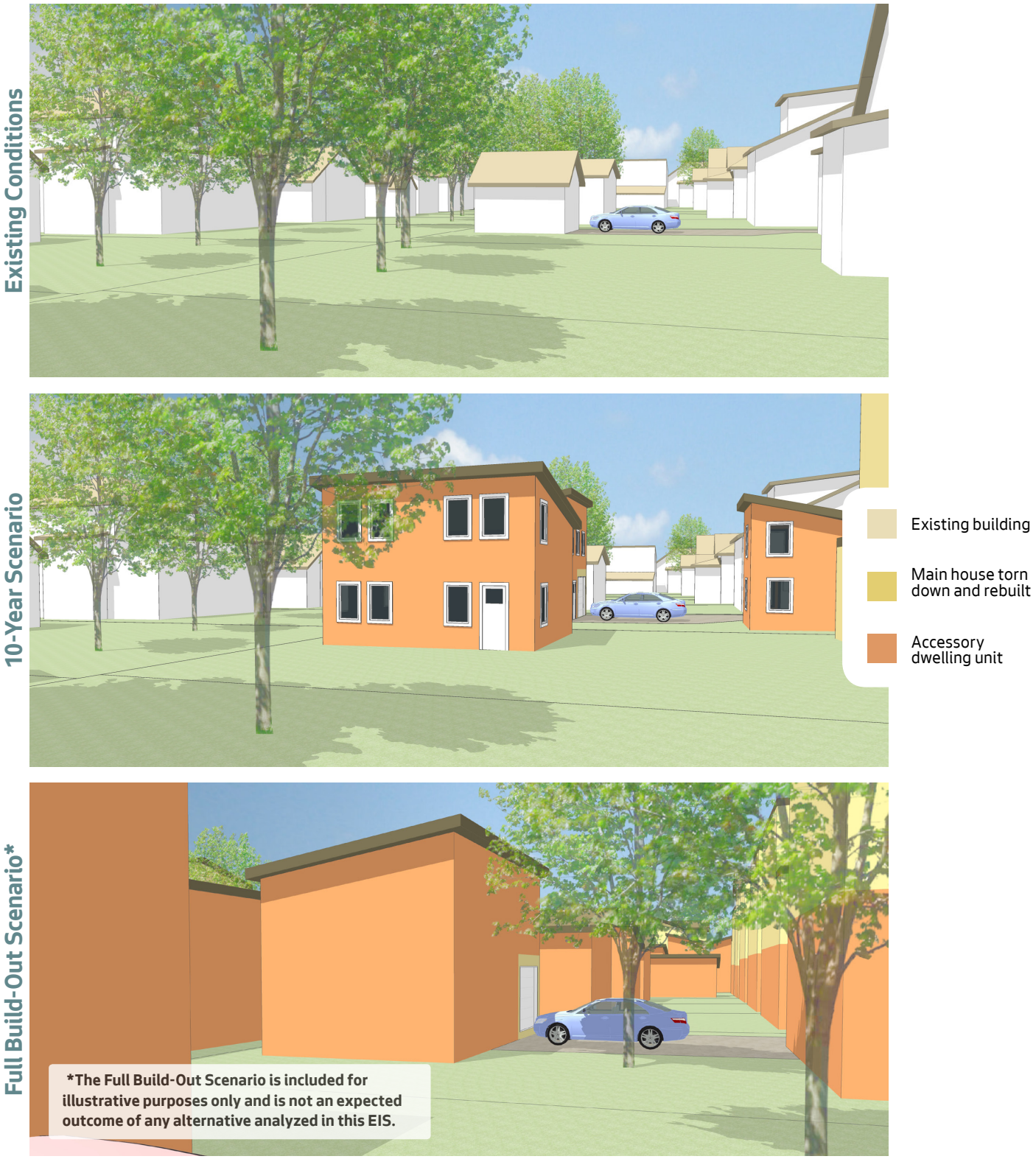
Exhibit 4.3-38 Visual Representation of the Preferred Alternative under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-38 is new in the Final EIS.

Exhibit 4.3-39 Visual Representation of the Preferred Alternative under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-39 is new in the Final EIS.

Exhibit 4.3-40 Visual Representation of the Preferred Alternative from a Rear Yard under the Existing Conditions, 10-Year, and Full Build-Out Scenarios



New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-40 is new in the Final EIS.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

Under Alternative 1 (No Action), current Land Use Code regulations for development in single-family zones would remain unchanged. We anticipate the current rate of ADU production would continue. Compared to ~~Alternatives 2 and 3~~ the action alternatives, Alternative 1 (No Action) would result in more teardowns, more lots with large new houses, and fewer ADUs overall. Changes in aesthetics resulting from tearing down existing houses and rebuilding new houses would continue.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE 2

Based on the results described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, we anticipate the following changes between 2018 and 2027:

- ***Alternative 1 (No Action).*** ~~1,890~~ 1,970 newly constructed ADUs and ~~2,610~~ 2,030 houses torn down and rebuilt
- ***Alternative 2.*** ~~3,330~~ 4,280 newly constructed ADUs and ~~2,460~~ 1,800 houses torn down and rebuilt

Compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2 would increase construction of ADUs and decrease the number of houses torn down and rebuilt throughout the city. Overall, we do not anticipate these changes would result in aesthetic impacts. In the hypothetical two-block scene, changes to lots due to teardowns or construction of new ADUs would be anticipated on nine percent of lots under Alternative 2. As shown in Exhibit 4.3-15, Exhibit 4.3-18, and the 10-year scenarios in Exhibit 4.3-20 through Exhibit 4.3-22, these development outcomes would not result in a fundamental change in visual character of neighborhoods where additional ADUs would be constructed. New ADUs would likely be dispersed throughout neighborhoods in the city and not be concentrated in large enough numbers to result in aesthetic impacts. If a concentration of ADUs did arise in a particularly area, localized aesthetic impacts could occur but would be minor. Further, Alternative 2 would decrease the number of teardowns of existing houses compared to Alternative 1 (No Action). This would help retain the overall aesthetic character of neighborhoods in the study area since new single-family houses erected following teardowns are often visually distinct from existing structures due to differences in architectural style, scale, and proportions.

Below we discuss the aesthetic impacts of Land Use Code changes in Alternative 2 at the level of an individual lot.

Aesthetic Impacts: Two ADUs on One Lot

Current land use regulations allow a lot in a single-family zone to have an AADU or a DADU, but not both. Alternative 2 would allow both an AADU and a DADU on the same lot. This would not change the current allowable building envelope in single-family zones; it would modify only the number of units allowed within that envelope. Although we assumed in the housing analysis that most AADUs would be constructed in the basements of existing houses, we assumed in this aesthetics analysis that AADUs would be constructed as an addition to the main house. This allowed us to consider scenarios in which there would be the highest level of anticipated change to the visual environment.

As illustrated in Exhibit 4.3-41, the addition of both an AADU and a DADU on the same lot would add visual "bulk" to the lot, which would result in smaller yards and decrease the relative sense of openness. These impacts would be minimal as construction would occur behind the main house, out of view of the street and most viewers. Some visual impacts could occur from private property on the subject lot or its neighbors, where more unobstructed views to the DADU might be possible. Nevertheless, the number of lots with both an AADU and a DADU would be minimal compared to the total number of study area lots experiencing no change. Therefore, this Land Use Code change would not have an impact on the overall aesthetic character of neighborhoods in the study area.

Exhibit 4.3-41 Visual Representation of a Lot with Both an AADU and a DADU

Existing Conditions

10-Year Scenario

Aesthetic Impacts: Development Standards

Alternative 2 contemplates several changes to the development standards that regulate the size and location of ADUs. This section illustrates and evaluates the potential aesthetic impacts of the following development standards under each alternative:

- Minimum lot size for DADUs
- Maximum size of AADUs and DADUs
- Maximum height for DADUs
- Maximum rear yard coverage limit
- Height limit exceptions for roof features

Minimum lot size

In Alternative 1 (No Action), only lots 4,000 square feet in area and larger can have a DADU.[4] Under Alternative 2, the minimum lot size on which an ADU could be constructed would be reduced to 3,200 square feet. The hypothetical two-block scene includes about 20 lots between 3,200 and 3,999 square feet. The primary aesthetic impact of lowering the minimum lot size would be an increase in visual bulk and scale on lots that cannot have a DADU under current regulations. Because houses on lots under 4,000 square feet tend to be smaller, it's also possible that DADUs on such lots would be more visible from the street when compared to larger lots. However, other development standards, such as maximum lot coverage limits, would continue to regulate the location and scale of DADUs. On lots under 4,000 square feet, the maximum lot area that could be covered (equal to 1,000 square feet plus 15 percent of the lot area) would limit the size of DADUs or, in some cases, preclude their construction altogether.

Maximum Gross Floor Area

Current regulations limit the size of AADUs to 1,000 gross square feet and DADUs to 800 gross square feet. In both cases, floor area in garage and storage areas counts against the floor area limits. Under Alternative 2, all ADUs would be subject the same gross floor area limit: 1,000 square feet, exclusive of garage and storage areas. As illustrated in Exhibit 4.3-42 Alternative 2 would therefore result in larger DADUs than allowed under Alternative 1 (No Action). The primary aesthetic impacts would result from the greater bulk and scale of DADUs on lots in a single-family zone. In

4 Conversion of an existing accessory structure to a DADU is allowed on lots under 4,000 square feet.

areas with a regular pattern of garages and other accessory structures in rear yards, larger DADUs allowed under Alternative 2 could stand out as less consistent with the established context. Other impacts could include a decrease in the amount of open space and landscaped areas on a lot and elimination of off-street parking if those portions of a lot previous used for parking are used to construct a larger DADU.[5]

5 Under all alternatives, off-street parking would continue to be required for the principal dwelling unit, and this required parking space cannot be eliminated to construct an ADU.

Exhibit 4.3-42 Visualization of the Largest Allowed DADU on a 5,200-Square-Foot Lot under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 and the Preferred Alternative

New in the FEIS

Exhibit 4.3-42 is updated in the Final EIS.

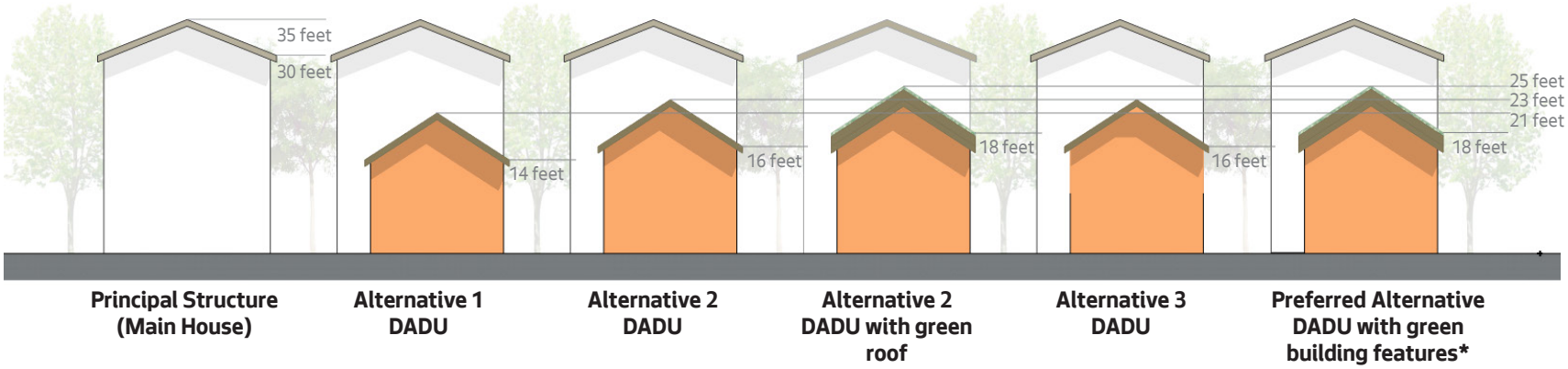
Maximum Height

The aesthetic impact of taller buildings would vary depending on an area's existing urban form and the magnitude of change compared to existing limits. Under current regulations, the maximum height limit for DADUs varies by the width of its lot and ranges from between 15 to 23 feet (Exhibit 4.3-43). Alternative 2 would add a few feet to these height limits. The most pronounced contrast of these changes would be for lots that are 50 feet wide or more. The height limit for a DADU with a pitched roof on these lots would be 25 feet. On lots less than 30 feet wide, DADUs with pitched roofs would be subject to a height limit of 17 feet. On all but the narrowest lots, DADUs with shed or butterfly roofs would be subject to lower maximum height limits than those with pitched roofs. Exhibit 4.3-43 shows the maximum height allowed for a DADU on any lot type (i.e., the maximum height limit for lots greater than 50 feet in width). On narrower lots, lower maximum height limits apply.

Minor aesthetic impacts would result from taller DADUs. Combined with an increase in the maximum gross floor area limit, taller DADUs under Alternative 2 would create an increase in bulk and scale. However, because building heights would increase by 3 feet at most, we anticipate aesthetic impacts would be minimal.

Development of taller structures could increase the potential for shade and shadows on adjacent properties and rights-of-way. However, due to the slight increases in height limits under Alternative 2, impacts from shading would be minimal. In addition, building setbacks would still apply, alleviating shadowing of adjacent properties.

Exhibit 4.3-43 Illustration of Maximum Height Allowed under Each Alternative on Lots Greater than 15 Feet in Width



Note Lot sizes are not drawn to scale.
*Preferred Alternative with or without green building features is identical to Alternative 2

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-43 is updated in the Final EIS.

Increasing the DADU height limit could have different effects in a flat area compared to an area with topographic variation. Exhibit 4.3-44 shows the effect of increased height when viewed along an alley where a DADU is on the downhill side of the block. Based on the lot width, the DADU can be one foot higher under Alternative 2 compared to Alternative 1 (No Action).

Exhibit 4.3-44 Visual Representation from an Alley of a DADU on a Sloping Lot

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-44 is new in the Final EIS.

Similarly, we can examine the effects of different height limits for a DADU on the uphill side of a sloping area. Exhibit 4.3-45 shows a view from the street.

Exhibit 4.3-45 Visual Representation from the Street of a DADU on a Sloping Lot

Alternative 1 (No Action)

Alternative 2

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-45 is new in the Final EIS.

Finally, Exhibit 4.3-46 shows a visualization from a rear yard of a DADU on a neighboring, uphill lot.

Exhibit 4.3-46 Visual Representation from a Rear Yard of a DADU on a Sloping Lot

Alternative 1 (No Action)

Alternative 2

New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-46 is new in the Final EIS.

Rear Yard Coverage

Current regulations limit coverage of a rear yard to no more than 40 percent. The rear yard coverage limit applies to DADUs and other accessory structures, like a garage or shed.

Alternative 2 would allow 20-percent more coverage of a rear yard for a one-story DADU. (Accessory structures other than the DADU would remain limited to 40-percent coverage.) The aesthetic impacts would translate to less open space in rear yards and greater visual bulk. By limiting the additional coverage to DADUs less than 15 feet tall, the increase in rear yard coverage could result in more DADUs that are relatively shorter and wider than under Alternative 1 (No Action). Vegetation and tree canopy could decrease if property owners choose to eliminate landscape features to construct DADUs.

Roof Features

Currently, no exceptions to the maximum height limit for DADUs are allowed for roof features. Alternative 2 would allow height limit exceptions for dormers, skylights, and other projections that add additional interior space. These roof features would be subject to the provisions applicable to single-family houses, such as size limits and location. For example, features that project from a roof would be limited to 30 percent of the roof area and subject to width and separation requirements. Impacts to aesthetics would be minimal as the increase in height allowed for roof features would be minor.

Maximum Floor Area Ratio

Currently, development in single-family zones is not subject to a FAR limit. Instead, the scale and location of new houses in single-family zones are governed by yard requirements, a maximum height limit, and an overall lot coverage limit. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, these development standards would continue to determine the size of the allowed building envelope on a lot. No impacts on aesthetics are anticipated.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE 3

The aesthetics impacts from Alternative 3 would be ~~very~~ similar, but slightly less than, those described under Alternative 2. As described above, under the 10-Year Scenario, the following changes could be anticipated:

- ***Alternative 1 (No Action).*** ~~1,890~~ 1,970 newly constructed ADUs and ~~2,610~~ 2,030 houses torn down and rebuilt
- ***Alternative 3.*** ~~3,100~~ 3,400 newly constructed ADUs and ~~2,200~~ 1,430 houses torn down and rebuilt

When compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 3 would increase construction of ADUs and decrease teardowns throughout the city; however, this is not anticipated to result in aesthetic impacts. In the hypothetical two-block scene, changes would be anticipated on 12 percent of lots. As shown

for the 10-year scenario on Exhibits 4.3-16 to 4.3.20, these changes would not result in a fundamental variation of the land use form of neighborhoods in which additional ADUs would be constructed. New ADUs would be dispersed throughout neighborhoods in the city and would not be concentrated in large enough numbers to result in aesthetic impacts. Further, Alternatives 3 would decrease the number of teardowns of existing houses, which would help retain the overall aesthetic character of neighborhoods in the study area.

Below we discuss the aesthetic impacts of Land Use Code changes in Alternative 3 at the level of an individual lot.

Aesthetic Impacts: Two ADUs on One Lot

Under Alternative 3, an AADU and a DADU would be allowed on the same lot or a lot could have two AADUs. The aesthetic impacts of constructing additional ADUs under Alternative 3 would be ~~very~~ similar to, but slightly less than, Alternative 2. Relative to Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would result in reduced aesthetic impacts because fewer ADUs would be constructed. Alternative 3 would allow a lot to have two AADUs within the same building envelope, which would not result in aesthetic impacts.

Aesthetic Impacts: Development Standards

~~The action alternatives~~ Alternative 3 contemplate<u>s</u> several changes to the development standards that regulate the size and location of ADUs. This section illustrates and evaluates the potential aesthetic impacts of the following development standards under each alternative:

- Minimum lot size for DADUs
- Maximum size of AADUs and DADUs
- Maximum height for DADUs
- Maximum rear yard coverage limit
- Height limit exceptions for roof features

Minimum Lot Size

As both Alternative 2 and 3 would reduce the minimum lot size to 3,200 square feet, the impacts under Alternative 3 would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

Maximum Gross Floor Area

Current regulations limit the size of AADUs to 1,000 gross square feet and DADUs to 800 gross square feet. In both cases, floor area in garage and

storage areas counts against the floor area limits. Like Alternative 2, AADUs and DADUs would be subject to the same gross floor area limit under Alternative 3 (1,000 square feet), but garage and storage areas would count toward this limit. For AADUs, this would be the same as current regulations, but slightly smaller than Alternative 2, where the floor area limit excludes garage and storage areas. As illustrated in Exhibit 4.3-21, for DADUs, Alternative 3 would represent an increase over the current 800-square-foot limit but be a slight reduction from Alternative 2 because garage and storage areas would be counted toward the limit. Alternative 3 would therefore result in slightly greater bulk and scale impacts than Alternative 1 (No Action) and slightly lesser bulk and scale impacts than Alternative 2.

Maximum Height

Like Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would also increase the maximum height limits for DADUs. However, Alternative 3 would not allow 1 to 2 additional feet of height for DADUs that met green roof standards. Therefore, the impacts would be marginally less than those described under Alternative 2.

Rear Yard Coverage

Since both Alternative 2 and 3 would allow 20-percent more coverage of a rear yard for a one-story DADU, the impacts under Alternative 3 would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

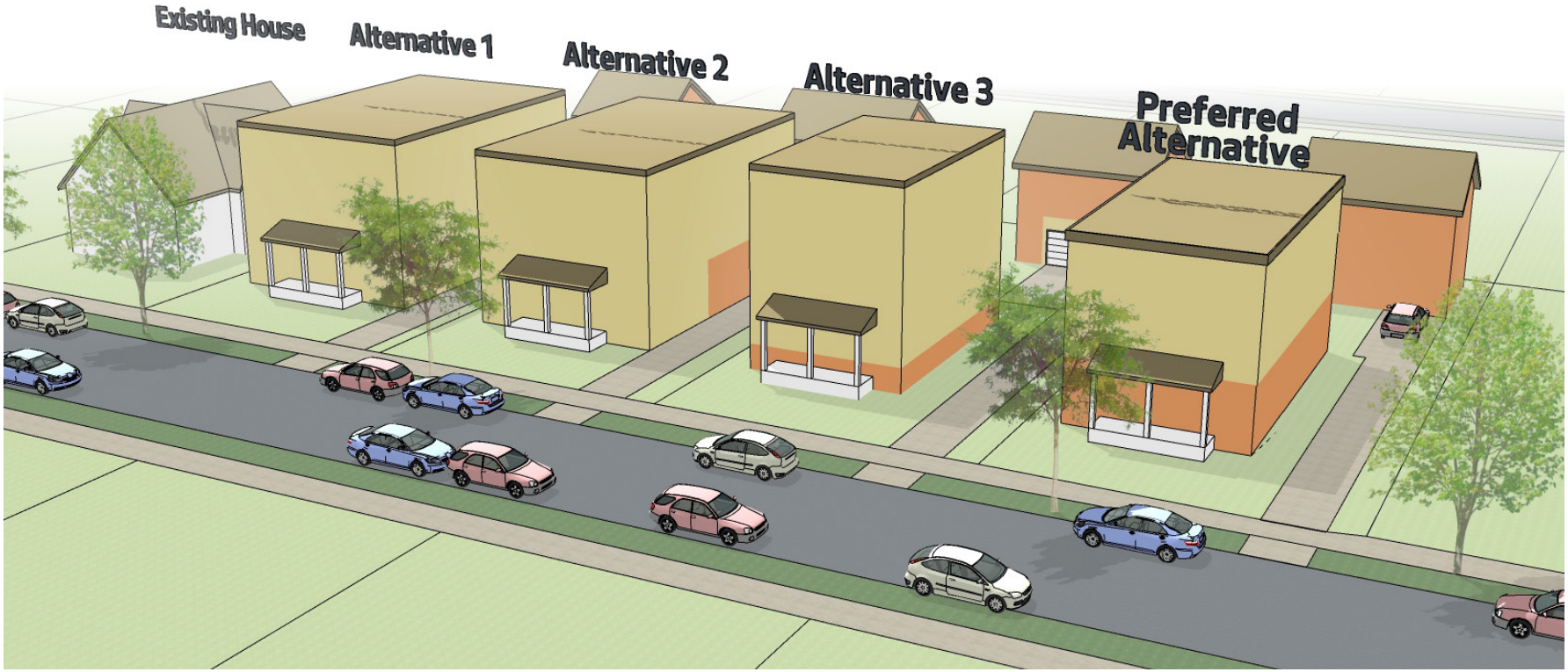
Roof Features

Since both Alternative 2 and 3 would allow height limit exceptions for roof features, the impacts under Alternative 3 would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

Maximum Floor Area Ratio

Currently, development in single-family zones is not subject to a FAR limit. Instead, the scale and location of new houses in single-family zones are governed by yard requirements, a maximum height limit, and an overall lot coverage limit. Under Alternative 3, a FAR limit would apply to development in single-family zones. New residences (main houses) would be subject to a FAR limit of 0.5 or 2,500 square feet (whichever is greater). On a 6,000-square-foot lot, for example, this would limit the size of a new house to 3,000 square feet; on lots under 5,000 square feet, the size limit of 2,500 square feet would apply. Below-grade floor area and floor area in a DADU would not count toward the FAR limit. On lots where existing development exceeded the FAR or 2,500-square-foot limits, a property owner would be able to convert existing space to an AADU and add a DADU subject to the size and owner-occupancy standards above.

Exhibit 4.3-47 Illustration of How the Maximum FAR Limit Affects House Size under Each Alternative



New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-47 is updated in the Final EIS.

As illustrated in Exhibit 4.3-47, in general, implementing a FAR limit would tend to reduce the size of new houses and reduce their aesthetic impacts to bulk and scale compared to both Alternative 1 (No Action) and Alternative 2. The analysis described in Section 4.1, Housing and Socioeconomics, suggests that limiting FAR might encourage creation of ADUs because below-grade and DADU floor area would be exempt from FAR calculations. While our estimate of ADU production was lower under Alternative 3 than under Alternative 2, to the extent the FAR limit would encourage marginally more DADUs specifically, there could be impacts on bulk and scale on single-family-zoned lots compared to Alternative 2, which would allow larger residences and have no FAR limit. However, our analysis also found that fewer teardowns would occur under Alternative 3 compared to Alternative 1 (No Action) and Alternative 2. This would reduce the aesthetic impacts of Alternative 3 relative to Alternatives 1 and 2 because more existing houses would be preserved rather than torn down and rebuilt as larger structures.

IMPACTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The aesthetics impacts from the Preferred Alternative would be very similar, but slightly greater than, those described under Alternative 2. As described above, under the 10-Year Scenario, the following changes could be anticipated:

- ***Alternative 1 (No Action).*** 1,970 newly constructed ADUs and 2,030 houses torn down and rebuilt
- ***Preferred Alternative.*** 4,430 newly constructed ADUs and 1,580 houses torn down and rebuilt

Compared to Alternative 1 (No Action), the Preferred Alternative would increase construction of ADUs and decrease teardowns throughout the city; however, this is not anticipated to result in aesthetic impacts. In the hypothetical two-block scene, we anticipate changes on 12 percent of lots. As shown for the 10-year scenario on Exhibits 4.3-16 to 4.3.20 , these changes would not result in a fundamental variation of the land use form of neighborhoods in which additional ADUs would be constructed. New ADUs would be dispersed throughout neighborhoods in the city and would not be concentrated in large enough numbers to result in aesthetic impacts. Further, the Preferred Alternative would decrease the number of teardowns of existing houses, which would help retain the overall aesthetic character of neighborhoods in the study area.

Below we discuss the aesthetic impacts of Land Use Code changes for the Preferred Alternative at the level of an individual lot.

Aesthetic Impacts: Two ADUs on One Lot

Under the Preferred Alternative, an AADU and a DADU would be allowed on the same lot or a lot could have two AADUs; however, a second ADU can only be added if a lot has been in the same ownership for at least one year. The aesthetic impacts of constructing additional ADUs under the Preferred Alternative would be very similar to, but slightly greater than, Alternative 2. Relative to Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative would result in increased aesthetic impacts because slightly more ADUs would be constructed. The Preferred Alternative would allow a lot to have two AADUs within the same building envelope, which would not result in aesthetic impacts.

Aesthetic Impacts: Development Standards

The Preferred Alternative contemplates several changes to the development standards that regulate the size and location of ADUs. This section illustrates and evaluates the potential aesthetic impacts of the following development standards under each alternative:

- Minimum lot size for DADUs
- Maximum size of AADUs and DADUs
- Maximum height for DADUs
- Maximum rear yard coverage limit
- Height limit exceptions for roof features

Minimum Lot Size

All action alternatives would reduce the minimum lot size to 3,200 square feet. Therefore, the impacts under the Preferred Alternative would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

Maximum Gross Floor Area

The maximum gross floor area allowed under the Preferred Alternative is the same as described under Alternative 2. Therefore, the impacts under the Preferred Alternative would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

Maximum Height

The maximum height allowed under the Preferred Alternative is the same as described under Alternative 2, though additional height would be allowed not only for green roofs but various other green building

strategies. The impacts under the Preferred Alternative would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

Rear Yard Coverage

Like Alternatives 2 and 3, the Preferred Alternative would allow 60 percent rear yard coverage for a DADU with total height no more than 15 feet. However, under the Preferred Alternative, limitations on tree removal would apply for development resulting in rear yard coverage above 40 percent. The aesthetic impacts would therefore be slightly less than those described for Alternatives 2 and 3 because additional trees would be preserved.

Roof Features

Since all action alternatives would allow height limit exceptions for roof features, the impacts under the Preferred Alternative would be the same as those described under Alternative 2.

Maximum Floor Area Ratio

Like Alternative 3, the Preferred Alternative would implement a maximum FAR limit. Under current rules, yard requirements, maximum height, and maximum lot coverage together determine how large a single-family house can be. Under the Preferred Alternative, development in single-family zones would be subject to an FAR limit of 0.5 or 2,500 square feet, whichever is greater.

Both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative would exempt certain floor area from counting towards the maximum FAR limit. Like Alternative 3, the Preferred Alternative would exempt below-grade floor area. But where Alternative 3 would also exempt floor area in a DADU, the Preferred Alternative would exempt floor area in any ADU, whether within the main house or in a detached structure. Exempting all ADU floor area avoids incentivizing AADUs located in basements, where the quality of living space can be inferior.

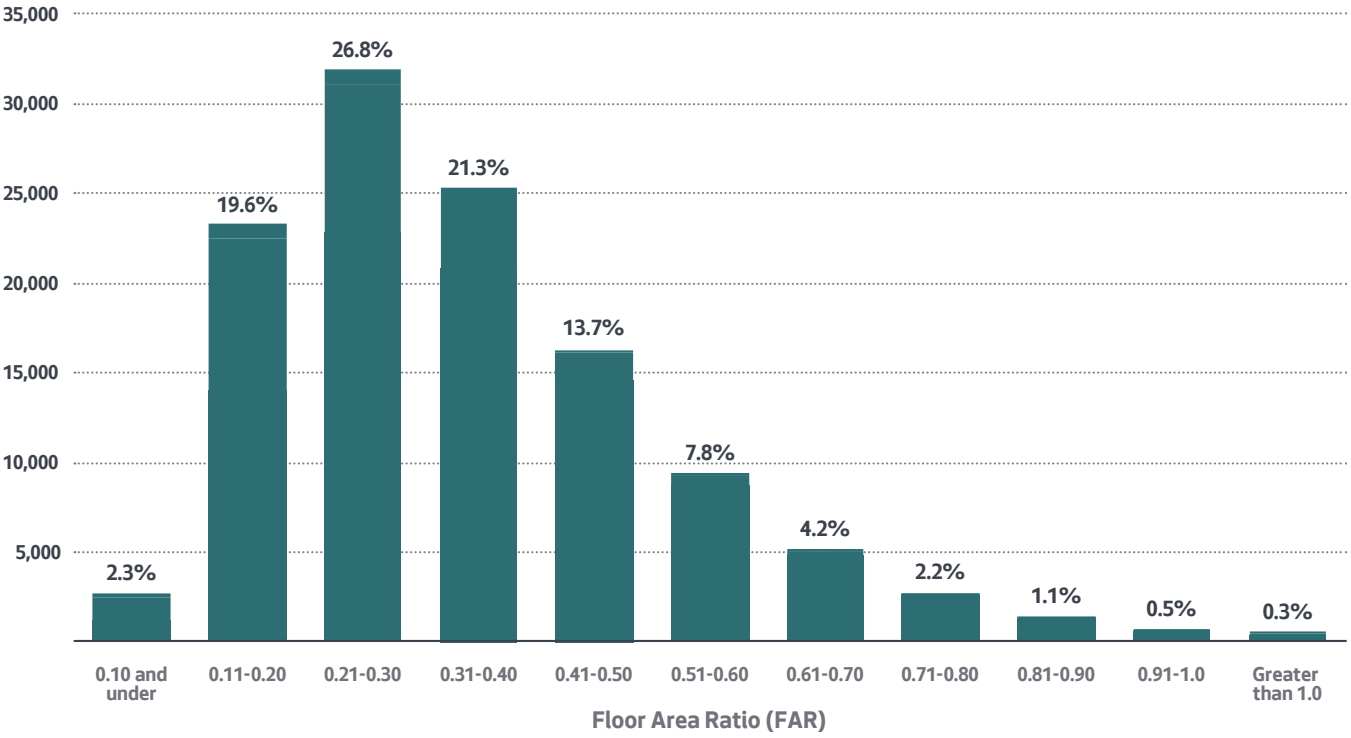
Compared to Alternative 1 (No Action) and Alternative 2, the maximum FAR limit in the Preferred Alternative would result in new houses smaller in scale and more compatible with existing development. Impacts to height, bulk, and scale would therefore be less than under Alternatives 1 and 2, where new structures on most lots can achieve an FAR greater than 1.0. We also expect the FAR limit would reduce demolitions of single-family homes under the Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative

1 (No Action), further lessening aesthetic impacts as more existing structures would remain.

The aesthetic impacts of the FAR limit under the Preferred Alternative would resemble those described under Alternative 3. Because all ADU floor area would be exempt from FAR calculations, and because the Preferred Alternative would allow two AADUs within the main house, the largest possible structure under the Preferred Alternative would be slightly greater than under Alternative 3.

Lots in the study area where existing development exceeds the maximum FAR limit would be nonconforming with respect to this development standard. A property owner could expand their existing development by constructing a DADU; creating an AADU as an addition to the house; or converting existing space into an AADU, thereby reducing the lot's chargeable floor area. Exhibit 4.3-48 shows the share of lots in Seattle's single-family zones according to an estimate of their FAR based on existing development.

Exhibit 4.3-48 Floor Area Ratio of Lots in Single-Family Zones Based on Existing Development



New in the FEIS Exhibit 4.3-48 is new in the Final EIS.

While about 16 percent of lots have an estimated FAR above 0.50, in some cases existing development is under 2,500 square feet. Exhibit 4.3-49 shows the number of lots in single-family zones that would be nonconforming with respect the maximum FAR limit under the Preferred Alternative.

Exhibit 4.3-49 Lots in Single-Family Zones with Existing Development above 0.5 FAR or 2,500 Square Feet

Zone	Percentage of nonconforming lots
SF 5000	11%
SF 7200	3%
SF 9600	2%
Total	**9%**

New in the FEIS

Exhibit 4.3-49 is new in the Final EIS.

4.3.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant adverse impacts on land use are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

4.3.4 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Under all alternatives, increased development on lots in single-family zones would occur in the study area, leading to a general increase in building heights and development intensity over time. This transition is an unavoidable and expected characteristic of urban populations and employment growth. Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative would further this trend by creating additional development capacity and incentives that could accelerate the development of taller, more intense ADUs in the study area. Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative would also result in a minor decrease in the rate of main houses being torn down and rebuilt. And, Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative would specifically reduce the size of the main house that could be constructed through the implementation of FAR limits. However, no significant unavoidable adverse impacts on aesthetics are anticipated as a result of the proposed Land Use Code changes.

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