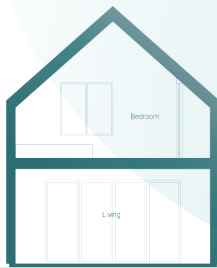

Accessory Dwelling Units

ANNUAL REPORT

September 2021



SECTION THROUGH LIVING ROOM



SECTION THROUGH THE CORE (KITCHEN AND BATH ROOMS)



SECTION THROUGH DINING AREA
(VARIATION 1 - DOUBLE-HEIGHT DINING AREA)



City of Seattle

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For more information about ADUs in Seattle and to view interactive versions of the data contained in this report, visit our **ADUniverse** website at maps.seattle.gov/ADU.



Executive summary

In 2019, the City of Seattle adopted new rules for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to remove regulatory barriers and help more Seattle residents create and live in this form of housing. Last year, ADU production increased to its highest level. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) issued permits for 237 attached accessory dwelling units (AADUs) and 276 detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs) in 2020, an increase of 53 percent and 112 percent, respectively, over units permitted in 2019.

ADUs permitted under the new regulations have been distributed throughout areas with both relatively lower and higher median household income. More than 80 percent of ADUs have been permitted in areas identified as high displacement risk on the City's Displacement Risk Index. Further survey research is necessary to evaluate what types of households are benefiting most directly from this development opportunity.

Following direction in Mayor Durkan's 2019 Executive Order on ADUs, in September 2020, the City unveiled a gallery of 10 pre-approved DADU designs as part of ADUUniverse, a new resource website with tools and information to demystify the ADU process. As of August 2021, SDCI has issued 36 permits for these pre-approved plans.

In 2018, the City completed a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) on policies for ADUs to understand if proposed efforts to encourage ADUs could affect race-based disparities. The RET found that removing regulatory barriers could have a positive impact on affordability and displacement by increasing housing choice — and that regulatory reform on its own is insufficient to address racial disparities in housing without other policy interventions to ensure that Seattle's ADU policy more equitably benefits lower-income households and households of color. As a result of the RET, the Office of Housing (OH) expanded its Home Repair Loan Program to allow borrowers to use funds to increase livable space in their home for the purpose of housing additional family and community members. Additional, in the 2020 budget, the City Council approved funding for OH to administer an affordable ADU loan pilot that sought to address financing barriers that often prevent lower- and moderate-income homeowners and homeowners of color from being able to develop an ADU. However, funds were reallocated due to budget constraints related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This annual report also explores how ADUs are used and identifies questions for further study. Data on short-term rental licenses suggest that a relatively small portion of Seattle's ADUs (about 11 percent) are used as short-term rentals. SDCI is analyzing tree-related information from permits dating back to July 2019. When completed, the data will help SDCI and the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) report on the number of trees preserved and replaced when ADUs are permitted. We anticipate including this data and analysis in the next annual report on ADUs. In partnership with the University of Washington, OPCD and SDCI are developing a survey of ADU owners and occupants to help address additional topics and questions identified in direction from the City Council and Mayor.

Introduction

In 2019, the City Council adopted **Council Bill 119544**, reforming Seattle’s rules for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by removing several regulatory barriers that discouraged or prevented owners from adding these small infill homes to their property. In Section 11 of the legislation, the Council directed the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) and Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) to report annually for five years on citywide ADU permit activity. Further, when she signed the legislation, Mayor Jenny A Durkan also issued **Executive Order 2019-04**, calling for several actions to encourage more affordable ADUs throughout Seattle. In this order, Mayor Durkan directed SDCI and OPCD to monitor and report on ADU development to assess the benefits and impacts of this housing type. In response, this first report describes our progress on efforts to increase access to ADUs and summarizes ADU production since Seattle’s revised ADU regulations took effect in August 2019.

ADUs are small, secondary dwellings allowed in residential zones. Seattle allows two types of ADUs: attached ADUs (AADUs) are connected to or within a principal residence, while detached ADUs (DADUs), often called backyard cottages, are located in a separate structure from the main house. Their relatively small size compared to houses and no added land cost mean ADUs often provide lower-cost housing and expand rental options in neighborhoods where housing is scarce and prices are out of reach to most households. Given Seattle’s legacy of segregation and exclusion through redlining, racial covenants, and restrictive zoning, increasing housing choices in residential areas is one important part of expanding access for low-income BIPOC households to all Seattle neighborhoods. However, high construction costs, limited financing options, and racial disparities in wealth, income, and homeownership mean that additional efforts are necessary to help ensure equitable access to the financial and technical resources needed to build or rent an ADU.

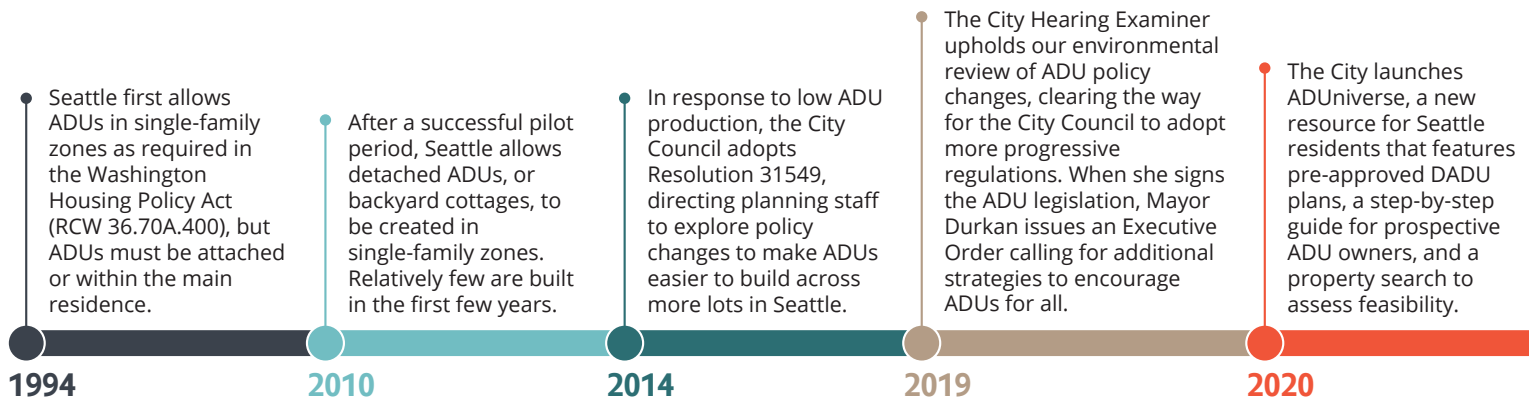
The City has sought to remove barriers to the creation of ADUs as one part of broader efforts to address housing affordability and increasing housing choice and neighborhood access. AADUs and DADUs have been allowed throughout Seattle since 1994 and 2010, respectively. Yet despite almost 100,000 eligible properties, only about 50 DADUs were permitted annually from 2010 to 2014, prompting the City Council to adopt Resolution 31547, which directed staff to identify strategies to make ADUs easier to create on more properties. Several years of analysis, engagement, and policy development helped us identify regulatory, financial, and process barriers that limit or prevent ADU creation and develop strategies to reduce or remove these barriers.



What are ADUs?

ADUs are small, secondary dwellings in residential zones that can take many forms: a standalone cottage in the rear yard (top), a dwelling unit above a garage (middle), or a suite within or attached to the main house (bottom).

Credit (from top to bottom):
CAST Architecture, Shape
Architecture, Hammer & Hand



The 2019 ADU reform mentioned earlier addressed several key regulatory barriers often cited by prospective ADU owners. Some regulatory barriers exist outside the City of Seattle’s purview, such as the sewage treatment capacity charge levied and overseen by King County, which the City worked with King County to reduce for ADUs in 2019. To address financial barriers that residents, particularly low- and moderate-income households, face to owning and occupying an ADU, we proposed and received funding from the City Council for an ADU financing pilot program the Office of Housing would administer to provide affordable construction loans to help income-eligible homeowners who might otherwise struggle to qualify for financing create an ADU. Due to budget constraints related to the COVID-19 pandemic, funding for this pilot program was reallocated from the Office of Housing budget in March 2020. To address the complexity of the ADU design and permitting process, we partnered with the Seattle design community to offer 10 pre-approved DADU plans that offer property owners a faster, lower cost, and more predictable design and permitting process and launched the designs in September 2020 as part of a new centralized ADU resource website called ADUniverse.

ADU reform in Seattle

In 2019, Seattle adopted new rules to remove regulatory barriers that often discouraged or prevented residents from adding an ADU to their property. Key features of the new regulations, which took effect in August 2019, include:

- Allowing two ADUs on all single-family lots
- Reducing the minimum lot size for DADUs to 3,200 square feet
- Increasing the height and size of DADUs to support family-size homes
- Removing parking and occupancy requirements
- Establishing a new limit on the maximum size of single-family dwellings

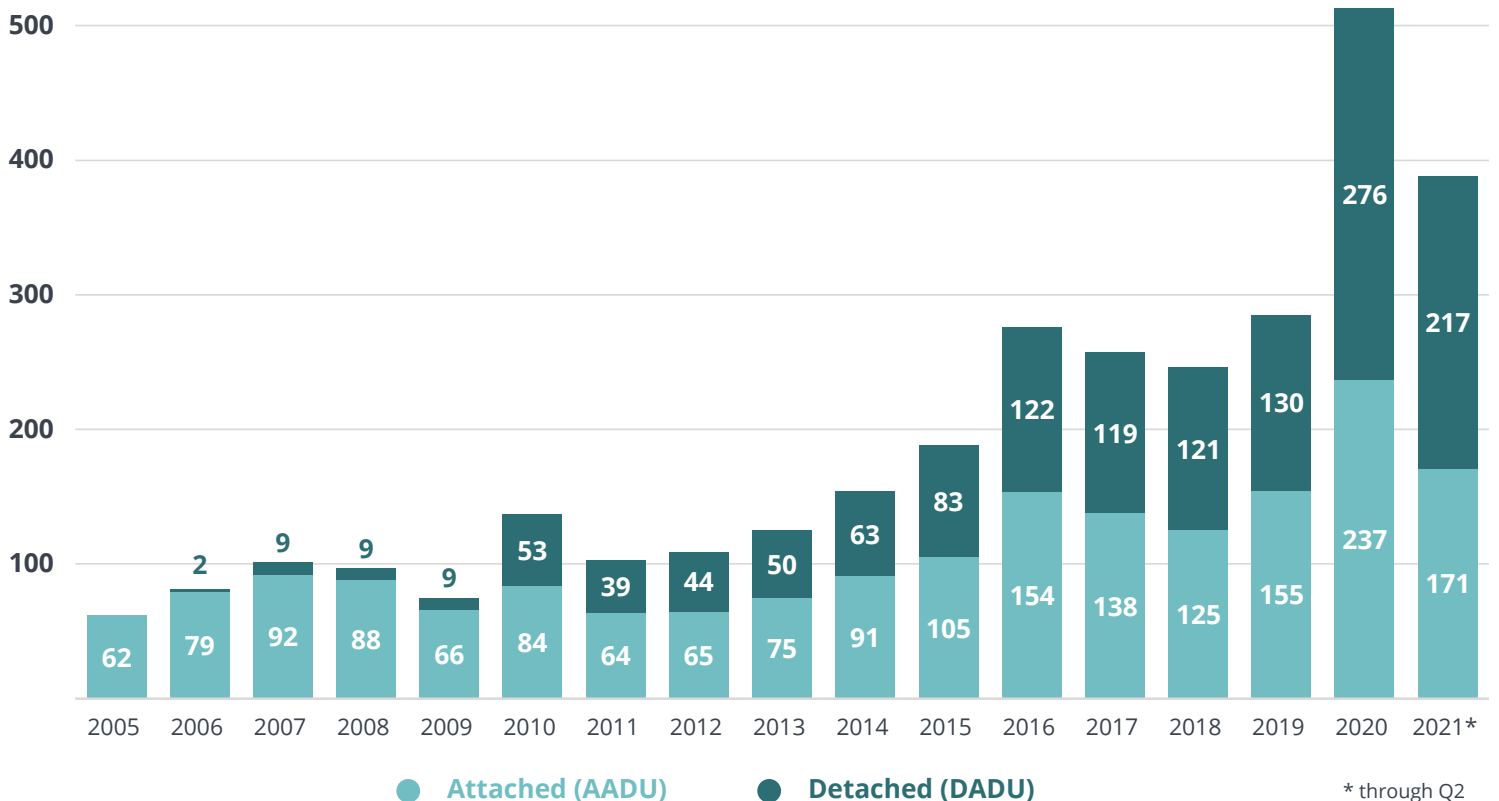
The remainder of this report includes much of the data and information identified in the Council’s legislation and Mayor Durkan’s Executive Order. We summarize data on ADU production from the SDCI permitting system and data on short-term rental licenses from the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS). Some questions are difficult to answer fully through the City’s available permitting data; to address these topics, we are partnering with the University of Washington to develop a survey of ADU owners and occupants that will explore topics like ADU construction cost and rent, how ADUs are used, and vehicle ownership among ADU occupants. We expect to complete this survey by the July 2022, as required in Section 11 of **Council Bill 119544**.

ADU production

This section summarizes ADU permitting historically and with a focus on activity since Seattle’s new ADU rules took effect in August 2019. The City’s development permitting system lets us summarize how many ADU permits issued each year, identify how many are AADUs and DADUs, and examine their location throughout Seattle. We can also gain other insights about ADU production, like how many ADUs are created on properties that have two ADUs, a new development option allowed under the 2019 legislation; how many ADUs are created through new construction versus alteration of existing space; and how many ADUs are associated with a demolition permit. Permitting data is available on the City’s GeoData platform and displayed on our [ADUverse](#) website.

As shown in Exhibit 1, overall ADU production has steadily risen over time. In particular, DADU permitting has gradually increased since they were first allowed citywide in 2010. Following several years with average annual permitting of about 50 DADUs, production increased to more than 120 DADUs per year from 2016 to 2019. During the same 2016-2019, AADU production varied more substantially and averaged 143 units per year.

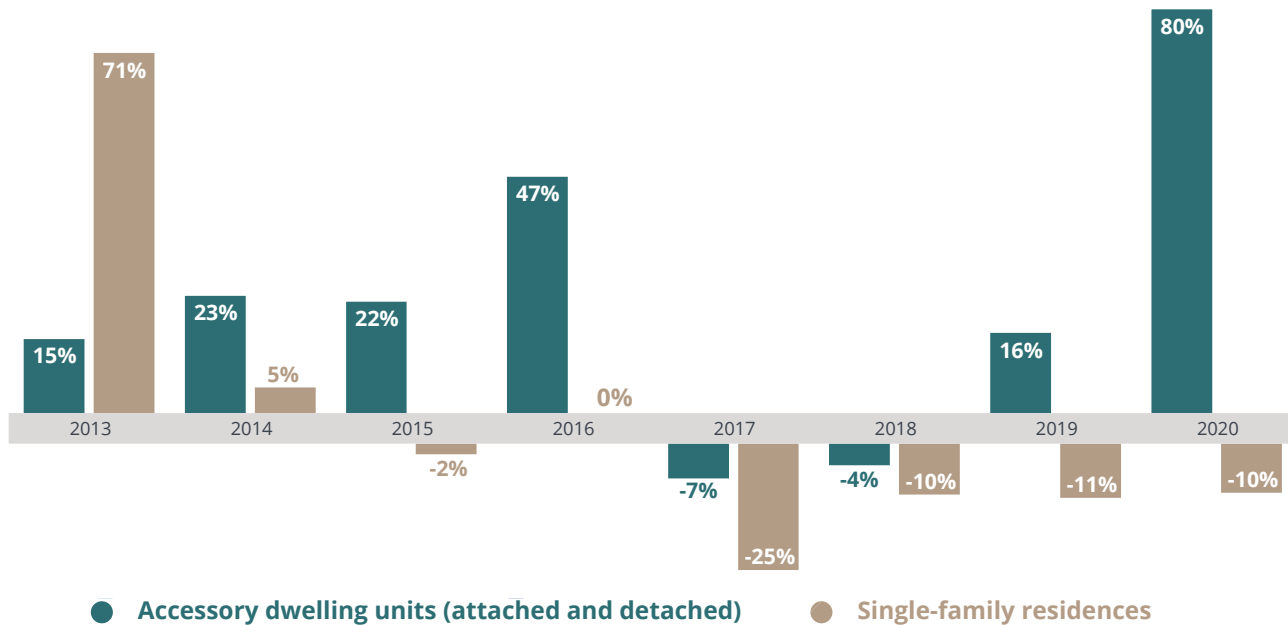
Exhibit 1 ADU production in Seattle since 2005



In 2020, Seattle’s ADU production increased to its highest level. SDCI issued permits for 237 AADUs and 276 DADUs. These 513 ADUs represented an 80 percent increase from 2019, a year when 285 ADU permits were issued, the most in one year until that point. Some, though not all, ADU permits in 2020 were issued under the regulations adopted in 2019. Several additional factors beyond regulatory reform may have contributed to this increase in permits, including people working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and favorable financing, among others.

While data is limited for identifying lasting trends, we can preliminarily gauge ADU permitting activity following implementation of Seattle’s 2019 ADU reform with the number of permits that have an application date since new regulations took effect on August 8, 2019. As of July 16, 2021, the City has permitted 423 AADUs and 507 DADUs under the new ADU regulations, a rate of about 18 AADUs and 21 DADUs per month. These initial figures suggest a meaningful increase in ADU permitting compared to 2017-2019, when the City issued an average of 12 AADU and 10 DADU permits per month.

Exhibit 2 Annual change in permits for ADUs and single-family residences, 2013-2020



To understand if this increase reflects changes in ADU policy or an overall surge in residential construction, we can compare ADU permitting with permits issued for single-family residences, as shown in Exhibit 2. Similar increases across unit types would suggest that broader forces (like low interest rates) might explain the rise in ADU permits issued in 2020. In fact, permits for single-family residences actually fell by 10 percent from 2019 to 2020, from 491 units to 443 units. Permitting in both years was substantially below the 2013-2017 average of 775 single-family units per year.

A key change in Seattle’s 2019 ADU legislation was the allowance of two ADUs on lots in single-family zones. Precisely identifying through permit data the number of properties with two ADUs is somewhat challenging: some permits are issued for multiple ADUs under a single construction record, while some properties with two ADUs received multiple permits over time for the same address as property owners who already had an ADU added a second — sometimes many years later — following the 2019 legislation. Our best estimate as of August 2021 is that approximately 99 properties in SF zones have permits issued for multiple ADUs. Roughly 20 percent of these properties have two AADUs, and 80 percent have one AADU and one DADU.

Exhibit 3 identifies the share of permits issued each year for an ADU created through new construction versus through an alteration or addition of existing space or an existing structure. Some permits involve only a change of use (with no construction) and are totaled under “other.”

Exhibit 3 ADUs permitted since 2019 by permit type

	AADUs				DADUs			
	New construction	Addition / alteration	Other	Total	New construction	Addition / alteration	Other	Total
2019	32	119	4	155	41	89	0	130
2020	84	151	2	237	63	213	0	276
2021*	84	87	0	171	75	140	2	217
Total	200	357	6	563	179	442	2	622

* through Q2

Exhibit 4 shows the distribution of ADU permits issued in SF zones since 2016 by lot size. The average lot size of ADUs permitted since 2016 is 6,290 square feet for AADUs and 6,282 square feet for DADUs. Median lot size for SF zones is 5,579 square feet, suggesting that, on average, ADUs are created on relatively larger lots.

On the following page, Exhibit 5 shows the distribution of ADU permits throughout Seattle historically and since 2016. In general, ADU permits have been relatively dispersed throughout Seattle's single-family zones, which include SF zones (SF 5000, SF 7200, and SF 9600) and Residential Small Lot (RSL) zones.

Visit [ADUniverse](#) to see interactive versions of these and other maps in this report.

Exhibit 4 ADUs permitted in SF zones since 2016 by lot size (square feet)

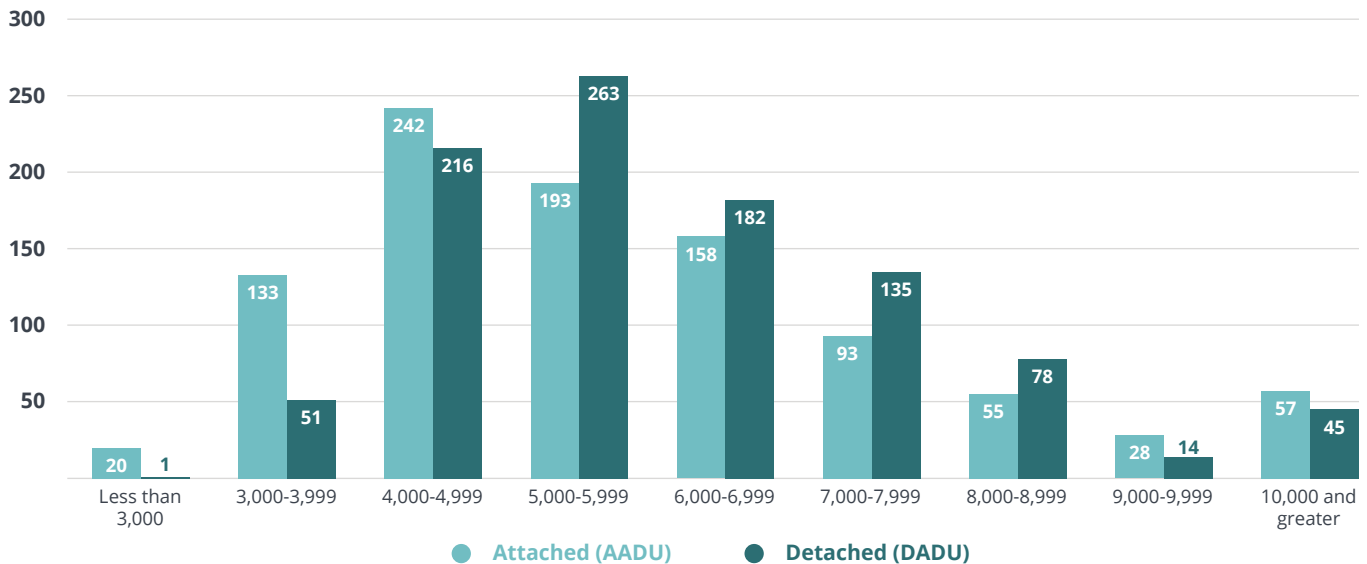
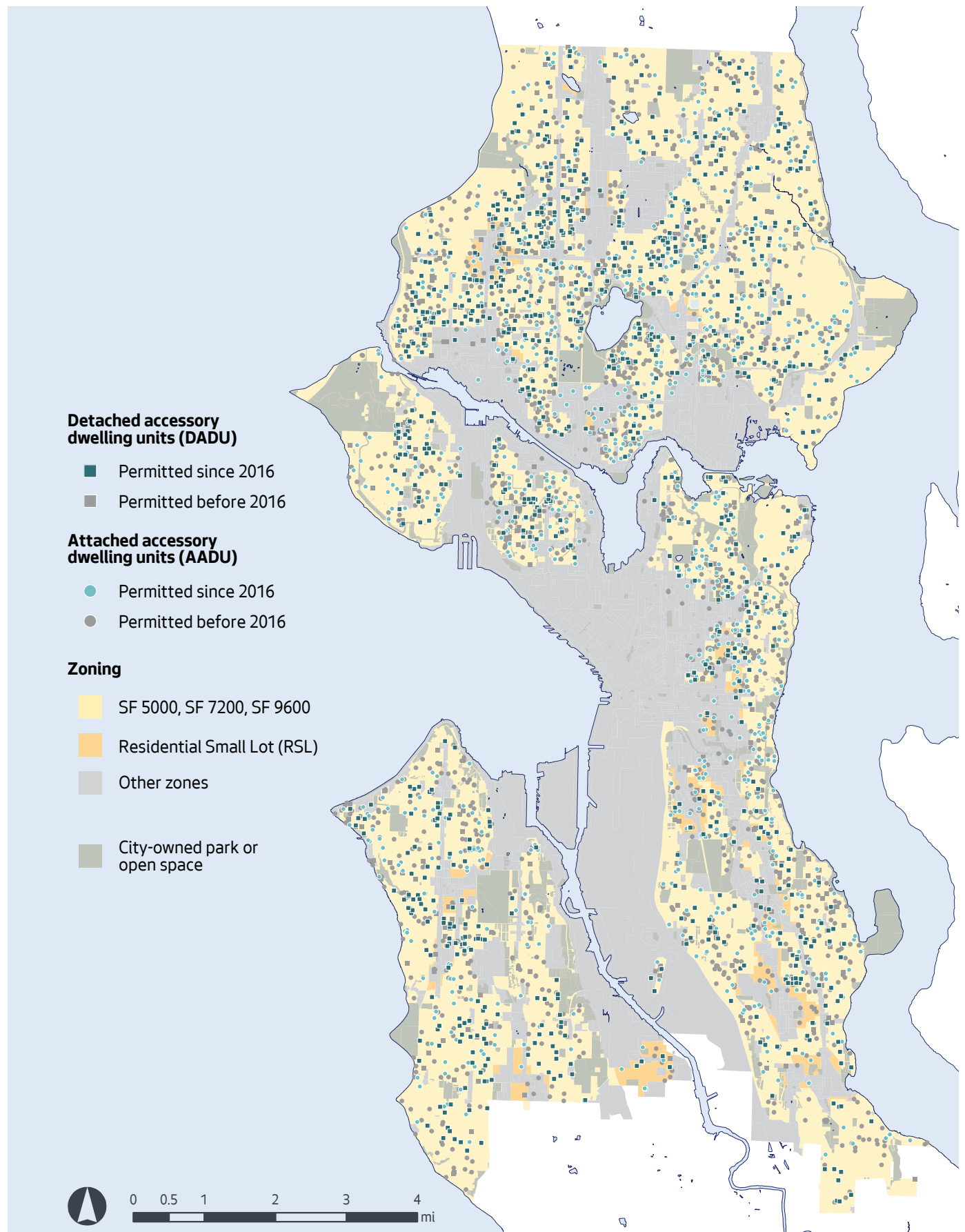


Exhibit 5 Distribution of ADU permits throughout Seattle



ADUs and affordability

As small, infill housing, ADUs often provide a lower-cost option for residents in neighborhoods where other homes are unaffordable. Their owners may benefit from the rental income that an ADU can provide, which in some cases could help a homeowner afford to stay in place. Given the high cost of construction, however, the opportunity to build or rent an ADU is not affordable to all Seattle residents. This section provides some preliminary insights about the types of areas where ADUs have been created and identifies areas for further survey research.

Displacement risk

The City's Comprehensive Plan, Seattle 2035, includes a **Displacement Risk Index** that identifies areas where people of color, low-income residents, and others could face heightened displacement pressure as the city grows over time. Exhibit 6 summarizes the number of ADUs permitted in areas identified as high displacement risk or low displacement risk. Exhibit 7 overlays ADUs permitted since 2016 on the Displacement Risk Index. Most ADUs have been permitted in areas with low risk of displacement. Eighty-six percent of AADUs and 88 percent of DADUs have been permitted in low displacement risk census tracts. Fourteen percent of AADUs and 12 percent of DADUs have been permitted in high displacement risk census tracts. This ratio likely reflects, in part, the fact that most single-family zones are located in low risk tracts.

Additional research through a survey of ADU owners and occupants is necessary to understand further whether and how ADUs in high displacement risk areas support homeowners at risk of displacement, increase housing choices that help residents stay in place, and/or exacerbate wealth disparities by race. Likewise, survey research could help identify the extent to which ADU production expands access to low displacement risk areas where housing costs are high.

ADU Racial Equity Toolkit

In October 2018, the City completed a **Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) on policies for ADUs** to understand if proposed efforts to encourage ADUs could affect race-based disparities. The RET found that removing regulatory barriers could increase housing choices in single-family zones and have a positive impact on affordability and displacement.

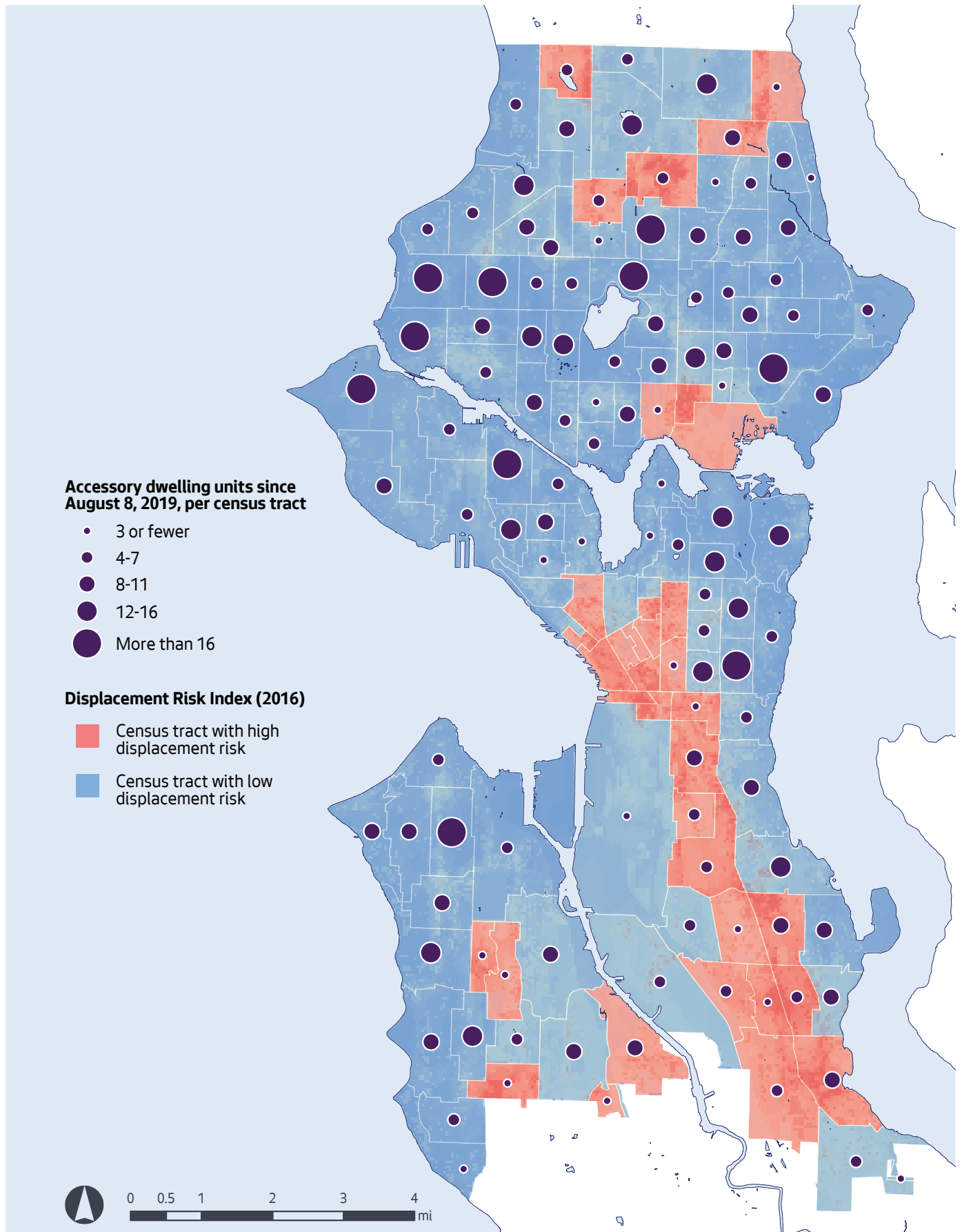
But the analysis also found that regulatory reform on its own is insufficient to address racial disparities in housing. Absent other policy interventions, wealthy, primarily white homeowners are most likely to have the capital necessary to create an ADU. The RET highlights the importance of actions beyond regulatory changes to ensure that Seattle's ADU policy more equitably benefits lower-income households and households of color.

For more detail, review the **ADU Racial Equity Toolkit**.

Exhibit 6 ADUs permitted in census tracts categorized by displacement risk

	AADUs			DADUs			Grand total
	Before 2016	Since 2016	Total	Before 2016	Since 2016	Total	
High displacement risk	222	135	357	52	112	164	521
Low displacement risk	1380	845	2,225	309	873	1,182	3,407
Total	1,602	980	2,582	361	985	1,346	3,928

Exhibit 7 ADU permits and census tracts categorized by displacement risk



Median income

While we cannot precisely determine through permitting data the socioeconomic or demographic characteristics of property owners who have created ADUs, we can examine the neighborhood conditions of areas where greater or lesser ADU production has occurred. The following exhibits focus on ADU permits with application dates on or after August 8, 2019, in order to gauge how ADU production has unfolded since Seattle’s new ADU regulations took effect.

Exhibit 8 summarizes the number of ADUs permitted by census tract according to the median household income of the tract. Most AADUs and DADUs permitted under Seattle’s new regulations have been in census tracts where the median household income is more than \$100,000. Census tracts with a lower median household income — areas likely to have more lower- and moderate-income homeowners — have seen fewer ADUs permitted.

However, the absolute number of ADU permits, as shown in Exhibit 8 does not reflect how much single-family zoning is in each census tract. Census tracts with a lower median household income may also have relatively less single-family zoning, and thus fewer parcels eligible for ADUs. To evaluate whether ADU permits have been more numerous in lower- or higher-income census tracts given the tract’s single-family zoning, Exhibit 9 plots each census tract according to its median household income and the number of ADU permits since August 8, 2019, per 100 parcels in single-family zones. When normalized for the amount of single-family zoning in each tract, ADU permitting under the new regula-

Affordable ADU financing pilot

In the 2020 budget, the City Council approved funding for an affordable ADU loan pilot program that sought to address financing barriers that often prevent lower- and moderate-income homeowners and homeowners of color from being able to develop an ADU. While funding for this program was reallocated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize the ongoing need for actions to ensure that Seattle’s ADU policies equitably benefit lower-income households and households of color.

Exhibit 8 ADUs permitted by application date in census tracts by median household income

Median household income by census tract	AADUs			DADUs			Grand total
	Before 8/8/2019	Since 8/8/2019	Total	Before 8/8/2019	Since 8/8/2019	Total	
Less than \$50,000	71	9	80	25	7	32	112
\$50,000-80,000	335	66	401	132	88	220	621
\$80,001-100,000	416	75	491	205	109	314	805
\$100,001-125,000	728	149	877	274	180	454	1,331
Greater than \$125,000	609	124	733	203	123	326	1,059
Total	2159	423	2,582	839	507	1,346	3,928

Source: 2015-19 American Community Survey

tions has been relatively distributed across census tracts based on median income; the dashed trend line shows that almost no statistical relationship exists between ADU permitting and an area’s median income.

Exhibit 9 ADU permitting since August 8, 2019, per census tract and median household income

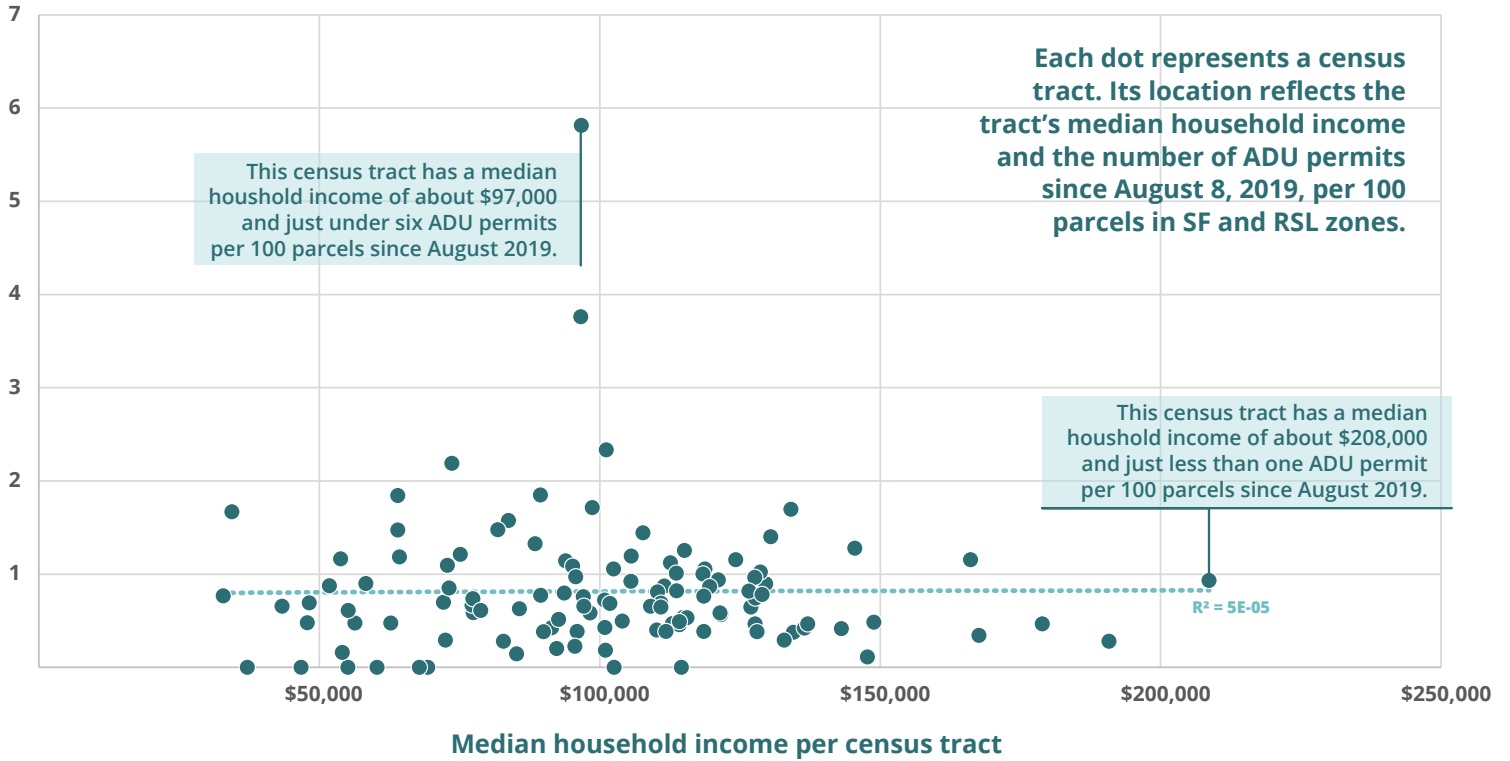
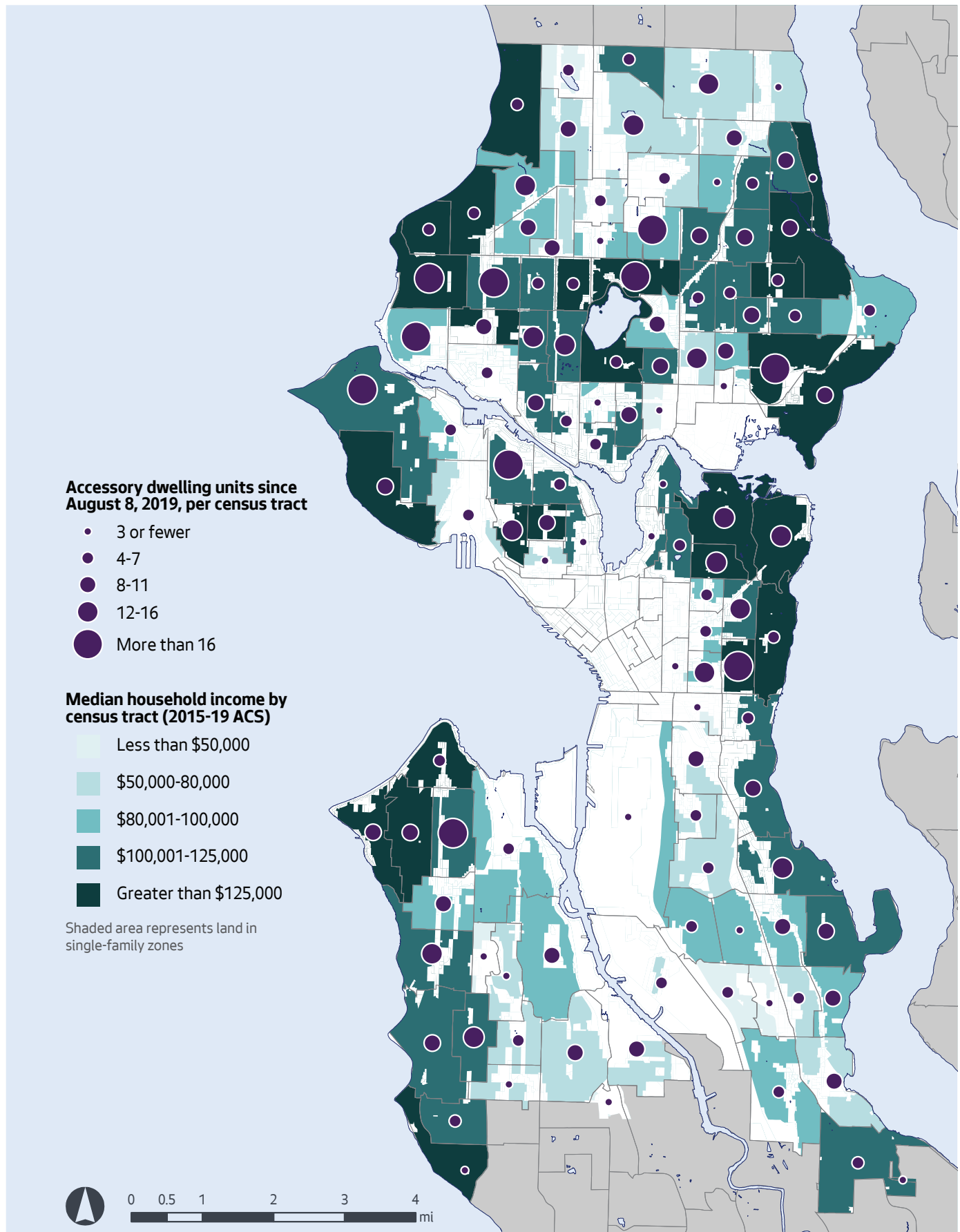


Exhibit 10 shows this same analysis spatially, with each dot scaled to the relative number of ADU permits under the new regulations and census tracts categorized according to median household income.

Neighborhood-level data does not provide specific property owner characteristics. While initial data suggests ADUs have generally been permitted in *areas* with both lower and higher median incomes, we do not know if the property owners themselves reflect a wide range of incomes. We also cannot determine if ADUs in *any* area, regardless of median income, might tend to be created by disproportionately wealthier households. Further survey research is necessary to assess to what extent lower- or moderate-income homeowners are benefiting from the opportunity to create ADUs. This information can also inform potential proactive efforts and interventions to help low-income residents and homeowners of color benefit from owning or renting an ADU, such as with an affordable ADU financing tool or through other strategies.

Exhibit 10 ADUs since August 8, 2019, and median household income by census tract



From top to bottom, left to right:

Cedar Cottage, CAST Architecture;
Willow Creek DADU, Shape
Architecture; MADADU. Magellan
Architects; Schooner, Fivedot
Architects; The Family, Ahouse
Studio; Urban Cottage, Urban
Cottage Prefab and WOOD Studio;
Seattle DADU, Artisans Group;
Sky House, Yes Architecture;
MOA Family ADU, Mobile
Office Architects; Edge House,
Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.

Pre-approved DADU plans

In her July 2019 Executive Order, Mayor Durkan directed us to develop pre-approved plans for DADUs as a strategy for simplifying, streamlining, and lowering the cost of the design and permitting process. In December 2019, we published a call for submissions and received more than 160 DADU plans from designers, architects, and builders. We convened a volunteer panel of City commissioners and board members to review submissions and recommend 10 plans for pre-approval. Following the process in **Tip 310**, SDCI completed its structural review of these designs, and we published a **gallery** of 10 pre-approved DADU plans.

Included in our ADUniverse website, the pre-approved designs offer a range of sizes, unit types, and architectural styles and provide a faster, more predictable, and lower-cost option for property owners seeking to build a DADU. By using a pre-approved plan, homeowners can save money and get a permit in two to six weeks for most sites.



Since launching the gallery in September 2020, 36 permits have been issued or initiated for the 10 pre-approved DADU designs as of August 2021. Permitting for these DADUs averaged 45 calendar days from intake to issuance, with an average of 31 days in SDCI review and 14 days out for corrections.

These pre-approved DADU plans have been reviewed against applicable standards in the Land Use Code and the Seattle Residential Code (SRC). Construction codes like the SRC are updated on a three-year cycle. The pre-approved plans were reviewed under the **2018 SRC**, which took effect in March 2021 and is valid until 2024. At that point, the City will need to decide whether and how to renew the validity of the pre-approved plans.

How ADUs are used

ADUs offer a range of potential benefits to their owners and occupants. For some, an ADU provides a source of reliable rental income that may help a household meet their needs or weather rising costs. ADUs can support multigenerational families as housing for a child returning home from living elsewhere, an aging parent, or family member with special needs. A household seeking to downsize might move into their ADU and rent their house, allowing them to stay in their longtime neighborhood as they age in place. An ADU might house occasional visitors or community members, provide additional living space that helps a household meet their changing needs, or a combination of these uses.

For their occupants, ADUs provide a chance to live in a quiet residential neighborhood where housing costs are out of reach to most Seattle-area residents. Many ADUs offer a private living area and yard space not available through other housing options in the area.

This flexibility is part of the value of an ADU. Some owners may rent their ADU on a long-term basis, preferring the reliability and stability of a longer lease. Others may obtain a license to use their ADU as a short-term rental, enjoying the flexibility to vary how their ADU is used.

Council Bill 119544 directs us to monitor how ADUs are used. This section presents information about the number of short-term rental (STR) licenses associated with ADUs and discusses preliminary observations about ADUs that provide homeownership opportunities through a condominium.

Other insights about how ADUs are used are more challenging to glean from permitting data alone. To gain additional information, we are partnering with the University of Washington to conduct a survey of ADU owners and occupants later in 2021. Survey responses will help us learn more about how owners use their ADUs; explore financial topics like ADU rents, construction costs, and financing; and understand owners' motivations for creating an ADU.

Short-term rentals

Seattle has short-term rental regulations that limit residents to operating up to two units, the operator's primary residence and a secondary unit. ADUs used as rentals must also register with the City's **Rental Registration and Inspection Ordinance (RRIO)** program. Exhibit 11 summarizes data from the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), which oversees the City's **short-term rental licensing program**, on the number of short-term rental licenses for units identified as ADUs. Applicants for a short-term rental license must indicate the type of unit they will operate, allowing us to estimate the number of ADUs associated with a short-term rental license.

Exhibit 11 Short-term rental (STR) licenses associated with ADU housing types

Unit type	Number of active licenses	Total ADU permits issued	STRs as share of permits issued
Attached accessory dwelling unit (AADU)	332	2,582 AADUs	12%
Detached accessory dwelling unit (DADU)	37	1,346 DADUs	3%
Other*	59	—	
Total	418	3,928 ADUs	11%

* Some STRs categorized as "other" appear to be ADUs. The "other" category is included in this table for that reason.

Exhibit 11 suggests that short-term rental licenses are associated with about 12 percent of permitted AADUs and three percent of permitted DADUs. Even if all short-term rental licenses categorized as "other" are in fact ADUs, the total would amount to about 11 percent of all ADU permits issued.

Several caveats apply to this short-term rental dataset. First, some licenses for the unit type "other" appear to be ADUs, and for that reason we include them here, but it is likely that not all licenses in this category are for ADUs. Second, an ADU used as a short-term rental might also be used for other purposes. Third, the existence of an STR license does not tell us for how many nights per year the ADU is offered for rent; some might be available full-time, while others might be rented less frequently. Finally, not all units operated in Seattle as short-term rentals have licenses.

Condominiums

In addition to being used as rental housing or space family and occasional visitors, ADUs can also be part of a condominium, where the ADU can be owned as a condo unit separate from yet still accessory to the primary residence. The City does not regulate the creation of condominiums, which are governed under state law (the Condominium Act, [RCW Chapter 64.34](#)) and administered by King County. The Land Use Code (SMC Title 23) generally applies equally to development regardless of whether it is rented, owned fee simple, or owned as a condominium.

This is true for ADUs, where the allowed number, size, and location of any ADUs on a property and rules on whether and how land can be subdivided are all the same if the ADU is part of a condominium. ADUs sold as condo units may offer a relatively lower-cost option for homeownership, particularly in high-cost areas; the median sales price for detached single-family homes in Seattle was nearly \$800,000 in 2018. Preliminary data suggests that the share of new ADUs created and sold as condos is increasing, though more analysis is necessary to verify if this is a lasting trend. The City is beginning to track formation of ADU condominiums so that future reporting can include this information.

ADU characteristics and outcomes

Council Bill 119544 and [Executive Order 2019-04](#) also direct us to assess and monitor various characteristics and outcomes of ADUs permitted in Seattle. These include DADU design characteristics like the height, gross floor area, and size of the lot; the number of off-street parking spaces and vehicle usage associated with new ADUs; and potential effects of ADU development on green space and tree canopy. Similar to ADU construction cost and rent, information about some of these topics generally is not present in City permitting data.

As mentioned earlier, OPCD and SDCI plan to conduct a survey of ADU owners and occupants that will provide quantitative and qualitative information about ADU characteristics and outcomes not otherwise available through permitting data, including the number of new off-street parking spaces and parking-related impacts associated with new ADUs, as required in Council 119544. Additionally, we anticipate advertising an internship focused on reviewing and describing the physical characteristics of DADUs permitted since the implementation of Seattle's ADU reform in 2019.

Trees

Under the [Tree Protection Code](#), a permit for tree and vegetation removal may be required when removing a tree depending on the property's location, whether development is planned, and the types of trees affected. The City's regulations identify three types of trees: trees more than six inches in diameter, exceptional trees, and hazardous trees. In single-family zones, where most ADUs are permitted, tree requirements apply when an applicant proposes development. When an ADU is constructed, tree planting is required if the lot falls short of certain baseline tree requirements. Exceptional trees must be retained unless doing so would prevent the development from achieving the maximum allowed lot coverage. The [2019 ADU legislation](#) included new policies to facilitate preservation of exceptional trees and trees more than two feet in diameter.

Exhibit 12 overlays ADU permits issued since 2016 with the City's most recent tree canopy data. While not indicative of parcel-level tree outcomes associated with ADU development, Exhibit 12 broadly suggests that ADUs have provided new housing options for people to live in tree canopy-rich areas.

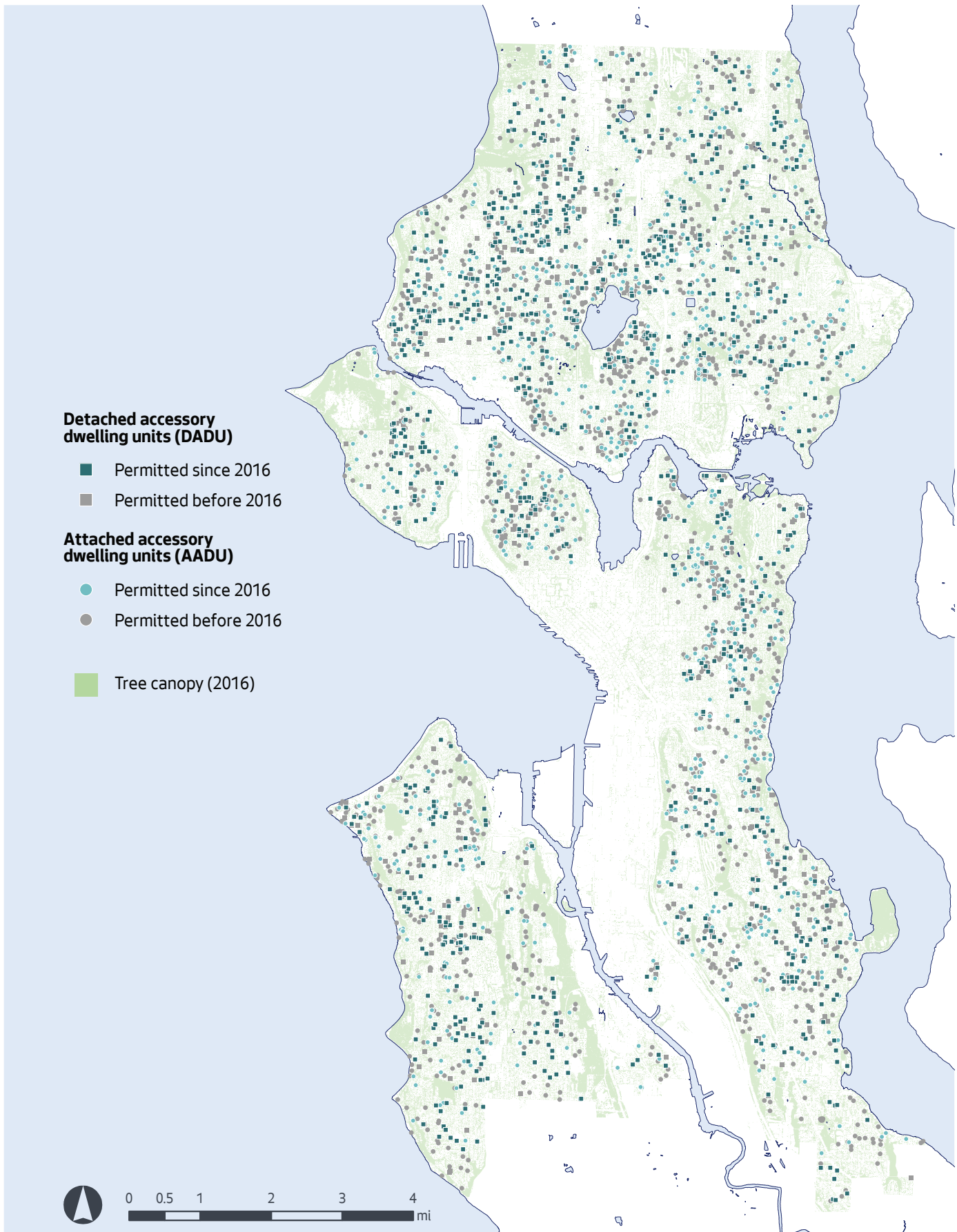
SDCI has been working with Seattle IT staff to develop new business practices and technology updates for tracking tree remov-

al and planting. This would allow for data-driven analysis of the effects of AADU and DADU construction on trees.

In June 2021, SDCI hired and trained GIS analysts to expedite data entry work and to condense the amount of time required to capture tree-related information from permits dating back to July 2019. SDCI originally anticipated the work to take up to three years due to the volume of applications and the time required to discern relevant tree protection information from site plans. However, with new additional staff hired, SDCI now forecasts that this work could be completed by the end of 2021. The data will help SDCI and OPCD report on the number of trees preserved and replaced as mitigation and provide information about each individual tree, e.g., tree species, tree type, whether or not it is exceptional, whether it is part of a tree grove, etc.

Data obtained through this effort will also allow City staff to identify and analyze trends related to AADU and DADU development on canopy coverage over time and will help inform any future policy and code development. We anticipate including this data and analysis in the next annual report on AADUs and DADUs.

Exhibit 12 ADU permits and tree canopy



Conclusion and future work

This report provides an initial assessment of outcomes since Seattle's landmark ADU reform in 2019. As requested in Council Bill 119544 and identified in Mayor Durkan's Executive Order 2019-04, SDCI and OPCD, along with partners and stakeholders, will continue to monitor and evaluate ADU production and its effects to encourage more of this housing type.

Later in 2021, OPCD and SDCI anticipate developing a survey of ADU owners and occupants that will provide additional quantitative and qualitative information about ADU development and usage. The survey will cover other topics identified in Council Bill 119544 and the Mayor's Executive Order 2019-04, including information about owners' motivations for constructing an ADU, demographic information, rental rates, parking and vehicle usage, and more.



Credit: Best Practice Architecture / Sozinho Imagery

maps.seattle.gov/ADU

Cover Image: Greenwood Contemporary DADU, Sheri Newbold / live-work-play
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