



June 3, 2019

The Honorable Lorena González
Seattle City Council
P.O. Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

RE: Accessory Dwelling Unit legislation

Dear Councilmember González:

AIA Seattle

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& Design
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Thank you for your work on Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) policy in recent years. AIA Seattle is pleased that the legislation is finally before you and we look forward to working on city-supported strategies related to ADUs moving forward. AIA Seattle supports Councilmember O'Brien's ADU legislation without amendments. We are confident that the analysis and consideration put into the legislation to this point has carefully addressed many needed changes to the way the city regulates ADUs.

Encouraging additional ADUs is the gentlest type of infill we can provide that is, importantly, applicable to all of Seattle's neighborhoods. As our city works to address deep deficits in overall housing availability and, specifically, affordable housing availability, this is a needed step to start to open up all of our neighborhoods to everyone in the city. Most critically, the legislation will allow more flexibility in single family zones—a crucial step if Seattle is to work toward our shared goal of providing more homes in more places for all types of people.

Allowing more ADUs will offer more options to residents, both owners and renters. It will allow rentals in places where currently apartments do not exist, providing more renters the same access to quality neighborhood amenities that those who live in single-family homes enjoy. It will give homeowners the option to remain in their homes when their incomes decline due to retirement or when property values around them soar beyond their means to keep up. It will allow families the opportunity to stay connected, allow strangers to forge new connections, and build community in new and foundational ways in our city.

Architects spend a lot of time thinking about ways to design strong, healthy, and vibrant cities. Encouraging greater density, even gentle density, will serve additional goals related to building a stronger city. Neighborhoods will grow more equitable; more and more residents will enjoy walkable neighborhoods close to amenities such as transit, parks, and good schools; and residents will grow less dependent on cars. These are all benefits of policies that expand density, and they begin with ADUs.

AIA Seattle has long supported the parts of Councilmember O'Brien's legislation that address what we experience with our clients as the biggest barriers to ADU construction today: removing parking requirements and relaxing owner occupancy rules. We also strongly support the FAR limitation on home size that will both incentivize density in the form of multiple families living on a single lot and promote good design by encouraging designers and builders to creatively address space and functionality issues.

AIA Seattle looks forward to continuing to work with the city on issues related to the design, regulation, and affordability of ADUs. This is an important point of change for our city with respect to deciding who gets to live where, and how, and what our neighborhoods will look like moving forward. We encourage you to approve this legislation and its key components.

Regards,

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Lisa Richmond
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AR', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alissa Rupp, FAIA
President