

Zoning Module 3 - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Allowing ADUs in all single family residential zones can increase the availability of affordable rental housing and make more efficient use of existing housing stock and infrastructure. By establishing standards for these units the ordinance can ensure neighborhood stability.

Comments: *You should also examine other permitting processes besides zoning and understand how they affect the likelihood of adding ADU's to the community. For instance sewer hook-up fees and impact fees may affect the affordability of the units.*

Purpose: To promote a mix of housing types, more compact development and support for nearby activity centers.

1. Encourage Efficient Use of Existing Housing Stocks and Infrastructure
2. Protect neighborhood stability, maintenance of property values and single family appearance by regulating Accessory Dwelling Units through this ordinance
3. Increase the availability of affordable rental housing.

The installation of an ADU in new and existing single-family dwellings (hereinafter principal units) shall be allowed in single-family residential zones by administrative approval subject to specific standards listed below:

A. ADU Standards:

- A.1. The structure must comply with all residential building, health, safety, and fire codes.
- A.2. The additional unit can be a detached cottage, a unit attached to a garage, or may be in a portion of a principal unit and must meet all underlying zone requirements concerning setbacks and height.
- A.3. Maximum lot coverage of all buildings may not exceed [50] % of the total lot size.

Comments: *The percent of lot coverage should be determined at a community level to ensure adequate private outdoor space; we do not recommend prohibiting ADUs on lots below a certain size as that may restrict them to locations that are farther from likely walkable destinations as smaller lots are more likely to be near activity centers.*

- A.4. A maximum of one accessory dwelling unit is permitted per lot.
- A.5. The owner of the property shall occupy either the principle unit or accessory unit as a permanent residence and at no time shall the owner receive rent payments for the owner occupied unit.
- A.6. The accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed [75]% of the size of the principle unit or [800]square feet in floor area whichever is less.

Comments: *Limitations on square footage are designed to ensure that ADUs remain subordinate to the principal unit. The maximum size of the unit should be determined at the local level, many ordinances have a limit of 800-1000 square feet or less. You may also use a ratio, a size limit based on a ratio between the primary unit and the ADU should be small enough to keep ADUs subordinate to the primary unit, but not so small as to require a large house to establish a viable ADU.*

- A.7. Accessory units may contain no more than two bedrooms and no more than one bathroom.
- A.8. The exterior appearance of an addition or detached accessory dwelling unit shall be architecturally compatible with the primary residence. Compatibility includes coordination of architectural style, exterior building materials and colors, roof form and pitch, window style and placement and landscaping. Within an Historic District historic district standards shall apply.

- A.9. Separate entrances shall be oriented towards the side or rear yards.
- A.10. The placement and design of windows on detached accessory dwellings shall ensure privacy for abutting properties. Privacy is maintained by orienting windows away from sight lines (i.e., above or out of view into adjacent yards or opposing windows of adjacent dwellings) or by using obscure glass.
- A.11. A minimum of one parking space shall be provided for each accessory dwelling. A parking space on-street in front of the lot may be counted, if on-street parking is otherwise permitted and the primary residence parking requirements have been met.
- A.12. Parking must be provided in the rear of the lot where alley access is available. Any parking space on site that is accessed from the front or side of the lot must be setback a minimum of 5 feet behind the front facade of any buildings on the lot and should be screened from adjacent residences.

After approval, the Director shall provide notice of the registration of the accessory unit to owners of property within 300' of the registered site. The notice shall state that the unit complies with the standards of this section, shall describe the requirements for maintaining the unit, and shall explain how to obtain general information, how to request inspections, and how to appeal the administrative approval.

Comments: *These standards are designed to ensure that the accessory is compatible in style with the existing structure, does not create a loss of privacy for existing neighbors and that the property is maintained by the property owner as a permanent residence to ensure maintenance. You may want to consider a limitation on the total number of unrelated occupants of both units based on the number of unrelated occupants allowed in a single family home. You may want to include a definition of owner occupancy in your list of definitions, such as:*

Definiton

Owner occupancy – A property owner, as reflected in title records, who makes his or her legal residence at a site, as evidenced by voter registration, vehicle registration, or similar means.

Resources

Municipal Research Center of Washington, Accessory Dwelling Units, October 1995, Report #33 [accessed September 2012] <http://www.mrsc.org/publications/textadu.aspx>

Accessory Dwelling Units: Case Study, U.S . Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research: [accessed September 2012] <http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/adu.pdf>