



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) Frequently Asked Questions



Q: What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)?

A: An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), also referred to as a granny flat, secondary dwelling unit, elder cottage housing opportunity (ECHO), or mother-daughter residence, is an apartment that can be located within the walls of an existing or newly constructed single-family home or can be an addition to an existing home. It can also be a freestanding structure on the same lot as the principal dwelling unit or a conversion of a garage or barn.

Q: Why is this Code Amendment concerning the issue of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) being addressed and why now?

A: The Code Amendment proposed concerning Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) is in response to the provisions of AB 1866, effective July 1, 2003 (Government Code §65852.150 *et seq.*), which mandates the allowance for accessory second dwelling units in the single family zones. The provisions of this bill allow local jurisdictions to impose standards on second units that include, but are not limited to:

- parking
- height
- setbacks
- lot coverage
- architectural review
- maximum size of a unit
- standards that promote historic resource protection
- that the ADUs are a residential use that is consistent with the existing General Plan and zoning designation for the lot

Currently, the Department of City Planning is processing ADU requests under State regulations. If more restrictive ADU regulations are preferred, they must be adopted through an ordinance.

Q: Does the City have to allow ADUs on residentially zoned lots?

A: Yes. Under the adopted State regulations, ADUs are required to be provided ministerially, without discretionary review or hearing. Therefore, if ADU regulations that are more restrictive than the State regulations are preferred, they must be adopted by an ordinance.

Q: Is every residentially zoned lot eligible to build an ADU?

A: Yes. According to State law, all residentially zoned standard sized lots are eligible to construct an efficiency unit at a minimum. However, the existing primary dwelling unit must be in compliance with all development regulations including setbacks, FAR, lot coverage, and parking. Additionally, the proposed ADU must also meet the development standards set forth in **including any special districts or overlays** (i.e. Specific Plan, HPOZ, Coastal Commission, hillside regulations, etc.). Therefore, if ADU regulations that are more restrictive than the State regulations are preferred, they must be adopted by an ordinance.

Q: What is the Planning Department's proposal?

A: The Planning Department has not determined whether an ordinance will be proposed as a study is currently being conducted to assess the issue. The Planning Department requests your input on whether or not the State ADU regulations should be amended and, if so, how.

To be involved, please contact: Gabriela Juárez at gabriela.juarez@lacity.org or at (213) 978-1337.