



Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulations

REGULATORY CODE CHANGES *ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 19, 2019*

On March 19, 2019 the City Council adopted Amended Ordinance No. 28576 enacting a package of changes to the City's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations. In addition, the City Council directed City staff to monitor and report on ADU development and report back to the City Council one year after the effective date and on a regular schedule thenceforth.

Additional guidance documents are under development in support of the May 1, 2019 effective date. For more information, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/DADU.

Summary of Changes

ZONING DISTRICTS:

- Allows Detached ADUs in single-family and mixed-residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-2SRD and HMR-SRD Districts), where they were previously only allowed through the Residential Infill Pilot Program

INTENT:

- Updates ADU code intent language to better address housing choice and sustainability

PROCEDURES:

- ADU Permit: Removes the requirement to secure a separate ADU land use permit
- Owner occupancy: Removes the requirement that the owner occupy either the main house or ADU, and removes the requirement to record an ADU Agreement on the property title
- Short-term Rentals: Requires the owner to live onsite for approval of a Short-term Rental
- Density calculations: Clarifies that ADUs are exempt from density calculations

REQUIREMENTS:

- Accessory structures location: Clarifies standards regarding accessory buildings and front yards
- Occupancy (number of occupants): Clarifies that the Building Code controls building occupancy
- Parking: Prohibits new driveways from the front property line serving ADUs
- Addressing: Requires ADUs to have an address posted and visible from the street
- Legalization: Updates timeline and requirements for legalizing pre-existing, unpermitted ADUs (amnesty program)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

- Accessory structures size: Allows larger accessory buildings on lots greater than 10,000 square feet (this allowance previously applied only to lots greater than ½-acre)
- Lot size: Removes minimum lot size and width requirements for ADU's (ADU size is proportional to the main house size and lot size)
- ADU size: Streamlines measurement of ADU size and increases Attached ADU size allowance

- Height:
 - *Conversions:* Allows conversion of existing structures taller than 18 feet with a Conditional Use Permit
 - *Bonus:* Adds height increase to 20 feet when parking is on the main level or in exchange for Built Green 4 Star certification (in non-View Sensitive District (VSD) areas)
 - *View Sensitive Districts:* Clarifies height limits in View Sensitive Districts
- Setbacks:
 - *Attached ADUs:* Clarifies Attached ADUs must meet main house setbacks
 - *Conversions:* Allows existing buildings being converted to ADUs not to meet setbacks, but must comply with Building Code requirements
- Open space: Clarifies that ADU projects may not eliminate required open space
- Walkways: Modifies the walkway requirement to provide additional flexibility
- Design standards:
 - *Complementary design:* Clarifies standards requiring ADU design to complement the main house
 - *DADU entrance:* Adds standard requiring DADU main entrances to be setback 8 feet from the side property line if the entrance faces the neighboring property
 - *Windows:* Adds standard requiring DADU second story windows within 10 feet of property line to be designed to reduce privacy impacts
 - *Roofs:* Adds standard requiring DADU roofs to be designed to reduce shading impacts when located close to neighboring properties
 - *Historic Districts:* References design review in historic districts
 - *Design guide:* Adds reference to an illustrated ADU design guide to assist in implementing design standards

For more information, visit www.cityoftacoma.org/DADU or contact Elliott Barnett, Senior Planner at (253) 591-5389, Elliott.barnett@cityoftacoma.org.