

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

LA County Planning is currently amending the existing ADU Ordinance to ensure compliance with State ADU law and improve the implementation process in our unincorporated communities. We are anticipating a public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission in April 2024, a Board of Supervisors hearing in Summer 2024, and adoption of the ordinance in Fall/Winter 2024. The draft ordinance and more information are available at planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/adu-ordinance-amendment/.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an accessory dwelling unit (ADU)?

An ADU is a unit with a kitchen and bathroom that is accessory to a single-family or multifamily residential use. An ADU must have its own exterior access. A Junior ADU (JADU) is an ADU with maximum size of 500 square feet. A JADU must be within a single-family residence and have its own exterior access.

How many ADUs will I be allowed to build on my single-family residential property?

A property with an existing or proposed single-family residence (SFR) will be allowed one ADU attached to the SFR, one ADU detached from the SFR, and one JADU.

How many ADUs will I be allowed to build on my multifamily residential property?

A property with an existing or proposed multifamily residence (MFR)—including multiple detached units, duplexes, or apartment buildings—will be allowed up to 25 percent of the units, converted from existing space and/or attached to the building(s), and up to two detached ADUs. For example, a property with eight primary units will be allowed two attached ADUs (existing space conversion and/or new construction) and two detached ADUs.

What are statewide exempt ADUs?

Statewide exempt ADUs are ADUs that must be approved without local development standards. For an SFR property, this includes one ADU converted from existing or proposed space, one JADU, and one detached ADU with maximum floor area of 800 square feet. For an MFR property, this includes up to 25% of existing units converted from non-habitable space in the building(s), and two detached ADUs.

Will I be allowed to build an ADU within a high fire risk area?

If a property is within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) and meets access requirements, local ADU rules will apply. If a property is within a VHFHSZ and does not meet access requirements, only statewide exempt ADUs will be allowed in accordance with State law.

Will I be allowed to build a two-story ADU?

The maximum height for all ADUs will be 25 feet, unless otherwise specified by a Community Standards District (CSD), Specific Plan (SP), or Planning Area Standards District (PASD). In instances where a CSD, SP, or PASD requires a lower height, a minimum height between 16 and 20 feet will still be allowed depending on the property type and location, per State law.

Will I be allowed to propose ADUs as part of a new multifamily project?

Yes. An applicant will be able to propose ADUs as part of a new multifamily development. ADUs do not count toward the allowable density for the project.

Will there be any changes to parking requirements for ADUs?

There is no change to required parking for ADUs outside of a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). No parking is required for ADUs outside of VHFHSZ. For properties within a VHFHSZ, one parking space will be required for the ADU, unless the ADU has no bedrooms, is located within a public transit area, or is attached to a residence or another accessory structure. When a garage, carport, or covered parking structure is demolished or rendered unusable because of ADU construction, no replacement parking is required, in accordance with State law.

Will I be allowed to build an ADU in my front yard setback?

An ADU with a maximum floor area of 800 square feet will be allowed to encroach within the front yard setback if there is no other location on the property where a ground-level ADU could be constructed.

Will there be restrictions on renting out ADUs?

ADUs and JADUs must be rented for at least 30 days at a time and cannot be used as short-term vacation rentals. On properties with a JADU, either the SFR or JADU must be owner-occupied.

Will I be allowed to convert an unpermitted structure into an ADU, even if it doesn't meet zoning or building code requirements?

Any existing structure can be converted into an ADU, as long as the structure does not present a threat to health and safety. Improvements may be required to maintain safe living conditions. Structures will be required to meet current building code standards. Please consult with Building & Safety early in the process to determine whether your project is feasible.

Are there different rules for ADUs on properties with historic resources?

Yes. There will be additional development standards for ADUs on properties with historic resources.

Will I be allowed to build an ADU near an animal-keeping structure such as a horse stable?

Yes. ADUs and JADUs will be exempt from the existing 35-foot separation requirement between animal-keeping structures and habitable structures.