

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU'S) IN UR DISTRICTS

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are intended to:

- Provide homeowners with a means of providing for companionship and security.
- Add small footprint and lower cost units to the existing housing supply.
- Make housing units within the City available to low- and moderate-income people.
- Provide an increased choice of housing that responds to changing needs, lifestyles, environmental sustainability, and modern development technology.
- Contribute to neighborhood stability and protect property values by creating avenues for additional income, aging in place, and meeting personal and property needs.
- Maintain residential appearance by ensuring that ADUs are of sound quality and generally consistent with neighborhood patterns.
- Increase density to better utilize existing infrastructure and community resources and to support public transit and neighborhood retail and commercial services.

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Development of ADUs in Urban Residential districts is primarily regulated by these sections in the Tacoma Municipal Code:

1. **District Development Standards (TMC 13.06.020.F)** control density, allowed uses and housing types, scale (building area, height and setbacks), and the amount of amenity space and tree credits required on a site. Development bonuses and flexibilities are also found in this section.
2. **Building Design Standards (TMC 13.06.100.F)** illustrate five **Housing Types** to provide predictability and variety of successful Middle Housing neighborhoods. They control the positions, sizes, access, and relationships of buildings, parking and amenity spaces to their lots. They also include related physical standards for large or corner sites and non-residential uses.
3. **Site Development Standards (TMC 13.06.090)** include Landscaping & tree standards, Off-street parking areas, Pedestrian and bicycle support standards, Fences and retaining walls, Utilities, and Street level building transitions.
4. **Unit Lot Subdivisions (TMC 13.04.093)** includes standards for subdivision of parcels into smaller "unit lots", usually offered for sale as fee simple parcels.
5. **Landmarks and Historic Special Review Districts (TMC 13.07)** include applicable standards for entries and other building elements in Historic Districts. When conflicts in the code exist, Historic Standards take priority over Building Design Standards.

DESCRIPTION

An ADU is a small, independent dwelling unit located on the same lot as a residential building. Often called "granny flats", "secondary suites", or "accessory apartments", ADUs can be located either within or attached to the primary structure ("internal" or "attached" ADUs), or in a detached structure often in the rear yard (detached ADUs).



NOTE: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org | 253-591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice). TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU'S) IN UR DISTRICTS



Attached ADU
(Dalton home www.accessorydwellings.org)



Detached ADU
(Photo by Lauren Flemister, City of Tacoma)

WHERE ARE ADU'S ALLOWED?

Two attached and/or detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are permitted on any legally established lot, as a subordinate use in conjunction with any new or existing residential development. Two attached ADUs to an existing single-unit home is considered a triplex and must comply with International Building Code requirements. ADUs are allowed in any Housing Type (see below).

ALLOWED USES

Residential Businesses and the use of an ADU as a short-term rental are allowed, subject to existing regulations. The property owner is required to occupy one of the dwellings for approval of a short-term rental of either the main dwelling or the ADU.

DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN STANDARDS

The habitable area of ADUs, excluding any garage area and other non-living areas, is limited to a maximum of 1,000 square feet. Each must include facilities for cooking, living, sanitation, and sleeping.

In Urban Residential zones, an ADU may be located within or classified as any Housing Type if it meets the applicable standards of its Housing Type (TMC 13.06.100.F), as well as the applicable District Standards of its zoning district (TMC 13.06.020.F)—including lot size, density, FAR, height, and setbacks. The ADU together with its entire lot must meet these standards. ADUs are counted as dwelling units in the Urban Residential zones for the purposes of calculating density.

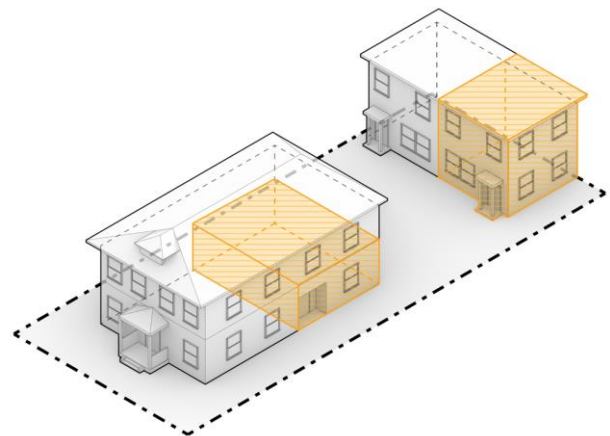


Diagram showing attached and detached ADUs.



NOTE: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org | 253-591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice). TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU'S) IN UR DISTRICTS

OPEN SPACE & LANDSCAPING

As mentioned above, an ADU must meet the applicable standards of its Housing Type and the District Standards of its zoning district, including amenity space. It must also meet applicable Site Development Standards for the zone, for landscaping and tree credits.

WALKWAYS

For ADUs with a separate exterior entrance, a pedestrian walkway shall be provided between the ADU and the nearest public sidewalk; or where no sidewalk exists, to the nearest public street right-of-way. The walkway shall be composed of materials that are distinct from any adjacent vehicle driving or parking surfaces. The walkway may function as a shared pedestrian/vehicle space if it is constructed of distinct materials and is located along an exterior edge of a driving surface.

PARKING

No off-street parking is required for ADUs. It is permitted to remove existing off-street parking spaces for the purpose of siting an accessory dwelling unit. Any provided parking must be located in the rear portion of the lot and shall not be accessed from the front if there is a developed alley. Short- and long-term Bicycle Parking is required per TMC 13.06.090.G.

FLEXIBLE STANDARDS FOR OWNER-OCCUPIED ADUS

Flexibility to certain development standards is provided to current owner-occupant households earning no more than 150 percent of the Pierce County family median income. Incentives are available when adding up to two accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on their own property and adding a binding title restriction that one of the units will be owner-occupied for at least the first 5-years from certification of occupancy.

The following development standards are modified for qualifying projects:

- 1) The rear yard height limit in the UR-1 and UR-2 Districts is raised to 35-feet.
- 2) No alley access is required if the alley is not currently developed.
- 3) The on-site tree credit requirement is reduced to the minimum "floor" level without requiring Tree Credit Fees or Canopy Loss Fees.

PERMITTING & INSPECTIONS

Construction permits are required for creating, converting, or legalizing an ADU. Please schedule an appointment with staff to review permitting and plan requirements and to determine application requirements. The City will review the application for compliance with code requirements including District Development Standards, Site Development Standards, Building Design Standards, and all applicable zoning, building, plumbing, mechanical, and energy requirements.

The City will inspect the property to confirm that the above standards and all applicable building, health, safety, energy, and electrical code standards are met. Permits must be issued prior to the start of work. If work occurs prior to issuance of the permit, double fees and deconstruction will likely be necessary to verify code compliance.

Additional tip sheets and links to support ADU design, zoning and permitting can be found at <https://www.tacomapermits.org/accessory-dwelling-units>



NOTE: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org | 253-591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice). TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU'S) IN UR DISTRICTS

ADU ACCELERATOR PROGRAM – COMING IN MARCH

Pre-approved plans will be available in March through the City's ADU Accelerator Program. See below examples from this program.



NOTE: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: [City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org](http://www.tacomapermits.org) | 253-591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice). TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.