

### Accessory Dwelling Units

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#### **6-560 Purpose and findings.**

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of this article is to allow and regulate accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) in compliance with California Government Code sections 65852.2 and 65852.22.
- (b) Effect of Conforming. An ADU or JADU that conforms to the standards in this section will not be:
  - (1) Deemed to be inconsistent with the city's general plan and zoning designation for the lot on which the ADU or JADU is located.
  - (2) Deemed to exceed the allowable density for the lot on which the ADU or JADU is located.
  - (3) Considered in the application of any local ordinance, policy, or program to limit residential growth.
  - (4) Required to correct a nonconforming zoning condition, as defined in Section 6-561(h) below.

#### **6-561 Definitions.**

As used in this article, terms are defined as follows:

- (a) "Accessory dwelling unit" or "ADU" means an attached or a detached residential dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary residence. An accessory dwelling unit also includes the following:
  - (1) An efficiency unit, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 17958.1.
  - (2) A manufactured home, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 18007.
- (b) "Accessory building" means a building, as defined by LMC 6-312, that is accessory and incidental to a dwelling located on the same lot.
- (c) "Complete independent living facilities" means permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same parcel as the single-family or multifamily dwelling is or will be situated.
- (d) "Efficiency kitchen" means a kitchen that includes all of the following:
  - (1) A cooking facility with appliances.
  - (2) A food preparation counter or counters that total at least 3 square feet in area and no more than 15 square feet in area.

- (3) Food storage cabinets that total at least 3 square feet in area and no more than 30 square feet of shelf space.
- (e) “Floor area” means the total habitable and non-habitable area contained within a building footprint as measured to the internal face of the external walls.
- (f) “Height” means the vertical distance between the average of the highest and lowest grade at the lowest foundation wall (measured at existing grade or finished grade, whichever is lower) and the highest point of the structure. An appurtenance attached to an accessory dwelling unit, which is listed in Section 6-513 LMC, is excepted from the height limit.
- (g) “Junior accessory dwelling unit” or “JADU” means a residential unit that meets all of the following criteria:
- (1) is no more than 500 square feet in floor area,
  - (2) is contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family building,
  - (3) includes its own separate sanitation facilities or shares sanitation facilities with the existing or proposed single-family building, and
  - (4) includes an efficiency kitchen, as defined in subsection (d) above.
- (h) “Living area” means the interior habitable area of a dwelling unit including basements and attics but does not include a garage or any accessory building.
- (i) “Nonconforming zoning condition” means an existing physical improvement on a property that does not conform with current zoning standards.
- (j) “Passageway” means a pathway that is unobstructed clear to the sky and extends from a street to one entrance of the ADU or JADU.
- (k) “Primary unit” or “primary residence” means a single-family or multi-family residential dwelling unit that either exists on or is proposed for a lot zoned for single-family or multi-family residential use.
- (l) “Proposed dwelling” means a dwelling that is the subject of a permit application and that meets the requirements for permitting.
- (m) “Protected tree” means a tree meeting one or more of the following standards:
- (1) Developed Property. Located on a developed property, that has a trunk diameter of 12 inches or more, and that is one of the following species: Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*); Canyon oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*); Blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*); White oak (*Quercus garryana*); Black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*); Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*); Interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*); California bay (*Umbellularia californica*); California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*); Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*);
  - (2) Approved Development Application. Of any size or species and designated to be protected and preserved as part of an approved development application;
  - (3) Riparian Tree. Is a native riparian tree with a trunk diameter of six-inches or more or one component trunk of a multi-trunked tree with a diameter of four-inches or more and that is one of the following species: Bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*); Boxelder (*Acer negundo*); White alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*); Black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*); Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*); Red willow (*Salix laevigata*); Arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*); Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*); Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*); California bay (*Umbellularia californica*); California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*); Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus Mexicana*, *aerulea*, or *glauca*).
  - (4) Undeveloped Property. Of any species with a diameter of six inches or more and located on an undeveloped property;
  - (5) Replacement Tree. Is a replacement tree planted as restitution for a violation of chapter 6-17;

- (6) Restricted Ridgeline Area. Is a native tree of any size or species within a restricted ridgeline area;
- (7) Street tree. Is a tree of any size or species and is located within a public right-of-way or a private access easement; or
- (8) Downtown tree. Is a tree of any size or species within a commercial zoning district.
- (n) "Public transit" means a location, including, but not limited to, a bus stop or train station, where the public may access buses, trains, subways, and other forms of transportation that charge set fares, run on fixed routes, and are available to the public.
- (o) "Tandem parking" means that two or more automobiles are parked on a driveway or in any other location on a lot, lined up behind one another.
- (p) "Zoning administrator" means the city's planning and building services manager or designee.

**6-562 Process and Timing.**

- (1) An ADU permit is considered and approved ministerially, without discretionary review or a hearing.
- (2) The City must act on an application to create an ADU or JADU within 60 days from the date that the City receives a completed application, unless either:
  - i. The applicant requests a delay, in which case the 60-day time period is tolled for the period of the requested delay, or
  - ii. The application to create a ADU or JADU is submitted with a permit application to create a new single-family dwelling on the lot, the City may delay acting on the permit application for the ADU or JADU until the City acts on the permit application to create the new single-family dwelling, but the application to create the ADU or JADU will still be considered ministerially without discretionary review or a hearing.
- (3) The City's Zoning Administrator will act upon all applications for Class C ADU permits. The City's Planning and Building Director, or his or her designee, will review all building permit applications for Class A or Class B ADUs.
- (4) Expiration of Permit. If the applicant does not begin the work authorized by the ADU permit within 12 months from the date of issuance or such other expiration date stated in the permit, the permit shall expire.

**6-563 General ADU and JADU Requirements.**

The following requirements apply to all ADUs and JADUs (Class A, Class B and Class C):

- (a) Zoning.
  - (1) An ADU or JADU subject only to a building permit under Sections 6-564 and 6-565 below may be created on a lot in a residential or mixed-use zone.
  - (2) An ADU or JADU subject to an ADU permit under Section 6-566 below may be created on a lot that is zoned to allow single-family dwelling residential use or multifamily dwelling residential use.
- (b) Number. Except as provided under Sections 6-564 and 6-565 below, only one ADU or JADU per lot.
- (c) Fire Sprinklers. Fire sprinklers are required in an ADU if sprinklers are required in the primary residence.
- (d) Address. All ADUs and JADUs shall be assigned an address. The Planning & Building Department will inform local agencies and service providers and the United States Postal

- Service of the address of the ADU OR JADU which will be the primary residence number followed by an identifying letter or number.
- (e) Passageway. No passageway, as defined in Section 6-561 (j) above, is required for an ADU.
  - (f) Rental Term. An ADU or JADU may not be rented for a term that is shorter than 30 days.
  - (g) No Separate Conveyance. An ADU or JADU may be rented separate from the primary residence, but no ADU or JADU may be sold or otherwise conveyed separately from the primary residence.
  - (h) Septic System. If the ADU or JADU will connect to an onsite water-treatment system, the owner must include with the application a percolation test completed within the last five years or, if the percolation test has been recertified, within the last 10 years.
  - (i) Owner Occupancy.
    - (1) All ADUs approved before January 1, 2020 are subject to the owner-occupancy requirement that was in place when the ADU was approved.
    - (2) An ADU that is approved after that date but before January 1, 2025, is not subject to any owner-occupancy requirement.
    - (3) All ADUs that are approved on or after January 1, 2025 are subject to an owner-occupancy requirement. A natural person with legal or equitable title to the property must reside on the property as the person's legal domicile and permanent residence.
    - (4) All JADUs are subject to an owner-occupancy requirement. A natural person with legal or equitable title to the property must reside on the property, in either the primary residence or JADU, as the person's legal domicile and permanent residence. However, the owner-occupancy requirement of this paragraph does not apply if the property is entirely owned by another governmental agency, land trust, or housing organization.
    - (5) Any owner-occupancy requirement in subsections (3) or (4) above may be excused for up to twelve (12) consecutive months for health, family, employment or military reasons. The zoning administrator may grant two (2) twelve-month extensions at the request of the owner for such reasons.
  - (j) Deed Restriction . Prior to issuance of a building permit for an ADU or JADU, a deed restriction must be recorded against the title of the property in the County Recorder's office and a copy filed with the zoning administrator. The deed restriction must run with the land and bind all future owners. The form of the deed restriction will be provided by the City and must provide that:
    - (1) The ADU or JADU may not be sold separately from the primary residence.
    - (2) The ADU or JADU is restricted to the approved size and to other attributes allowed by this article.
    - (3) An ADU or JADU may not be rented for a term that is shorter than 30 days minimum rental.
    - (4) The deed restriction runs with the land and may be enforced against future property owners.
    - (5) The deed restriction may be removed if the owner eliminates the ADU or JADU, as evidenced by, for example, removal of the kitchen facilities. To remove the deed restriction, an owner may make a written request of the zoning administrator, providing evidence that the ADU or JADU has in fact been eliminated. The zoning administrator may then determine whether the evidence supports the claim that the ADU or JADU has been eliminated. Appeal may be taken from the zoning

administrator's determination consistent with other provisions of this Code. If the ADU or JADU is not entirely physically removed, but is only eliminated by virtue of having a necessary component of an ADU or JADU removed, the remaining structure and improvements must otherwise comply with applicable provisions of this Code.

- (6) The deed restriction is enforceable by the zoning administrator or his or her designee for the benefit of the City. Failure of the property owner to comply with the deed restriction may result in legal action against the property owner, and the City is authorized to obtain any remedy available to it at law or equity, including, but not limited to, obtaining an injunction enjoining the use of the ADU or JADU in violation of the recorded restrictions or abatement of the illegal unit.

**6-564 Class A ADUs.**

If an ADU or JADU complies with each of the General Requirements in Section 6-563 above, and the specific requirements of either subsection (a) or subsection (b) below, it is a Class A ADU and is allowed with only a building permit in the following scenarios:

- (a) Limited Detached on Single-family Lot: One detached, new-construction ADU on a lot with a proposed or existing single-family dwelling (in addition to any JADU that might be established on the lot), if the detached ADU satisfies all of the following limitations:
  - (1) The side- and rear-yard setbacks are at least four-feet.
  - (2) The total floor area is 800 square feet or smaller.
  - (3) The height is 16 feet or less.
- (b) Limited Detached on Multifamily Lot: No more than two detached ADUs on a lot that has an existing multifamily dwelling if each detached ADU satisfies all of the following limitations:
  - (1) The side- and rear-yard setbacks are at least four-feet.
  - (2) The height is 16 feet or less.

**6-565 Class B ADUs.**

If an ADU or JADU complies with each of the General Requirements in Section 6-563 above, and the specific requirements of either subsection (a) or subsection (b) below, it is a Class B ADU and is allowed with only a building permit in the following scenarios:

- (a) Converted on Single-family Lot: One ADU or JADU on a lot with a proposed or existing single-family dwelling on it, where the ADU or JADU:
  - (1) Is either: within the space of a proposed single-family dwelling; within the existing space of an existing single-family dwelling; or within the existing space of an existing accessory building, plus up to 150 additional square feet if the expansion is limited to accommodating ingress and egress;
  - (2) Has exterior access that is independent of that for the single-family dwelling; and
  - (3) Has side and rear setbacks sufficient for fire and safety, as dictated by applicable building and fire codes.
- (b) Converted on Multifamily Lot: Multiple ADUs within portions of existing multifamily dwelling buildings that are not used as livable space, including but not limited to storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, or garages, if each converted ADU complies with state building standards for dwellings. At least one converted ADU is allowed within an existing multifamily dwelling buildings, and multiple converted ADUs shall be permitted up to 25 percent of the number of existing multifamily dwelling units.

**6-566 Class C ADUs.**

The following section applies to ADUs that cannot be categorized as Class A or Class B ADUs. The Zoning Administrator shall approve an ADU permit for a Class C ADU that complies with the General Requirements in Section 6-563 above, and with all the following specific requirements of this section:

- (a) Maximum Unit Size.
  - (1) The maximum size of a detached or attached ADU subject to this Section is 1,200 square feet of floor area. No more than two bedrooms are allowed.
  - (2) An attached ADU that is created on a lot with an existing primary residence is further limited to 50 percent of the floor area of the existing primary residence except as permitted by subsection (a)(3) below,.
  - (3) Application of other development standards in this Section 6-566, might further limit the size of the ADU, but no application of any requirements under Section 6-566, may require the ADU to be less than 800 square feet in floor area, less than 16 feet in height with four-foot side and rear yard setbacks.
- (b) Setbacks.
  - (1) A setback of no more than four feet from the side and rear lot lines shall be required; except no setback shall be required for an existing living area or an existing accessory building or an accessory building constructed in the same location and to the same dimensions as an existing accessory building that is converted to an ADU or to a portion of an ADU.
  - (2) Except as provided in subsection (b)(1), above, front yard setbacks shall be as follows:
    - i. R-6, R-10, R-12, R-15, D-1, M-R-A, M-R-B, M-R-O districts: at least 20 feet; on corner lots the principal frontage shall have a setback of at least 20 feet and the other setback shall be at least 4 feet.
    - ii. R-20, R-40, R-65 districts: at least 25 feet; on corner lots the principal frontage shall have a setback of at least 25 feet and the other setback shall be at least 4 feet.
    - iii. R-100 district: at least 30 feet; on corner lots, the principal frontage shall have a setback of at least 30 feet and the other setback shall be at least 4 feet.
    - iv. L-R-5 and L-R-10 districts: a minimum of 50 feet.
    - v. RB, C, SRB, C-1, PHC districts: 50 feet on the ground floor from frontages facing Mt Diablo Boulevard. For all other frontages no setback is required.
- (c) Floor Area Ratio (FAR). No ADU subject to this Section 6-566, may cause the total FAR of the lot to exceed the following thresholds, as applicable, subject to Section 6-566 (a)(3), above:
  - (1) M-R-A district: .25 for lot sizes less than 10,000 square feet; .30 for lot sizes at least 10,000 square feet and less than 11,000 square feet; increasing .01 for every 1,000 square feet of lot size above 11,000 square feet (see section 6-826).
  - (2) M-R-O district: the maximum floor area shall be no greater than that allowed if the parcel were in the M-R-A zoning district, except that it need not be less than 0.50 times the area of the site.
- (d) Lot Coverage. No ADU subject to this Section 6-566, may cause the total lot coverage of the lot to exceed the following thresholds, as applicable, subject to Section 6-566 (a)(3), above:
  - (1) D-1 district: 50 percent.
  - (2) M-R-A district: 35 percent.
  - (3) M-R-B district: 25 percent.

- (e) Minimum Open Space. No ADU subject to this Section 6-566, may cause the total percentage of open space of the lot to fall below the following thresholds, as applicable, subject to Section 6-566 (a)(3) above.
- (1) M-R-A district: 45 percent. 20 percent of the ground level of the lot shall be planted open space (maintained with growing plants) with a minimum dimension of 15 feet.
  - (2) M-R-B district: 50 percent. 30 percent of the ground level of the lot shall be planted open space (maintained with growing plants) with a minimum dimension of 15 feet.
  - (3) M-R-O district: 30 percent. 20 percent of the ground level of the lot shall be planted open space (maintained with growing plants) with a minimum dimension of 10 feet.
  - (4) M-R-T district: 50 percent.
- (f) Height. The height of an accessory dwelling unit is limited as provided below.
- (1) Height in Single-Family Zoning Districts. The height of an ADU shall not exceed 17 feet in height or the maximum height of the primary unit, whichever is less.
  - (2) Height in Other Zoning Districts. The height of an ADU shall not exceed the height of the primary unit or the maximum height of the zoning district in which the primary unit is located, whichever is less. Maximum heights for each zoning district are listed below:
    - i. D-1 district: 25 feet; one and one-half stories.
    - ii. M-R-A district: On lots smaller than 30,000 square feet in area, 25 feet in height. On lots not less than 30,000 square feet in area, 35 feet in height.
    - iii. M-R-B district: 35 feet.
    - iv. M-R-O district: 35 feet in height; three stories.
    - v. M-R-T district: 25 feet.
    - vi. M-R-P district: 20 feet; one story in height.
- (g) Parking.
- (1) Generally, One off-street parking space is required for each ADU with 1 or more separate bedrooms. Off-street parking is not required for ADUs without separate bedrooms (studio). The parking space may be provided in setback areas or as tandem parking, as defined by Section 6-561 (o) above, unless the zoning administrator makes specific findings that parking in setback areas or tandem parking is not feasible based upon specific site or regional topographical or fire and life safety conditions.
  - (2) Exceptions. No parking under Section 6-566 (g)(1) is required in the following situations:
    - i. The ADU is located within one-half mile walking distance of public transit, as defined in Section 6-561 (n) above.
    - ii. The ADU is located within an architecturally and historically significant historic district.
    - iii. The ADU is part of the proposed or existing primary residence or an existing accessory building under Section 6-565 (a) above.
    - iv. When on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the occupant of the ADU.
    - v. When there is an established car share vehicle stop located within one block of the ADU.
  - (3) No Replacement. When a garage, carport, or covered parking structure is demolished in conjunction with the construction of an ADU or converted to an ADU, those offstreet parking spaces are not required to be replaced.
- (h) Architectural Requirements.
- (1) The exterior design, building materials, colors, window style, and exterior finishes shall be the same as those on the existing or proposed primary unit.

- (2) If a passageway or entrance is provided for the accessory dwelling unit, such entrance shall not be located on the same side as the entrance to the primary unit. If an accessory dwelling unit is accessed by an outside stairway, the stairway shall not be on the same side as the entrance to the primary unit.
- (3) The off-street parking for an ADU shall be accessed by the primary unit's existing curb cut(s).
- (4) All exterior lighting for an ADU must be shielded and down-facing. Exterior wall-mounted lighting may only be placed on the two faces of the building that are furthest from the perimeter of the property. Shielded and downward-facing path lighting, with an above-grade height of no more than 20 inches, is permitted on all sides of an ADU.
- (i) Tree Protection. For each protected tree, as defined in Section 6-561 (m) above, removed to provide for the location of an ADU, one 15-gallon tree of the same genus and species shall be planted onsite.
- (j) Creek Setback. To protect from flooding and land subsidence, an ADU shall be set back from an unimproved creek channel as follows:
  - (1) Channel Depth of Zero through 21 Feet. If the side slopes of the channel are steeper than 2:1 (horizontal:vertical), the width of the structure setback is determined by a line measured from the toe of the slope a distance of twice the channel depth plus the appropriate top-of-bank setback as follows:

Channel Depth (Feet)	Top of Bank Setback Minimum Width (Feet)
0—6	12 each side
6—12	15 each side
12—18	18 each side
18—21	21 each side

If the side slopes of the channel are flatter than 2:1 (horizontal:vertical) the structure setback is the appropriate setback indicated in the table above, measured from the top of the bank.

- (2) Channel Depth Exceeding 21 Feet. If the depth of a channel exceeds 21 feet, the width of the structure setback is determined by measuring from the toe of the slope a distance of three times the channel depth.
- (3) If a parcel is subject to subdivision easements or setback requirements under Contra Costa County Ordinance Code Sections 914-14.002 through 14.014 which are inconsistent with this subsection, those subdivision requirements control.

**6-567 Impact Fees.**

All Class A, B and C ADUs shall be subject to any applicable impact fees adopted by the city, except as provided below.

- (a) No impact fee is required for an ADU that is less than 750 square feet in floor area.
- (b) Any impact fee that is required for an ADU that is 750 square feet or larger in floor area must be charged proportionately in relation to the square footage of the primary residence unit. (E.g., the floor area of the primary unit, divided by the floor area of the ADU, times the typical fee amount charged for a new dwelling.)



For purposes of this section, “impact fee” has the same meaning as the term “fee” is defined in subdivision (b) of California Government Code Section 66000, except that it also includes fees specified in California Government Code Section 66477.

**6-568 Reserved.**

**6-569 Appeals.**

An aggrieved person may appeal a decision to deny an ADU or JADU to the city manager. The appeal shall be in writing, filed with the planning director, and shall specifically set forth the decision appealed from and the grounds for the appeal. The appeal shall be filed within 14 days of the action to deny the ADU or JADU.

The city manager shall review the appeal without a public hearing within 30 days of receipt of the written appeal. The city manager shall limit his or her consideration of the appeal to whether the ADU meets the general provisions in Section 6-563, and development standards in one of the following: Sections 6-564, 6-565, or 6-566, as applicable. The decision of the city manager shall be final.

(Ord. 543 § 2, 2004; Ord. 540 § 2 (part), 2003; Ord. 408 § 1 1993; Ord. 300 § 1 (part), 1984; Ord. 655, 2016, Ord. 676, 2020, Ord. 678, 2020)