

D# 23 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU'S)

General Description

The City of Renton Planning Division made this docket item request. It proposes amending Title IV to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) in most residential zones when they are subordinate to and detached from a single-family dwelling.

Impact Analysis

Effect on rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan

Not applicable. The proposed change would not affect the rate of growth, but would enable growth to be accommodated in a way that is not currently allowed in the City. The proposed change may encourage property owners to develop new units on their property thereby increasing the rate of development. However, it would not be expected to increase the conversion of land because it is most likely that the majority of newly built ADU's would occur on parcels that have pre-existing single-family dwellings, as opposed to new single-family dwelling being constructed with new ADU's. In fact, the proposed changes may encourage less conversion of land.

Effect on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities created by the proposed changes. It is expected that public facilities such as sewer and water would be able to adequately accommodate any increase in usage for two reasons. First, it is reasonable to assume the limited size of the ADU's (800 square-feet) would in turn limit the anticipated number of occupants to one or two on average, thereby not significantly increasing the number of users. (Examples of 800 square-foot or less floor plans are shown in Attachment A.) Second, the average size of households over the last several decades has shrunk (3.38 in 1950 to 2.59 in 2000). This reduction in household size leaves some level of excess capacity on much of the water and sewer infrastructure in the City. It is reasonable to assume that a small increase in users, on parcels where ADU's may occur, would in effect place no more burden on systems than historic levels.

Effect on the rate of population and employment growth

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the rate of population and employment growth created by the proposed changes. However, a portion of the expected rate of population growth may be accommodated within already developed areas.

Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable

The Comprehensive Plan objectives are being met, as specified. The vision of the City, in part, is of a community that is healthy and safe, that has cohesive, well-established neighborhoods and a growing diversity of housing to match the diversity of the population with its various needs and wants. The proposed changes would encourage a diversity of housing to match the diversity of the population.

Effect on general land values or housing costs

Allowing accessory dwelling units may increase or maintain general land values for property owners while decreasing the housing costs for those who live in the ADU's. Land values may be

increased or maintained because in part, the proposed changes include a requirement that either the primary unit or the ADU be owner occupied. This requirement would prevent speculators or those who wished to maintain both units as rentals from purchasing a property developed with both a single-family dwelling and an ADU. This may somewhat limit the range of those who would be interested in purchasing the property, thereby limiting the overall increase in general land value. However, inherently the costs of the improvement to include an ADU would be reflected in the sale price of the property. For example, a property with both a primary home and an ADU would be expected to have a higher sales price than a property with only a primary unit of similar type and quality. Housing costs for the residents of the ADU would be less than a platted single family dwelling, due to the zero cost for land acquisition.

Whether capital improvements or expenditures are being made or completed as expected
Not applicable.

Consistency with GMA, the Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies

The proposed changes are consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the Comprehensive Plan, and Countywide planning policies. One of the goals of GMA is to “encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner”. The proposed allowance of detached ADU’s furthers this goal by allowing parcels to accommodate additional housing where public facilities already exist or could be provided efficiently. Goal seven of the City of Renton Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element Goals calls for new development and neighborhoods in the City that:

- Contribute to a strong sense of community and neighborhood identity;
- Offer a variety of housing types for a population diverse in age, income, and lifestyle;
- Are varied or unique in character.

The proposed allowance of ADU’s helps to fulfill all of the above subparts of goal seven. Many ADU’s are built for the children or adult parents of the residents of the primary unit to allow some level of autonomy while initiating or retaining independence. Due to the smaller size and the no cost for land acquisition, ADU’s also provide an opportunity for lower cost housing. These traits of ADU’s can contribute to a family’s sense of community and strengthen neighborhood identity while offering homes that are varied in character and in the types of residents who occupy them.

Additionally, housing element Policy #H-44, states that the City will support accessory dwelling units as strategies for providing a variety of housing types and as a strategy for providing affordable housing, with the following criteria:

- Ensure owner occupancy of either the primary or secondary unit.
- Allow both attached and detached accessory dwelling units and detached carriage units, at a maximum of one per single-family house, exempt from the maximum density requirement of the applicable zone.
- Require an additional parking space for each accessory dwelling unit, with the ability to waive this requirement for extenuating circumstances.
- Allow a variety of entry locations and treatments while ensuring compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

The second bullet that refers to attached ADU's will be amended as part of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendments so that detached accessory dwelling units and detached carriage units will be the only ADU type included in the bullet. Following that change, all of these remaining criteria will be accommodated and/or specified in the appropriate Title IV code sections. The proposed changes will create consistency between Title IV and the City's Comprehensive Plan and Planning Policies.

Effect on critical areas and natural resource lands

The proposed changes would not have any effects on critical areas and/or natural resource lands. All proposed ADU's would be reviewed at the time an application is submitted and potential impacts would be mitigated. ADU's would not be allowed if they were detrimental to existing environmentally sensitive areas.

Effect on other considerations

Not applicable.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of this docket request.

Implementation Requirements

- *4-2-060 Zoning Use Table*
 - (See Attachment B)
- *4-2-080 Conditions Associated Zoning Use Tables*
 - (See Attachment C)
- *4-2-110A Development Standards for Single Family Residential Zoning Designations (Primary and Attached Accessory Structures)*
 - (See Attachment D)
- *4-2-110B Development Standards for Single Family Residential Zoning Designations (Detached Accessory Structures)*
 - (See Attachment E)
- *4-2-110D Conditions Associated with Development Standards Table for Single Family Residential Zoning Designations*
 - (See Attachment F)
- *4-2-110F Development Standards for Residential Zoning Designations (Primary and Attached Accessory Structures)*
 - (See Attachment G)
- *4-2-110G Development Standards for Multifamily Residential Zoning Designations (Detached Accessory Structures)*
 - (See Attachment H)
- *4-2-110H Conditions Associated with Development Standards Table for Multi-Family Residential Zoning Designations*
 - (See Attachment I)

- *4-4-080F.10.e Parking Spaces Required Based on Land Use*
 - (See Attachment J)
- *4-8-120C Submittal Requirements*
 - (See Attachment K)
- *4-11-010 Definitions A*
 - (See Attachment L)
- *4-11-040 Definitions D*
 - (See Attachment M)