

D#91 ADU REVIEW

General Description

This docket item was to review the implementation of the regulations regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's). The City began allowing detached ADU's in 2009 with provisions such as requiring the property owner live on-site, the ADU's architectural style be compatible to the primary dwelling, and limiting ADU's to 800 square feet in size.

Impact Analysis

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

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the rate of growth, development, and the conversion of land created by the proposed changes.

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.

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.

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

The Comprehensive Plan seeks to promote new residential development and neighborhoods that are "visually attractive, safe, and healthy environments in which to live". These docket items help to ensure that neighborhoods are visually attractive.

Effect on general land values or housing costs

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on general land values or housing costs created by the proposed changes.

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 have no bearing on growth management. They are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies.

Effect on critical areas and natural resource lands

The effects of this proposal are anticipated to have no impact on critical areas and natural resource lands.

Background

In July 2009, the City amended the code to allow detached accessory dwelling units. Since then there have been 11 applications for them, they can be broken down as follows:

- 6 pre-application
- 2 approved, but not built
- 1 manufactured home permitted as a medical hardship, permitted as ADU
- 1 garage converted to ADU
- 1 approved and built

Review of these applications indicates that in general the ADU's have fit in to the context of the surrounding neighborhood and have been clearly subordinate to the primary dwelling. However, there are some reasons for concern about the size and scale of the ADU compared to the primary dwelling. For example, one constructed ADU is in fact 148% of the size of the primary dwelling. This is not a desirable outcome. There are also some applications for ADU's that would be two story structures (dwelling unit over the garage) and the primary dwelling is only a single story structure. This is also a contributing factor to the perception that the size and scale of the ADU is not subordinate to the primary dwelling.

In a survey of other local jurisdictions, staff found that most jurisdictions limit both the size of ADU's by setting the maximum square feet, as well as indicating a maximum percentage of the primary dwelling the square feet of the ADU can be. Renton currently only sets the maximum square feet. Many jurisdictions also count ADU's toward the maximum building coverage, this also helps to ensure that lots are not overwhelmed with structures. Renton does not currently include ADU's in the calculation for maximum building coverage of a lot.

Staff recommends adopting a standard for the percentage of the primary dwelling the ADU can be and including ADU's in the maximum building coverage calculation. Initially, staff recommended that ADU's be limited to 50% of the size of the primary dwelling or 800 square feet, whichever is less. For example, if the ADU that was built to 148% of the primary dwelling had been limited to 50% of the size of the primary unit, that ADU would have only been 270 square feet. Concerns were raised that this 50% threshold could place a burden on owners of existing homes that are small, regardless of their lot size, essentially not allowing them to build an ADU on their property.

In response to this, staff amends the recommendation to limit the size of ADU's to 75% of the size of the primary dwelling. This should allow a reasonable amount of both flexibility and limitations on ADU's so that they can be of a reasonable size for use and still remain subordinate in size and scale to the primary dwelling. In addition, staff makes an additional recommendation, to limit the height of the ADU to the same height of the primary dwelling. This would work to ensure that there will not be two story structures behind single story structure thereby further ensuring that the ADU is subordinate to the primary dwelling.

City of Renton ADU Applications Since 2009

Preapps						
Address	Lot Size - sq ft	Zone	SF House - sq ft	ADU - sq ft	% of Primary	75% of Primary - Sq Ft
913 N 35th	9,100	R-8	960	400	41.67%	720
326 Burnett Ave N	4,815	R-8	1,380	576	41.74%	1,035
3866 Monterey Pl NE	49,600	R-8	2,400	800	33.33%	1,800
10911 SE 168th St	11,250	R-10	1,620	697	43.02%	1,215
16022 114th AVE SE	13,208	R-8	1,840	788	42.83%	1,380
611 Smithers Ave S	6,600	RM-T	2,140	600	28.04%	1,605
Approved Not Built						
3215 Burnett Ave N	7,650	R-8	1,984	748	37.70%	1,488
11410 SE Petrovitsky	38,134	R-14	1,920	800	41.67%	1,440
Approved and Built						
341 Wells Ave N	4,500	R-8	540	800	148.15%	405
2105 Dayton Ave NE	12,275	R-8	1,380	800	57.97%	1,035
Other						
223 Garden Ave N	13,750	R-8	1,470	775	52.72%	1,103

Sample of Other Cities ADU Code

City	Max Size	Design	Max Height	ADU's Counted in Max Building Coverage	Min Lot Size	Other
Kirkland	800 sq ft or 40% of gross sq ft of ADU and primary residence combined (garages/covered decks and porches excluded).	Similar roof pitch, siding treatment, and window style.	Same as primary, and no more than 15 ft higher on slopes.	Yes	none	
Seattle	800 sq ft (garages and storage areas included).	none specified	Depends on lot width and roof type. Range is 15 ft on lots 30 ft wide or less to 23 ft pitched on lots at least 50 ft wide.	unknown	4,000 sq ft	ADU's counted in lot coverage and rear yard coverage is limited to 40% of the area required for rear yard.
Shoreline	50% of the primary residence.	none specified	Same as primary.	Yes	none	
Kent	800 sq ft or 33% of primary residence, whichever is smaller.	none specified	Same as primary.	Yes	none	
Bellingham	800 sq ft or 40% of primary residence, whichever is smaller.	Similar roof pitch, siding treatment, and window style.	Less than or equal to primary and no higher than 25 ft.	unknown	10,000 sq ft (unless alley accessed or from two streets).	No floor may be greater than 500 sq ft
Auburn	950 sq ft or 50% of primary residence, whichever is smaller.	none specified	Same as primary.	unknown	none	If detached garage is converted, appearance must still be garage and must still be able to be used as garage for at least 1 car.
Federal Way	800 sq ft or 40% of primary residence, whichever is smaller.	Must appear to be a single family house.	Same as primary.	Yes	none	

City	Max Size	Design	Max Height	ADU's Counted in Max Building Coverage	Min Lot Size	Other
Newcastle	1,000 sq ft or 40% of primary, whichever is smaller (excluding garage). May exceed if single floor and efficient design.	Similar roof pitch, siding treatment, and window style.	Same as primary.	Yes	none	
Lynnwood	800 sq ft or 40% of primary residence, whichever is smaller. 1,000 sq ft or 50% , if single story accessible unit.	Must appear to be a single family house. Also, same exterior materials, roof pitch, and landscaping of primary.	Same as primary.	Yes	Must be minimum lot size in the zone	
Does Not Allow Detached ADU's						
Bellevue						
Tukwila						