

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT DESIGN GUIDE

JULY 2019



Use this guide with its companion documents
Santa Cruz County ADU Basics and ADU Design Guide
and the resources provided at
sccoplanning.com/ADU

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This Guide is not a substitute for the Santa Cruz County Code. If there are discrepancies between this Guide and the County Code, the language in the County Code will govern.

Some properties may have environmental or utility constraints that increase costs, restrict siting options, or require extra review for ADUs. Please consult with County staff for projects with these special circumstances.

Design Your ADU

This booklet offers guidance on the many configurations and design options that are available to homeowners, in an effort to assist homeowners in finding the best design for their property and for the future occupants of the ADU. Included are summary diagrams of development standards; sample floor plans; design considerations, tips and best practices; and example photos of the following ADU types:

- ADUs within the Urban Service Line
 - » Detached New Construction (p. 2)
 - » New Construction above a Detached Garage (p. 3)
 - » Attached New Construction (p. 4)
- ADUs outside of the Urban Service Line
 - » Detached New Construction (p. 5)
 - » New Construction above a Detached Garage (p. 6)
 - » Attached New Construction (p. 7)
- Conversion ADUs (p. 8)
- Remodel Alternative (p. 9)
 - » This option does not create a separate ADU; rather, it is a way for homeowners to improve and/or create more flexible use of the home which can include “rentable” space to roommates, from existing interior space.
 - » These spaces are defined in the code by their limited food prep areas. See Santa Cruz County Code Section 13.10.700-D: Definition of “dwelling unit.”



To determine whether your property is within or outside of the Urban Service Line, go to: www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/zoningDevelopment/What'sMyZoning.aspx

EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Even on smaller urban lots an ADU can be added. The County offers a 2% bonus to the usual 0.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and 40% lot coverage limitations allowing 0.52 and 42% on lots 6000sf or smaller. Limiting factors will generally be:
 - » Required building separation (3' for ADUs)
 - » Required off-street parking
- Standards for exterior wall and maximum height limits encourage interesting roof forms.



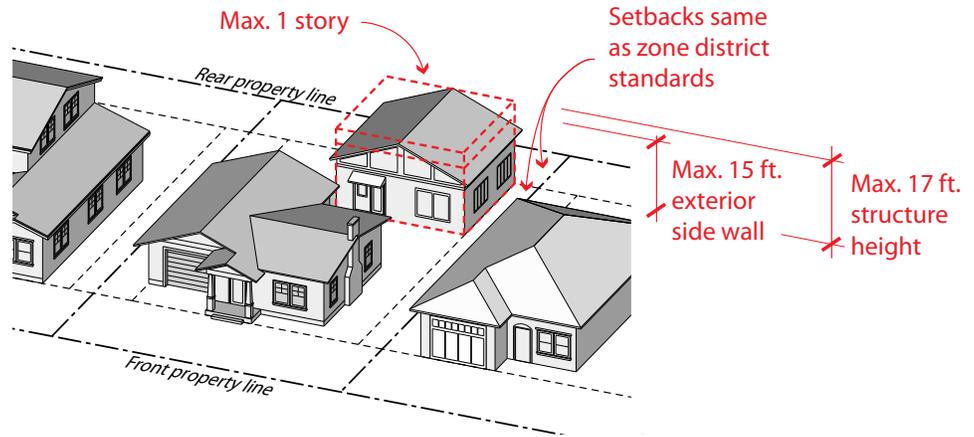
- Innovative interior design can accommodate full kitchens in small spaces. Smaller units are less expensive to build.



Detached New Construction

Inside the Urban Service Line

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



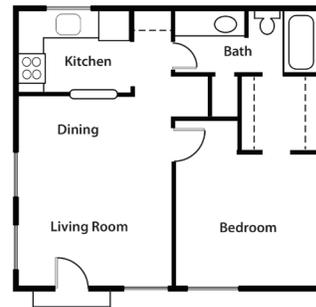
Maximum ADU size:

- For parcels <5,000 sq. ft.: 10% of parcel size
- For parcels 5,000 to 9,999 sq. ft.: 640 sq. ft.
- For parcels >10,000 sq. ft.: 800 sq. ft.

SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS



Approx. 360 sq. ft. detached ADU. Includes studio bedroom/living area and full kitchen.

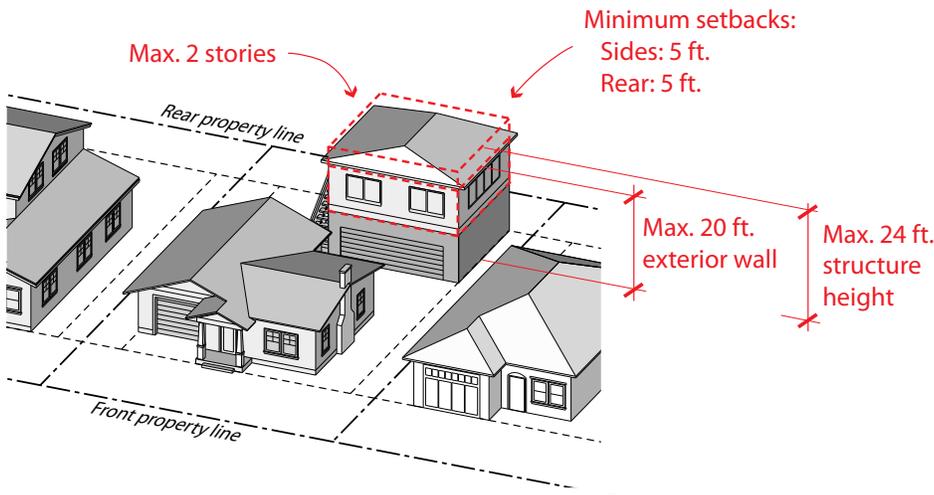


Approx. 640 sq. ft. detached ADU. Includes one bedroom and full kitchen.

New Construction above a Detached Garage

Inside the Urban Service Line

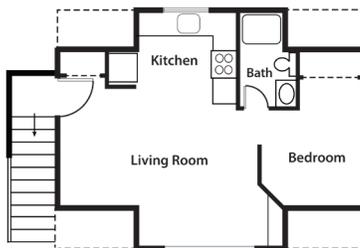
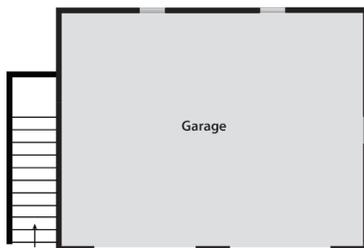
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



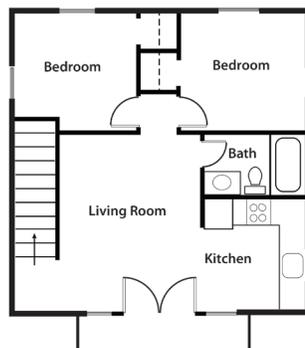
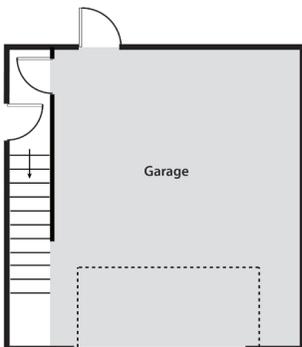
Maximum ADU size:

- For parcels <5,000 sq. ft.: 10% of parcel size
- For parcels 5,000 to 9,999 sq. ft.: 640 sq. ft.
- For parcels >10,000 sq. ft.: 800 sq. ft.

SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS



Approx. 460 sq. ft. ADU above existing detached garage. Includes one bedroom and full kitchen.



Approx. 640 sq. ft. ADU above existing detached garage. Includes two bedrooms and full kitchen.

EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Required side and rear setbacks for an ADU above an existing detached garage are 5 feet, regardless of the setbacks of the existing detached garage.
- An ADU above an existing garage should be designed with colors, materials, and forms that are consistent with the design of the garage.



www.pinterest.com



www.historicshed.com

- Standards for exterior wall and maximum height limits encourage interesting roof forms.
- Second-story window placement should be sensitive to the privacy of both the ADU and adjacent neighbors.

EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Attached new construction includes:
 - » A second story addition above existing one-story single-family dwelling;
 - » A second-story addition above existing attached garage;
 - » A one-story extension of the existing floorplan; and
 - » A two-story extension of the existing floorplan.



www.pinterest.com



www.accessorydwellings.org



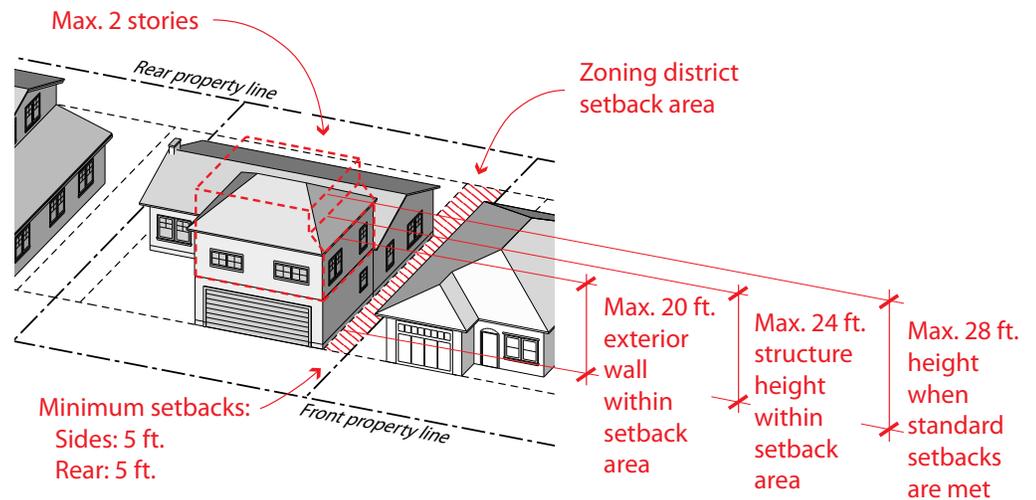
Dyett & Bhatia

- On small lots, attached new construction may be more feasible than detached new construction.
- Placement of plumbing to take advantage of existing drains and vents can simplify an addition.

Attached New Construction

Inside the Urban Service Line

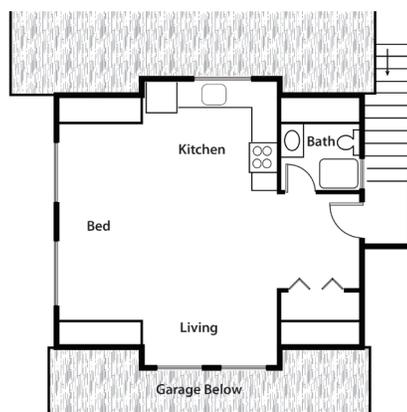
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



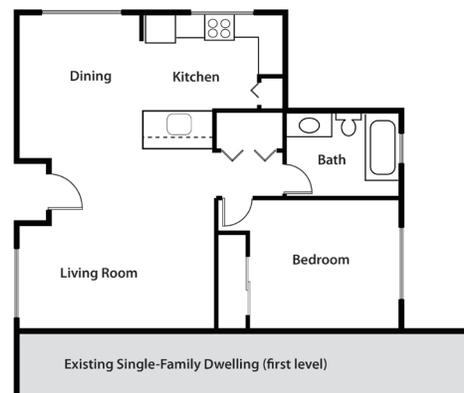
Maximum ADU size:

- For parcels <5,000 sq. ft.: 10% of parcel size
- For parcels 5,000 to 9,999 sq. ft.: 640 sq. ft.
- For parcels >10,000 sq. ft.: 800 sq. ft.

SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS



Approx. 550 sq. ft. ADU above existing attached garage. Includes studio bedroom/living area and full kitchen.

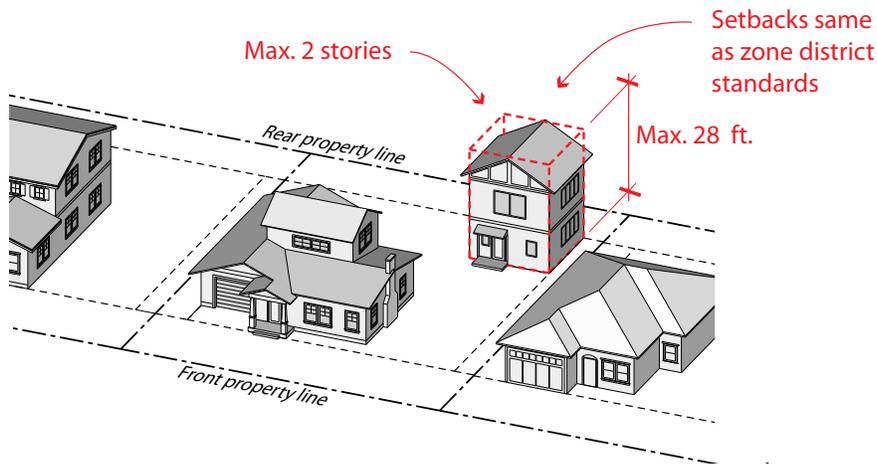


Approx. 800 sq. ft. ADU added on to rear of single-family dwelling. Includes one bedroom and full kitchen.

Detached New Construction

Outside of the Urban Service Line

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



Maximum ADU size:

- For parcels <10,000 sq. ft. 800 sq. ft.
- For parcels 10,000 sq. ft to 1 acre.: 1,000 sq. ft.
- For parcels >1 acre: 1,200 sq. ft.

SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS



(Left) Approx. 540 sq. ft. detached new two-story ADU. Includes one bedroom and full kitchen.

(Below) Approx. 1,200 sq. ft. detached new two-story ADU (requires 1 acre or larger lot size). Includes two to three bedrooms and two full baths, and full kitchen.



EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- A 28-foot height limit outside of the Urban Service Line allows two-story ADUs. Compact stair design may maximize usable interior space.



www.smallhousebliss.com



www.accessorydwellings.org



www.accessorydwellings.org

- Location on the lot and placement of second-story windows should be sensitive to the privacy of both the ADU and adjacent neighbors.
- A safe path of travel must be provided between the ADU and the sidewalk/street.

EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Outside of the Urban Services Line, ADUs can be built above garages either using reduced setbacks and subject to a 24' maximum and 20' exterior wall height limits, or meeting the zoning setbacks and using the 28' height limit.
- An ADU above an existing garage should be designed with colors, materials, and forms that are consistent with the design of the garage below.
- Second-story window placement should be sensitive to the privacy of both the ADU and adjacent neighbors.



www.houzz.com

- Exterior stairs, windows, and decks can enhance the design of an ADU and maximize efficiency of indoor space.

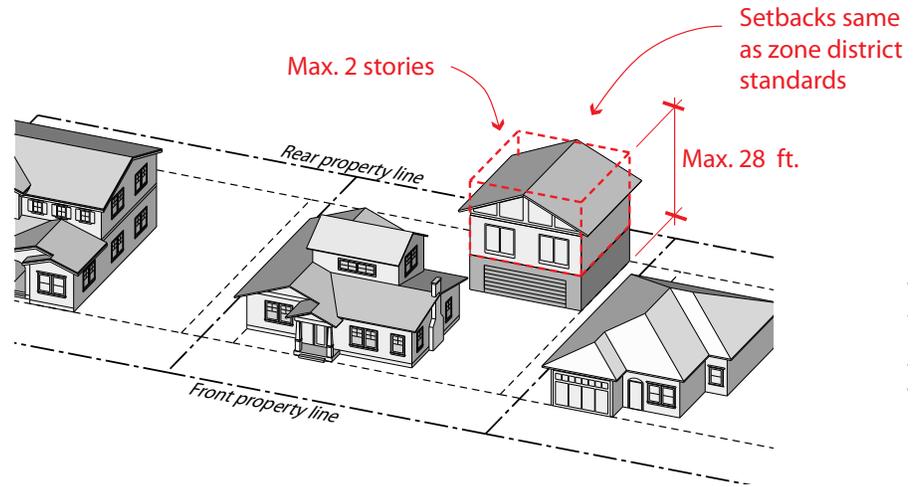


www.inhabitat.com

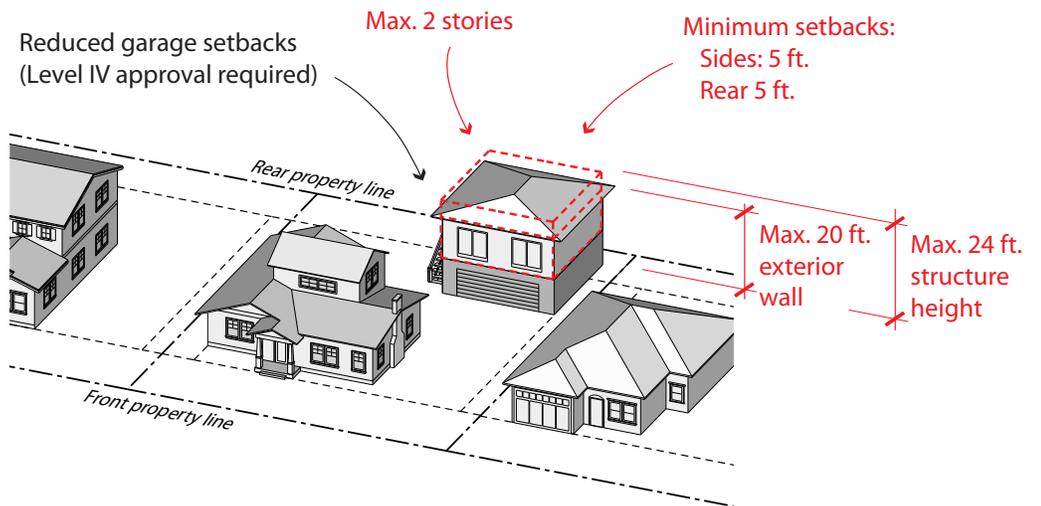
New Construction above a Detached Garage

Outside of the Urban Service Line

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS WHERE GARAGE & ADU COMPLY WITH STANDARD SETBACKS



DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS WHERE GARAGE & ADU UTILIZE ALLOWED REDUCED SETBACKS



Maximum ADU size:

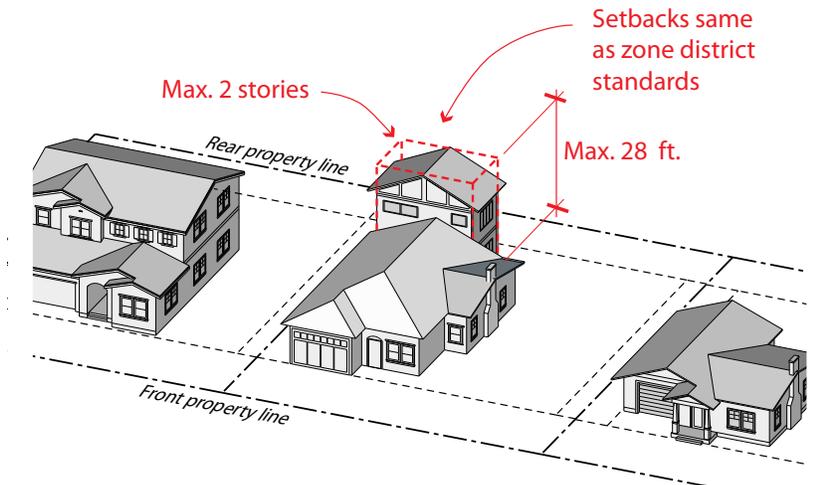
- For parcels <10,000 sq. ft. 800 sq. ft.
- For parcels 10,000 sq. ft to 1 acre.: 1,000 sq. ft.
- For parcels >1 acre: 1,200 sq. ft.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR SAMPLE FLOORPLANS

Attached New Construction

Outside of the Urban Service Line

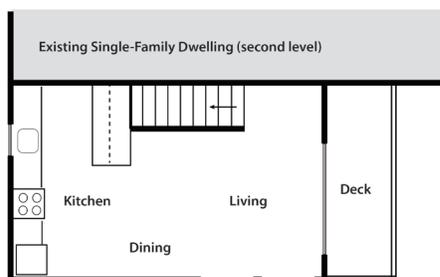
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



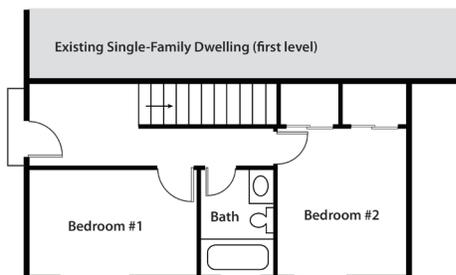
Maximum ADU size:

- For parcels <10,000 sq. ft. 800 sq. ft.
- For parcels 10,000 sq. ft to 1 acre.: 1,000 sq. ft.
- For parcels >1 acre: 1,200 sq. ft.

SAMPLE FLOOR PLAN



Approx. 1,000 sq. ft. two-story ADU added on to existing single-family dwelling. Includes two bedrooms, deck, and full kitchen.



EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Attached new construction includes:
 - » A second story addition above existing one-story single-family dwelling or attached garage;
 - » A one- or two-story extension of the existing home.



www.buildinganadu.com



Dyett & Bhatia



www.urbanland.uli.org

- Locating living areas and bedrooms against the exterior wall takes advantage of natural light and ventilation for the most commonly lived-in rooms. Bathrooms, kitchens, closets and hallways can be placed in more interior locations.

EXAMPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- Standard conversions are the conversion of existing interior living space, an existing attached garage, or an existing detached garage into an ADU.
- Conversion ADUs must have full kitchens and separate entrances to the exterior.

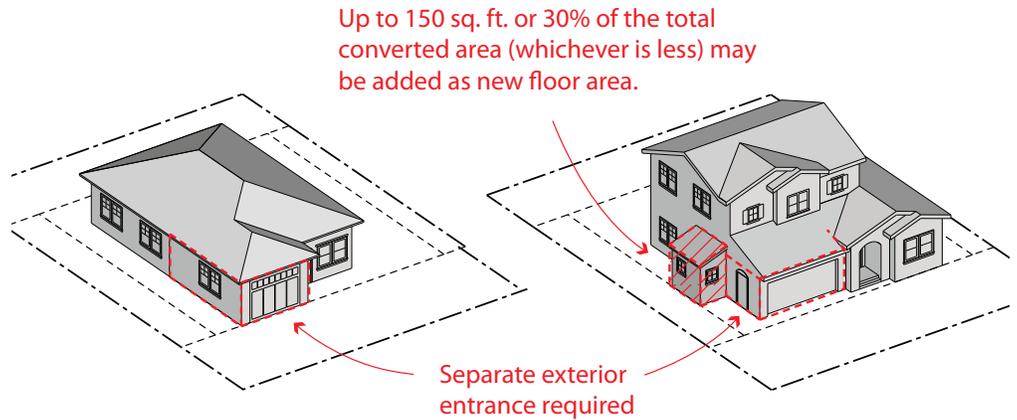


- Allowable new “pop-out” area in a Conversion ADU may be useful for new kitchen areas, new interior stairways that access second-floor space, or new covered entryways.
- Low ceiling height of an existing garage or basement may require floor excavation for the ADU to meet Building Code.

Conversion ADUs

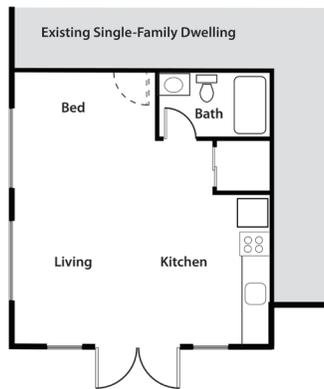
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Maximum ADU size varies based on parcel location and size. Additions altering the exterior walls of existing structures are limited to 150 sq. ft. or 30% of the total converted area, whichever is less. Interior remodels/additions to structures allowed within size limits.

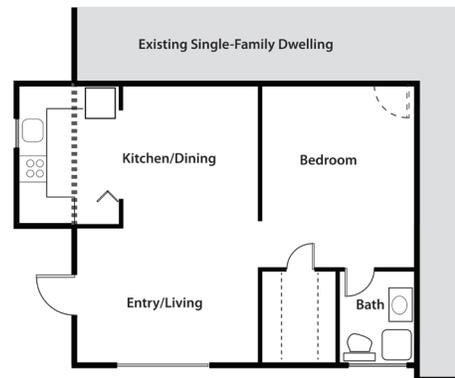


	MAXIMUM ADU SIZE			
	<5,000 sq. ft. parcel	5,000-9,999 sq. ft. parcel	10,000 sq. ft to 1 acre parcel	>1 acre parcel
INSIDE USL	50% of primary dwelling or 640 sq. ft., whichever is less	640 sq. ft.	800 sq. ft.	800 sq. ft.
OUTSIDE USL	50% of primary dwelling or 640 sq. ft., whichever is less	800 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft.	1,200 sq. ft.

SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS



Conversion of existing attached garage into an approx. 530 sq. ft. ADU. Includes studio bedroom/living area and full kitchen.



Conversion of existing attached garage into an approx. 750 sq. ft. ADU. Includes one bedroom, living/dining area, a full kitchen, and an approx. 55 sq. ft. “pop-out”.

Remodeled Single-Family Home Creating Separate Living Space

This option refers to changes to existing interior space that improves the existing single-family homes and/or creates greater separation between livings space but that does not create a fully separate unit. Remodeled areas may include basements, attics, lofts, master bedrooms, mudrooms, sunrooms, or other existing interior spaces. Limited food preparation amenities that use nothing more than a standard 110 wall outlet are permitted in a remodeled space. These spaces must be part of a single-family home and are not permitted in any detached structure.

DESIGN EXAMPLES



www.houzz.com



www.pinterest.com



www.decoist.com

Basement remodels may provide additional living and/or working space.



www.accessorydwellings.org



www.patch.com

Attics may be remodeled to create additional living space that is full-height or partial height.



www.homedit.com



www.apartmenttherapy.com



www.decoist.com

Other spaces for remodels include master bedroom suites, lofts, or sunrooms.



www.homedit.com



www.tinyhousedesign.com

Food preparation amenities in remodels are limited to kitchenettes, which allow a maximum 120 volt electrical service (standard wall outlet), sink, and refrigerator (one kitchenette permitted per single-family home).



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Urban and Regional Planners