



Code Changes for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

What is Changing for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)?

State law for ADUs will require Olympia to update its zoning code. There are several new limitations on local regulations.¹ For example, Cities and Counties must comply with all of the following:

- a. Cannot assess impact fees on new ADUs that are greater than 50 percent of those imposed on the principal unit;
- b. Must allow at least two accessory dwelling units on all lots that are located in all zoning districts within an urban growth area that allow for single-family homes, in the following configurations:
 - One attached ADU and one detached ADU;
 - Two attached ADUs; or
 - Two detached ADUs, which may be comprised of either one or two detached structures;
- c. Must allow an ADU on any lot that meets the minimum lot size required for the principal unit;
- d. Cannot establish a maximum gross floor area requirement for ADUs that is less than 1,000 square feet;
- e. Cannot impose setback requirements, yard coverage limits, tree retention mandates, restrictions on entry door locations, aesthetic requirements, or requirements for design review for ADUs that are more restrictive than those for principal unit;
- f. Must allow detached ADUs to be sited at a lot line if the lot line abuts a public alley, unless the city or county routinely plows snow on the public alley;
- g. Must allow ADUs to be converted from existing structures, including but not limited to detached garages, even if they violate current code requirements for setbacks or lot coverage;
- h. Cannot prohibit the sale or other conveyance of a condominium unit independently of a principal unit solely on the grounds that the condominium was originally built as an accessory dwelling unit; and

When regulating ADUs, the City may impose a limit of two accessory dwelling units, in addition to the principal unit, on a residential lot of 2,000 square feet or less.

These provisions do not apply to lots designated with critical areas or their buffers, or to a watershed serving a reservoir for potable water if that watershed is or was listed, as of July 23, 2023, as impaired or threatened under the federal clean water act.

Parking For ADUs²

The City of Olympia does not currently require parking for ADUs. Under the new requirements, Cities:

- a. Cannot require off-street parking as a condition of permitting ADUs within one-half mile walking distance of a major transit stop (there are currently no transit stops within the City or urban growth area that meet the definition of major transit stop);
- b. Cannot require more than one off-street parking space per unit as a condition of permitting ADUs on lots smaller than 6,000 sq. ft. before any zero lot line subdivisions or lot splits; and
- c. Cannot require more than two off-street parking spaces per unit as a condition of permitting ADUs on lots greater than 6,000 sq. ft. before any zero lot line subdivisions or lot splits.

¹ See [RCW 36.70A.681](#) for all limits. Only those not currently addressed by Olympia are included above.

² The parking limitations apply unless the City submits a specific type of study to the Washington State Department of Commerce and the department finds and certifies that the application of the parking limitations for ADUs will be significantly less safe for vehicle drivers or passengers, pedestrians, or bicyclists than if the jurisdiction's parking requirements were applied to the same location for the same number of detached houses.