

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is an extra living unit on your property, complete with kitchen, bathroom and sleeping facilities. An ADU may be attached to or detached from the primary home on your property. When the unit is attached, it is considered a duplex under the building codes. An overview of the requirements is provided in this document.

What are the basic Zoning Code requirements for ADU's?

- **Zoning:** ADU's are an allowed use in single family residential zones of the City (RS-A, RS-12,000 and RS-7,200).
- **Number of ADU's per lot.** A property may have one attached and one detached accessory dwelling unit per lot.
- **Size.** Attached ADU's shall not exceed 1,000 square feet. Detached ADU's shall not exceed 800 square feet. Note: The Community Development Director may make exceptions to size limitations to allow for the better utilization of existing spaces. Buildings must be at least 5 years old to be eligible for an exception to the size limitation.
- **Parking.** One additional on-site parking space shall be provided for each new ADU unless the lot on which the ADU is located is within one quarter (¼) mile of a transit stop.

- **Design.** An ADU needs to meet the following design criteria:
 - All new structures/additions shall meet current development standards for the zone in which the property is located.
 - Additions shall be consistent with the existing facade, roof pitch, siding and windows of the existing structure.
 - Detached structures shall match (or complement) the design of the primary unit.
- **Lot Coverage.** Lot coverage for residential structures is dependent on the zoning classification. Lots zoned RS-A are limited to 20% lot coverage, and lots zoned RS-12,000 and RS-7,200 are limited to 35% lot coverage standards.
- **Setbacks.** The minimum distance between the structure and the interior property lines are typically 5 feet, and 20 feet from the property line adjacent to a street.

What are the Building Code Requirements for ADU's?

- **Applicable Codes.** The same requirements that are applicable to new single-family construction are applicable to an ADU. These can be found in the Burien Municipal Code Title 15 or at www.burienwa.gov.
- **Setbacks.** In addition to the setbacks noted under zoning, a detached ADU must be at least 6 feet from any other structure on the property.

- **Fire Separation.**
 - **AN ADU IS** considered a separated unit and needs to meet the following fire separation requirements:
 - Where the ADU will be less than 6 feet from the primary dwelling or is attached to the primary dwelling unit, a fire separation consisting of materials that will provide one-hour fire resistive construction for non-sprinklered buildings and one half hour fire resistive construction for sprinklered buildings.
 - **AN ADU IS NOT** considered a separated dwelling unit if it meets the following requirements:
 - The ADU is constructed within an existing dwelling unit.
 - All required smoke alarms in the ADU and primary dwelling unit are interconnected in such a manner that the actuation of one alarm will activate all alarms in both the primary dwelling unit and ADU.
- **Sewer connection.** A detached ADU will require a separate connection to the sewer main. A sewer availability certificate will need to be completed and submitted with the permit application. Where a septic system exists, verification of approval by the King County Health Department will need to be provided with the permit application.

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- **Water connection.** Water may come from the main water supply to the primary dwelling unit provided the water line and meter are sized to accommodate the water demand of both structures. If not, a separate water supply may be needed. A Water Availability Certificate will need to be completed and submitted with the permit application.
- **Hydrant availability.** A fire hydrant availability certificate will need to be completed and submitted with the permit application where new living space is created within the primary dwelling or existing accessory structure. It is also required where new living space is added on to the primary dwelling or constructed as a detached ADU.
- **Other utilities.** The city does not require separate meters for electrical or natural gas, but you may want to check with your utility provider for any requirements they may have.
- **Access to shut offs and circuit breakers.** Occupants of each dwelling unit must have access to all circuit breakers, gas shut-offs for water heater and furnace, and water shut-off valves for water heater and furnace that provide electricity, water, or gas for their unit. This can be a challenge when remodeling to create an ADU within the existing residence
- **Heating and ventilation.** A separate heating and ventilation system is required for each dwelling unit and are not allowed to be shared.
- **Hot water.** A single water heater may be shared where the ADU is located within the primary dwelling unit provided it can be shown that it is sized to provide hot water to both units. If not, a separate hot water heater will need to be provided.
- **Attics and Basements.** Attics and basements can be converted to living space if there is adequate ceiling height. Attics with a sloped ceiling requires a minimum ceiling height of 5 feet with not less than 50 percent at a height of at least 7 feet. Basements require a ceiling height of at least 7 feet.
- **Airport noise reduction requirements.** Additional construction requirements to mitigate aircraft noise if your property is east of 1st Ave South. Please ask for the Airport noise reduction requirements if this is applicable.