



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT ORDINANCES

BACKGROUND

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are also known as cottage housing, AADUs, DADUs, mother-in-law suites, granny flats, or casitas. Local governments throughout the Puget Sound region have a variety of regulations governing the development of ADUs.

AADU	Attached accessory dwelling unit
DADU	Detached accessory dwelling unit

IMPORTANCE OF ADUS

ADUs provide additional housing units that are compatible with the look and scale of single-dwelling development, make more efficient use of existing housing stock and infrastructure, and provide a mix of housing options. There are many benefits to ADUs including making it easier for first-time buyers to qualify (also, renting out an ADU can provide additional income), enabling seniors to age in place, and expanding options for multigenerational living.

ADUs can also be sustainable when employing green construction techniques or adding walkability to neighborhoods. Built Green has certified two cottage projects in the past few years and would love to certify more. Check out project one and project two.



UNPERMITTED ADUS

In the Seattle area, it's estimated that three quarters of what look and function like ADUs were never permitted. Many homeowners do not legally permit their backyard cottages because of the lengthy bureaucratic process, the high cost of complying with code, and tax increases. Even when cities adopt ADU ordinances, most experience a negligible uptick due to:

- Excessive restrictions
- Size limitations
- Red tape

HOW TO INCREASE ADUS

- Remove owner occupancy requirements
- Reduce off-street parking requirements
- Waive permit and impact fees
- Increase flexibility in maximum floor area requirements or lot area coverage
- Relax setback requirements



MODEL CODE

MBAKS RECOMMENDS IMPLEMENTING CODE WITH THE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- Allow two ADUs per primary dwelling unit:
 - either two AADUs
 - or one AADU and one DADU
 - or two DADUs
- No parking requirement
- No owner occupancy requirement
- Two ADUs can be joined within the primary dwelling structure or two DADUs outside the structure
- Allow ADUs up to 1,250 square feet, regardless of primary dwelling unit size or lot size
- Allow planning/development directors to allow for an increase in the size of ADUs in order to efficiently use all floor area
- Allow an AADU in all primary structures, regardless of size
- Allow a DADU on parcels that are 4,000 square feet or larger
- Expedited permitting process
- Waived or greatly reduced permit and impact fees
- Waived or greatly reduced utility connection fees
- Waived or greatly reduced street improvement requirements
- Flexible setback requirements
- No special requirements for the location of ADU entrances
- Design guidelines should be no stricter than those for single family homes, particularly in regard to façade modulation and exterior materials
- Pre-approved ADU/DADU plans to streamline process
- Allow and encourage panelized/prefab/modular ADU designs
- No requirement to notify adjacent property owners about proposed ADU projects if allowed under current code with no exemptions
- Allow air rights condominiums



ADU REGULATIONS ACROSS OUR REGION

ARLINGTON

One AADU or DADU allowed. An ADU can't be established on any parcel smaller than 4,200 square feet. The gross floor area (calculated from finished wall to finished wall) of an existing structure, an addition, or new detached structure, converted to or constructed for the purpose of creating an ADU, shall not exceed 30% of the gross floor area of the primary single family structure (not including garage and/or detached accessory buildings) or 800 square feet (whichever is less). The total square footage of impervious surfaces on the lot (lot coverage) cannot exceed 35%. One additional parking space must be provided and owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

arlingtonwa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1270/Attachment-C



AUBURN

One AADU or DADU allowed. ADUs cannot exceed 50% of the primary unit or 950 square feet, whichever is less. Their style must match the primary residence. They cannot exceed 950 square feet or be under 300 square feet or have more than two bedrooms. Only one ADU exterior entrance is allowed and it must be no closer than 10 feet to an adjoining property line. One additional parking space must be provided and owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

auburn.municipal.codes/ACC/18.31.120

BELLEVUE

One AADU allowed. DADUs are not allowed. AADUs can't exceed 40% of the total square feet of the residence. They must be more than 300 square feet but not exceed 800. One off-street parking space is required. ADUs are not currently allowed in new construction (ADUs are only allowed in existing single-family dwellings that received their final inspection approval at least three years prior). The combined number of occupants in the primary residence and the ADU may not exceed the number allowed by the definition of "family," Land Use Code (LUC) 20.50.020. The city's Development Services will provide notice of the registration of the ADU to owners of property within 500 feet of the site. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

development.bellevuewa.gov/zoning-and-land-use/zoning-requirements/accessory-dwelling-units

BURIEN

Two ADUs allowed. ADUs may be one AADU and one DADU. Two DADUs not allowed. AADUs must not exceed 1,000 square feet. DADUs must not exceed 800 square feet. The director may make exceptions to size limitations to allow for the better utilization of existing spaces. Buildings must be at least five years old to be eligible for an exception to the size limitation. One parking space required; lots within ¼ mile of a transit stop are exempt. Parking exemption will be reevaluated three years after ordinance goes into effect (ordinance passed Dec. 2019). No owner occupancy requirement.

burienwa.civicweb.net/document/31646/Adopt%20Ordinance%20No.%20724.%20Zoning%20Code%20Amendments.pdf

DUVALL

One AADU or DADU allowed. A DADU shall not exceed 800 square feet of gross floor area. An AADU cannot exceed 1,500 square feet of gross floor area. If an ADU occupies an entire single floor, the planning director may allow for an increase in the size of the ADU in order to efficiently use all the floor area. One off-street parking space must be provided. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

library.municode.com/wa/duvall/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CO_TIT14UNDERE_CH14.48_ACDWUNAD_14.48.030RE

EDMONDS

One AADU allowed. DADUs are not allowed. "Attached" is defined as a building located within 10 feet of the main building, as measured from exterior wall to exterior wall, and connected by a breezeway, hallway, or similar connection. The AADU must not exceed 40% of the livable floor area of the principal dwelling. The ADU must not be more than 800 square feet or have two bedrooms. Requires additional off-street parking spot, for a total of three spots. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

edmondswa.gov/images/COE/Services/Permits_and_Development/Forms_and_Handouts/P1---Accessory-Dwelling-Unit.pdf



EVERETT

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADU must not exceed 75% of gross area of the principal unit or 800 square feet, whichever is less. Most have design standards requiring consistency with the primary residence. Requires additional off-street parking stall unless within a quarter mile of a transit stop. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

everettwa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10758/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-Checklist-PDF

FEDERAL WAY

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADU must be between 300–800 square feet, but no more than 40% of the square footage of the primary dwelling unit. The ADU can't have more than two bedrooms. Maximum lot coverage and parking requirements based on RS zone. One of the dwelling units must be owner-occupied for at least six months a year.

codepublishing.com/WA/FederalWay/#!/html/FederalWay19/FederalWay19200.html • (19.200.180)

GRANITE FALLS • CURRENTLY UNDER BUILDING MORATORIUM

ISSAQUAH

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADU must not exceed 1,000 square feet. One additional parking space required (tandem parking may be used to fulfill this requirement). The primary dwelling unit or the ADU must be occupied by an owner of the property or a family member of the property owner.

codepublishing.com/WA/Issaquah/#!/Issaquah18/Issaquah1807.html#18.07.450 • (18.07.450)

KENMORE

One AADU or DADU allowed. DADUs on lots >6,000 square feet are limited to 10%, up to 1,500 square feet. DADUs on lots <6,000 square feet are limited to 600 square feet. AADUs are limited to 1,000 square feet or a single floor. There is a six-month owner occupancy requirement. The maximum height is limited to 35 feet or two stories.

kenmore.civicweb.net/FileStorage/0BE1729A8C624570BB149870016B1FB5-Attachment%201%20Part%202%20-%20Revised%20Ordinance%20Attachment.pdf

KENT

One AADU or DADU allowed. DADUs must not exceed 800 square feet or 33% of the size of the principal unit, whichever is smaller. AADUs must not exceed 40% of the principal unit. One off-street parking space is required. One of the units must be owner-occupied for at least six months a year.

kentwa.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=4092

KIRKLAND

Two ADUs allowed. One AADU and one DADU, or two AADUs/DADUs per single-family dwelling unit. Two DADUs are prohibited in certain cases. Duplexes can have ADUs. ADUs are limited to 1,200 square feet. If the AADU is completely located within existing gross floor area on a single floor, the Planning Director may allow increased size in order to efficiently use all floor area. On lots with more than one ADU, there shall be one off-street parking space provided, unless a) on-street parking is available within 600 feet of the subject property or b) the property is located within one-half mile of transit service with 15-minute headways during commute hours. No owner occupancy requirement.

kirklandwa.gov/depart/planning/Code_Updates/Projects/Accessory_Dwelling_Units.htm



LAKE STEVENS

One AADU or DADU allowed. Size must not exceed 50% of gross primary floor area or 800 square feet, whichever is less. One additional off-street parking space is required, in addition to existing SFR requirement. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

lakestevenswa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6661/1030-Accessory-Dwelling-Units?bidId=

LYNNWOOD

One AADU or DADU allowed. Size must not exceed 800 square feet or 40% of the primary unit, whichever is less. A maximum of one bedroom shall be provided for units less than 600 square feet in size; a maximum of two bedrooms shall be provided for units 600 square feet or greater in size. One off-street parking space required. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

codepublishing.com/WA/Lynnwood/html/Lynnwood21/Lynnwood2142.html

MARYSVILLE

One AADU or DADU allowed. The floor area of the accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 35 percent of the total floor area of the single-family dwelling. Additional off-street parking spot required. Owner occupancy required. If the owner ceases to reside in either the principal or the accessory dwelling unit due to illness, death, or some other unforeseeable event preventing continued occupancy, the community development director may, upon finding that discontinuance of the accessory dwelling unit would cause a hardship for the owner and/or tenants, grant a temporary suspension of this owner occupancy requirement for a period of one year.

codepublishing.com/WA/Marysville/#!/Marysville22C/Marysville22C180.html

MERCER ISLAND

One AADU or DADU allowed. The size of the ADU must be a minimum of 220 square feet and a maximum of 900 square feet, excluding any garage area. The square footage of the ADU shall not exceed 80% of the total square footage of the primary dwelling unit. Parking requirements depend on total square footage; see code. Primary dwelling unit or ADU must be occupied by an owner of the property or an immediate family member of the property owner.

mercerisland.municipal.codes/MICC/19.02.030

MILL CREEK

One AADU or DADU allowed. ADUs must less than 400 square feet, but no more than 800 square feet, and in any event not more than 30% of the gross floor area of the residence. One additional parking space and owner occupancy are required.

codepublishing.com/WA/MillCreek/html/MillCreek17/MillCreek1722.html

MUKILTEO

One AADU or DADU allowed. AADUs are allowed on single-family residential lots 5,000 square feet or greater in size. DADUs are only permitted on lots 10,000 square feet or greater. The ADU must be not exceed 700 square feet or 60% of the primary dwelling unit size, whichever is smaller. No more than one bedroom. Four off-street parking spaces must be provided—two for the primary dwelling and two for the ADU. The parking spaces for each unit must be independent of the other spaces and must be accessible to the street without having to cross the other unit's spaces. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units. See also: Accessory Dwelling Units—Brochure #40 by City of Mukilteo.

codepublishing.com/WA/Mukilteo/html/Mukilteo17/Mukilteo1730.html



NEWCASTLE

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADU must be a minimum of 300 square feet and not more than 1,000 square feet in size and can't exceed 40% of the total square footage of the primary dwelling unit. If the accessory dwelling unit is located completely on a single floor, the director of community development may allow the AADU to exceed these square footage requirements to the extent necessary to efficiently use all floor area. One additional parking space is required, for a total of at least three parking spaces. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

codepublishing.com/WA/Newcastle/html/Newcastle18/Newcastle1831.html

NORTH BEND

One AADU or DADU allowed. ADUs must be located in the side yard or rear yard areas only. ADUs are not permitted on lots under 4,000 square feet and cannot be larger than 10% of the lot area or 800 square feet, whichever is smaller, and is limited to a maximum of one bedroom. Studios are allowed on lots under 5,000 square feet. ADUs must meet the height requirements of 1.51(b). Owner occupancy is required in the primary dwelling unit.

codepublishing.com/WA/NorthBend/html/NorthBend18/NorthBend1810.html#18.10.041

REDMOND

One AADU or DADU allowed. The AADU must not exceed 1,500 square feet. If the AADU occupies an entire single floor, the Technical Committee may allow for an increase in the allowed size of the AADU in order to efficiently use all floor area. The DADU must not exceed 40% of the total square footage of the primary dwelling unit, and in no case can the DADU exceed 1,000 square feet. Property owners who propose an ADU must notify their adjacent neighbors of the project in writing. One off-street parking space is required in addition to the two parking spaces required for the primary dwelling unit. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

redmond.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7503/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-PDF

RENTON • IN THE PROCESS OF UPDATING CODE

One DADU allowed. No AADUs allowed. ADUs must not exceed 75% of the primary residence or 800 square feet, whichever is smaller. Recent policy change to incentivize ADUs in new construction: In a subdivision of 10 or more new residential units, development fees for ADUs are waived by 50% and waived in full for every third new ADU. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

edocs.rentonwa.gov/Documents/1/edoc/967512/Accessory%20Dwelling%20Units.pdf

SAMMAMISH

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADUs must not exceed a floor area of 1,000 square feet when detached, except when one of the dwelling units is wholly contained within the existing residence, in which case the floor area must not exceed 50% of the existing unit. No additional off-street parking space is required when the parcel contains four or more parking spaces. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

sammamish.us/attachments/pagecontent/36778/17280.pdf



SEATAC

One AADU or DADU allowed. All ADUs need to be at least 220 square feet in area. The maximum size of the ADU will vary depending upon the type built. DADUs, ADUs created through an addition, and those designed into the structure at the time of permitting can be up to 800 square feet. An ADU created within an existing structure can be up to 45% of the total area of the primary unit. One off-street parking space is required. For a minimum of nine months in any 12-month period, the owner of the primary unit must occupy one of the two units.

seatacwa.gov/government/city-departments/community-and-economic-development/permits-land-use-applications/permit-application-information/accessory-dwelling-unit-adu

SEATTLE

Two ADUs allowed. It can be either two AADUs or one AADU and one DADU. The second unit must meet one of following requirements: 1) green building standard or 2) be affordable for the next 50 years. The ADU/DADU can be up to 1,000 square feet in single-family zones. There is no parking or owner occupancy requirement.

seattle.gov/sdci/permits/common-projects/accessory-dwelling-units

SHORELINE

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADU cannot exceed 50% of the size of the main dwelling. Exception: An ADU interior to the residence may be larger than 50% of the primary residence where the unit is located on a separate floor and shares a common roof (i.e. daylight basement). One off-street parking space is required in addition to two for the main house. This requirement may be met using tandem (end-to-end) spaces for the minimum parking for the main house. The owner of the property or an immediate family member must live in either the main house or the ADU.

shorelinewa.gov/home/showdocument?id=2364

SNOHOMISH

One AADU or DADU allowed. The ADU cannot exceed 50% of gross primary floor area or 800 square feet, whichever is less. It must comply with city design standards. One additional parking space is required, for a total of three parking spaces. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

snohomishwa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/208/ADU-FAQ

SNOQUALMIE • IN THE PROCESS OF UPDATING CODE

Has a Residential 2 (R2) zone that allows for the construction of duplex, triplex, quadruplex, attached townhomes of no more than four units, and small AADUs/DADUs.

codepublishing.com/WA/Snoqualmie/html/Snoqualmie17/Snoqualmie1715.html

STANWOOD

One AADU or DADU allowed. ADUs cannot exceed 50% of primary residence or 900 square feet, whichever is less. Design elements must be consistent with main house. One additional parking space is required. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

codepublishing.com/WA/Stanwood • (17.95.470)



TUKWILA

One AADU or DADU allowed. DADUs must be on a minimum lot size of 6,500 square feet and the unit may be up to 800 square feet. AADUs may occupy 40% of the square footage of the house, up to a maximum of 1,000 square feet, whichever is less. One additional parking space is required. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

tukwilawa.gov/wp-content/uploads/DCD-Planning-Accessory-Dwelling-Units.pdf

UNINCORPORATED KING COUNTY

One AADU or DADU allowed. If the urban lot is less than 5,000 square feet in area or has more than one primary dwelling, only an AADU is allowed. One of the dwelling units shall not exceed a floor area of 1,000 square feet, except when one of the dwelling units is wholly contained within a basement or attic. One additional parking space is required. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

kingcounty.gov/council/legislation/kc_code/24_30_Title_21A.aspx • (21A.08.030)

kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/permitting-environmental-review/dper/documents/forms/b-aff-adu-pdf.ashx

UNINCORPORATED SNOHOMISH COUNTY

One AADU or DADU allowed. One additional parking space is required. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units. For DADUs: The minimum floor area must be 360 square feet and not exceed 40% of the floor area of the single-family dwelling unit or 850 square feet, whichever is less. For AADUs: If the floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is under 2,000 square feet, the floor area of the AADU shall not exceed 40%. If the floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is under 2,000 square feet or more, but less than 3,000 square feet, the floor area of the AADU shall not exceed 35% or 800 square feet, whichever is greater. If the floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is under 3,000 square feet or more, but less than 5,000 square feet, the floor area of the attached accessory apartment shall not exceed 30% or 1,050 square feet, whichever is greater. If the floor area of the single-family dwelling unit is over 5,000 square feet, the floor area of the AADU can't exceed 20% or 1,500 square feet, whichever is greater.

snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8052/12---Apartment-Permits-Detached-Accessory-PDF
snohomish.county.codes/SCC/30.28.010

WOODINVILLE

One AADU or DADU allowed. DADU may not be larger than 50% of the living area of the primary residence. One additional parking space is required. Owner occupancy is required in one of the two units.

codepublishing.com/WA/Woodinville/#!/Woodinville21/Woodinville2121.html • (21.21.030)