



Accessory Dwelling Units – FAQs

Concord Development Code Section 18.200.180 – Accessory Dwelling Units

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit or ADU is an attached or detached residential dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, is located on a parcel in conjunction with a proposed or existing principal residence and includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. An ADU may also include an efficiency unit or a manufactured home.

What zoning districts are Accessory Dwelling Units allowed in?

ADUs are permitted to be located in all zoning districts that allow for single-family or multifamily dwelling residential uses, including: R (Residential), NTS (North Todos Santos), CO (Community Office), CMX (Commercial Mixed-Use), NC (Neighborhood Commercial), DP (Downtown Pedestrian), and DMX (Downtown Mixed-Use) zones.

How many ADUs are allowed?

Subject to building regulations, density, lot coverage, floor area, setback and height restrictions, the maximum number of ADUs on a single lot is limited to the following:

1. Lots with an existing or proposed principal residence:
 - i. One ADU within the space of a proposed or existing principal residence; **OR**
 - ii. One ADU located within the footprint of an existing accessory structure legally constructed with a building permit; **OR**
 - iii. One detached, new construction ADU.

Note: An ADU may be built in conjunction with a Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU). See the JADU discussion later in this FAQ.

2. Lots with an existing multi-family dwelling:
 - i. At least one ADU on a lot containing an existing multi-family dwelling, constructed within areas that are not used as livable space, including, but not limited to, storage rooms, boiler rooms, passageways, attics, basements, carports or garages, not to exceed 25 percent of the number of existing multi-family dwelling units; and
 - ii. Two detached ADUs per lot.

What is the permitted size for ADUs?¹

Studio or one bedroom: 850 square feet maximum

Two or more bedrooms: 1,200 square feet maximum

Additionally, attached ADUs (including conversion of existing habitable space within the principal residence) shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the gross floor area of the existing principal residence. The 50% limitation does not apply if the ADU is 800 square feet or less.

What are the required setbacks?

Front yard: Per the applicable zoning district

Side and rear yards: Four feet

Corner side yard: Four feet but in no case shall the ADU be closer to the property line than the proposed/existing principal dwelling

Between structures: Per the Fire and Building Code Regulations (typ. 5 feet)

The minimum setbacks shall be waived for an ADU constructed entirely within the footprint of a legally constructed principal residence or accessory building, and for up to 150 square feet outside of the footprint of said principal residence or accessory building if the additional area is limited to accommodating ingress and egress; however, the ADU must still comply with all applicable Building Code Regulations.

What is the allowed maximum lot coverage²?

ADUs shall comply with the maximum lot coverage allowance in zoning districts where lot coverage standards apply. Lot coverage may be exceeded for an ADU with a gross floor area of up to 800 square feet and for an additional 150 square feet to accommodate for ingress and egress.

What is the height limit?

The maximum height for an ADU is sixteen feet.

The maximum height (16 feet) can be exceeded to accommodate an ADU constructed entirely within the exterior physical dimensions of (i) an existing principal residence, multifamily dwelling, or accessory building legally constructed with a building permit or (ii) a proposed principal residence. In no case shall the ADU have a building height greater than the existing building or sixteen feet, whichever is greater.

What are the design standards?

Property owners are encouraged to design the ADU to be architecturally consistent with the principal residence, including building form, exterior siding and/or trim, roof form

¹ Includes all fully enclosed space and non-habitable areas such as garages but excludes carports.

² Lot coverage means the portion of a lot that is covered by structures, including principal and accessory buildings, garages, carports, and roofed porches in addition to the Accessory Dwelling Unit. Lot coverage does not include unenclosed and unroofed decks, landings, or balconies.

and materials, and window placement/type. Any new entrance to an attached ADU is encouraged to be located on the side or at the rear of the building.

How much parking is required?

One off-street parking space per ADU is required. These spaces may be provided by a garage or carport, as tandem parking on a driveway. Only uncovered spaces may be located in setback areas. The required parking can be waived if findings are made that parking is not feasible. No new parking spaces are required if a garage, carport or covered parking structure, legally constructed with a building permit, is demolished to accommodate new construction of an ADU or if said structures are converted to an ADU.

In addition, no new parking is required for ADUs when:

1. Located within 1/2 mile walking distance of public transit (e.g., a bus stop or BART station); or
2. The ADU is within the proposed principal residence or within an existing principal residence or within an existing accessory structure legally constructed with building permits; or
3. When on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the occupant of the ADU; or
4. When there is a car share vehicle (e.g., Zipcar) located within one block of the ADU.

Is the property owner required to occupy one of the dwelling units?

The property is not required to occupy the ADU or principal residence.

Can the ADU be sold?

An ADU cannot be sold or otherwise conveyed separately from the principal residence.

Can the ADU be rented?

All rentals of ADUs must be for a period of at least 30 days.

Is a water meter required?

Contra Costa Water District is no longer requiring a separate water meter and water line for ADUs and allows the use of the water line serving the principal residence; however, the water line is required to be upsized from 5/8" to 3/4".

Homeowners are still required to pay a Facility Service Charge to upsize the water line, which is less than the Facility Service Charge for a new water meter; however, the necessary work to upsize the water line is required to be performed by Contra Costa Water District's crews. Each proposed unit will be reviewed by Contra Costa Water District on a case-by-case basis to determine the total costs associated with the ADU. Contact the Contra Costa Water District at (925) 688-8000 for a fee estimate.

What are the permit requirements?

A building permit issued by the Building Division.

What are the fees?

Contact the Building Division at (925) 671-3107 or by email at bldgpermits@cityofconcord.org for a fee estimate. Additional impact fees may apply if the ADU is 750 square feet or larger.

How long does it take to get a permit?

Up to sixty (60) days after the Building Division receives a completed application. All permits for ADUs are based on a ministerial review process and conformance with state law standards. All approval or denial determinations are final. No appeals are permitted. A building permit denial requires the submittal of a new application, which starts a new 60-day review period.

The City may delay acting on the permit application if it is submitted in conjunction with an additional discretionary permit application for the approval of a new principal residence on the lot, until approval of the permit application for the new principal residence.

Junior Accessory Dwelling Units

What is a Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU)?

A Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit or JADU means a unit that is contained entirely within a principal residence. A JADU may include its own bathroom or share a bathroom with the existing principal residence.

What zoning districts are JADUs allowed in?

JADUs are permitted to be located in all zoning districts that allow for single-family uses, including all R (Residential) districts, NTS (North Todos Santos), CO (Community Office), and CMX (Commercial Mixed-Use) zoning districts on lots with a proposed or existing principal residence.

How many JADUs are allowed?

No more than one JADU shall be permitted on any one lot.

What is the permitted size of a JADU?

The maximum gross floor area for a JADU shall be 500 square feet.

How much parking is required?

No parking spaces are required for a JADU.

Owner occupancy required.

The property owner of a lot containing a JADU shall occupy the principal residence, JADU, or an ADU, located on the same lot.

Can the JADU be sold?

A JADU cannot be sold or otherwise conveyed separately from the principal residence.

Can the JADU be rented?

All rentals of JADUs must be for a period of at least 30 days.

Deed restriction.

A recorded deed restriction is required for JADUs. The deed restriction shall run with the land, prohibit the sale of the JADU separately from the principal residence, and require the legal owner to reside within either the principal residence, the JADU, or an ADU located on the same lot. For JADUs that were established with a deed restriction, the deed restriction may be removed upon proof provided by the owner that the permitted JADU has been removed.

Is a water meter required?

Contra Costa Water District is no longer requiring a separate water meter and water line for ADUs and allows the use of the water line serving the principal residence; however, the water line is required to be upsized from 5/8" to 3/4".

Homeowners are still required to pay a Facility Service Charge to upsize the water line, which is less than the Facility Service Charge for a new water meter; however, the necessary work to upsize the water line is required to be performed by Contra Costa Water District's crews. Each proposed unit will be reviewed by Contra Costa Water District on a case-by-case basis to determine the total costs associated with the ADU. Contact the Contra Costa Water District at (925) 688-8000 for a fee estimate.

What are the permit requirements?

A building permit issued by the Building Division.

What are the impact fees?

There are no impact fees for JADUs.

How long does it take to get a permit?

Up to sixty (60) days after the Building Division receives a completed application. All permits for JADUs are based on a ministerial review process and conformance with state law standards. All approval or denial determinations are final. No appeals are permitted. A building permit denial requires the submittal of a new application, which starts a new 60-day review period.

The City may delay acting on the permit application if it is submitted in conjunction with an additional discretionary permit application for the approval of a new single-family unit on the lot, until approval of the permit application for the new single-family unit.