

Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units

Standard	Attached ADU	Detached ADU	Conversion of Floor Area Existing and Permitted as of January 1, 2017	Junior ADU*
Permitted Zoning Districts	R1 R2 RE RMD OS RM 15/30/40 when property is used for a single-family dwelling	R1 R2 RE RMD OS RM 15/30/40 when property is used for a single-family dwelling	R1 RE (conversions in other districts subject to attached or detached ADUs standards)	R1 RE RMD R2 OS RM 15/30/40 when property is used for a single-family dwelling
Minimum Lot Area	5,000 square feet (10 Acres in OS)	5,000 square feet (10 Acres in OS)	None	None
Maximum ADU Size (Area)	Lesser of 600 square feet, or 50% of existing living area	900 square feet	None, must be located within existing residence or structure	500 square feet, must include the conversion of existing bedroom
Maximum ADU Height	1-Story / 17 Feet 2-Stories / 30 feet in the RE District 2-Stories / 25 feet in the OS District	1-Story / 17 feet	None, must be located within existing residence or structure	None, must be located within existing residence
Daylight Plane (height limitation that defines a building envelope)	Same as residence (underlying base district)	Begins at a height of 8 feet at the property line and extends upward at a 45-degree angle	None, must be located within existing residence or structure	None, must be located within existing residence
Minimum ADU Setbacks	Same as main residence (underlying base district) 5 feet min from side/rear property lines when located above garage in the RE/OS	6 feet from interior side/rear property line 16 feet from street side yard Not permitted in the front yard setback	None, except as required for fire safety	None
Lot Coverage (ADU)	Same as residence (underlying district) <i>See Exceptions on back page</i>	Same as residence (underlying district) <i>See Exceptions on back page</i>	None, must be located within existing residence or structure	Same as residence (underlying district)
Floor Area (ADU)	Counts toward site floor area requirements / house size Basement area may be exempt in some districts, but included in Maximum ADU Size (Area) <i>See Exceptions on back page</i>	Counts toward site floor area requirements Basement area may be exempt in some districts, but included in Maximum ADU Size (Area) <i>See Exceptions on back page</i>	None, must be located within existing residence or structure	Same as residence (underlying base district) Main residence may exceed maximum floor area by 50 square feet to accommodate Junior ADU
Parking	None required, some standards apply if ADU parking proposed Any required parking displaced by an ADU must be restored on site	None required, some standards apply if ADU parking proposed Any required parking displaced by an ADU must be restored on site	None required, some standards apply if ADU parking proposed Any required parking displaced by an ADU must be restored on site	None required, some standards apply if JADU parking proposed Any required parking displaced by an ADU must be restored on site
Privacy	2-Story ADUs in RE / OS, use techniques to lessen views on neighbors, such as, landscaping, obscure glazing, and windows above eye level	None	2-Story ADUs in all permitted districts, use techniques to lessen views on neighbors, such as, landscaping, obscure glazing, and windows above eye level	None
Entryways	Independent exterior access Except for corner lots, must face different property line than main residence or located on rear half of lot	Independent exterior access	Independent exterior access	Independent exterior access Interior entry to the main living area

For All ADUs & JADUs

- May not rent for periods less than 30 days
- May not be sold separately from the primary residence
- Only one ADU or JADU may be located on a lot that also has a single-family dwelling unit
- The property owner shall occupy the ADU/JADU or main residence, unless both units are rented to the same tenant; sub-leasing is prohibited
- Fire sprinklers are only required when it is also required for the main residence
- Street addresses are required
- A Deed Restriction recorded with the County will be required prior to permit issuance
- ADU/JADUs are not considered a new residential use when calculating utility connection fees
- Basement used in the guide is a defined term and subject to specific standards
- For property located in the DHS district - refer to the SOFA Coordinated Area Plan Phase I

New ADUs on properties that are listed in the city's historic inventory, the California Register or National Register of Historic Places shall comply with Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties; for more information visit: <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/preservation.asp>

Protected trees may not be removed to accommodate an ADU; for more information visit: <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pwd/trees/regulated.asp>

* Junior ADUs may include separate bathroom, or may share a bathroom with the existing structure, and must have an efficiency kitchen with the following:

- Sink w/maximum 1.5-inch waste line diameter
- Cooking facility with appliances that do not require more than 120 volts, natural, or propane gas
- Food preparation counter and storage cabinets

EXCEPTIONS

Lot Coverage: An attached or detached ADU does not count toward lot coverage in the R1, RE, RMD, or OS Zoning Districts under the following conditions:

- The site is already developed with an existing single family residence
- The property is substandard by no more than 10% of the minimum lot size requirement, or larger
- The site would exceed the permitted lot coverage with the addition of the proposed ADU

Floor Area: An attached or detached ADU may exceed site floor area requirements up to 175 square feet subject to the following conditions:

- The site is already developed with an existing single family residence
- The site would exceed the maximum floor area with the addition of the proposed ADU
- The proposed ADU is one story



City of Palo Alto

Summary Guide to ADUs and Junior ADUs



Photo courtesy of Henry Wood

Prepared by the Planning and Community Environment Department

This document is a summary of the new ADU/JADU regulations and not a substitute for the specific regulations available in Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 18.42.040. The New ADU/JADU regulations become effective on June 8, 2017. For more information, call 650-617-3117, or visit:

http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/advance/accessory_dwelling_units_regulations_update.asp

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