

Accessory Dwelling Units

A Guide to Permitting Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the City of Gainesville



What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit, or ADU?

Walking around your neighborhood, you may have seen windows and a door above a garage or a cottage-sized home in the backyard of your neighbor's house. What you have seen is likely an accessory dwelling unit. You may be wondering how the unit was built, if it is lawful, and how you can build your own for your older relative, collegiate child, or as a rental unit.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are additional living quarters that are independent of the primary dwelling unit.

An ADU can be an apartment within a primary residence or it can be an attached or freestanding home on the same lot as the primary residence. The City of Gainesville's Land Development Code (Chapter 30 of the Code of Ordinances) defines ADUs as "an independent, self-contained dwelling unit with kitchen and bathroom facilities, on the same lot as an associated primary use or structure." Gainesville allows ADUs by right in single-family neighborhoods and most zoning districts throughout the city.

What is the purpose of ADUs?

ADUs are intended to provide property owners with flexibility in establishing separate living quarters for purposes such as caring for seniors, providing housing for their children, or obtaining rental income. The allowance of ADUs increases the range of housing choices and the supply of accessible and affordable housing units within the community.

Benefits of ADUs:

ADUs provide many benefits for the homeowner and the community.



Affordability

Because they do not require additional land or major new infrastructure, ADUs are cheaper to build than the traditional single-family home. Rental income from the ADU can subsidize the cost of the primary unit.



Care for the Elderly/Persons with Disabilities

An ADU can be utilized so that an elderly or disabled individual who wishes to remain in their home can stay in their house and have their caregiver reside in the ADU, or vice versa.



Workforce Housing Development

ADUs can be incorporated into existing, built-out neighborhoods in parts of the community that are closer to employment centers. Rather than being forced to commute long distances for their jobs, people can live affordably within the community.

How to build an ADU on your property in the City of Gainesville

Where are ADUs allowed?

ADUs are allowed in all zoning districts, except for the following:

- Automotive-Oriented Business (BA)
- Tourist-Oriented Business (BT)
- Limited Industrial (I-1)
- General Industrial (I-2)
- Airport Facility (AF)
- Conservation (CON)
- Education (ED)
- Public Services and Operations (PS)



What types of ADUs are allowed?

An ADU may be within, attached to, or detached from a primary structure.

ADUs must meet the Florida Building Code Standards. ADUs must be built on a permanent foundation/slab and cannot be on a trailer or wheels.



What are the zoning standards for ADUs?

Each ADU must comply with all standards applicable within the zoning district, including required setbacks and building height limits.

Zoning Standard	Requirement for ADUs	Other Comments
Density	One attached and one detached ADU may be permitted per lot or parcel	In SF zoning, if the lot or parcel is <u>smaller</u> than 1/8 of an acre (5445-square-feet), only one ADU (attached or detached) is allowed. ADUs are exempt from density calculations
Size	Maximum 850-square-feet (gross floor area)	Structures exceeding 850-square-feet that existed on February 27, 2020, may be converted into ADUs
Design*	Must be designed as a subordinate structure to the primary structure on the lot in terms of mass, size, height, and architectural character	Architectural design, character, style, and appearance of the ADU must be consistent and compatible with the primary structure
Utilities	May share existing utility and service infrastructure with the primary unit	Subject to compliance with GRU standards
Subdivision	An ADU may not be sold separately or as a condominium unless properly subdivided	Must meet subdivision standards per the Land Development Code

*New attached or detached ADUs cannot take up more than half (50%) of the total visible facade area parallel to the front property line



Learn more:

See the specific code language at Section 30-5.35 of the Land Development Code.