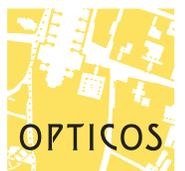
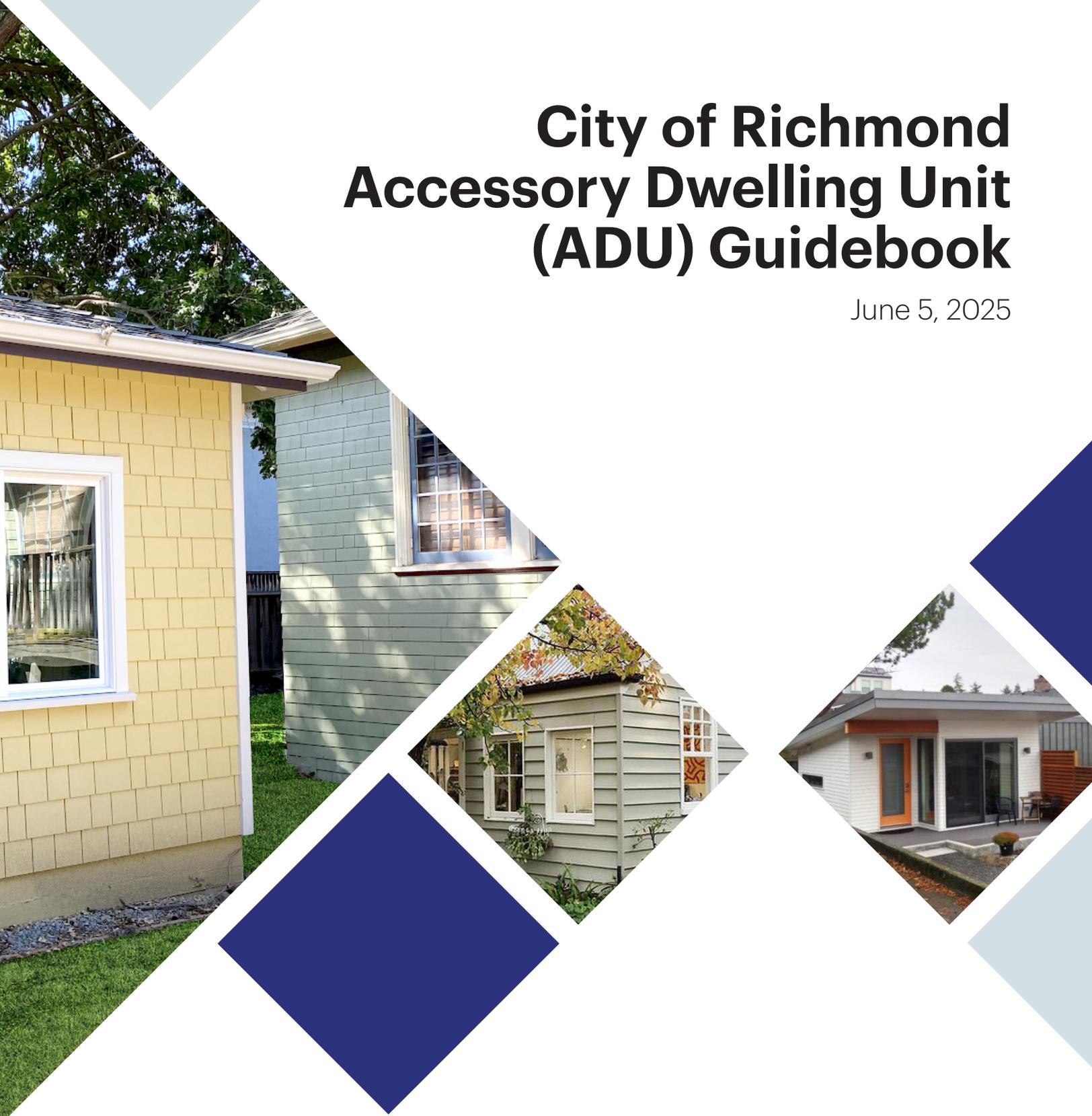


# City of Richmond Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Guidebook

June 5, 2025



*This guidebook is aligned with state and local law as of June 5, 2025 but there are continual updates and revisions to the code, which you can find on the [City's website](#).*

# What's Inside?

## A ADU Basics

- Introduction
- Options
- Regulations
- Community benefits

## B Bringing ADUs to Life

- Step-by-step guide through the process of ADU design and permitting in Richmond

## C Compiled ADU Resources

- Richmond's pre-approved ADU plans
- ADU design resources: brainstorming checklist, garage conversions, ADUs on multifamily lots, legalizing unpermitted ADUs, and cost estimates.
- Additional helpful resources for ADUs
- Frequently-asked questions

## D Definitions

*Prepared For:* **City of Richmond**  
450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA 94804

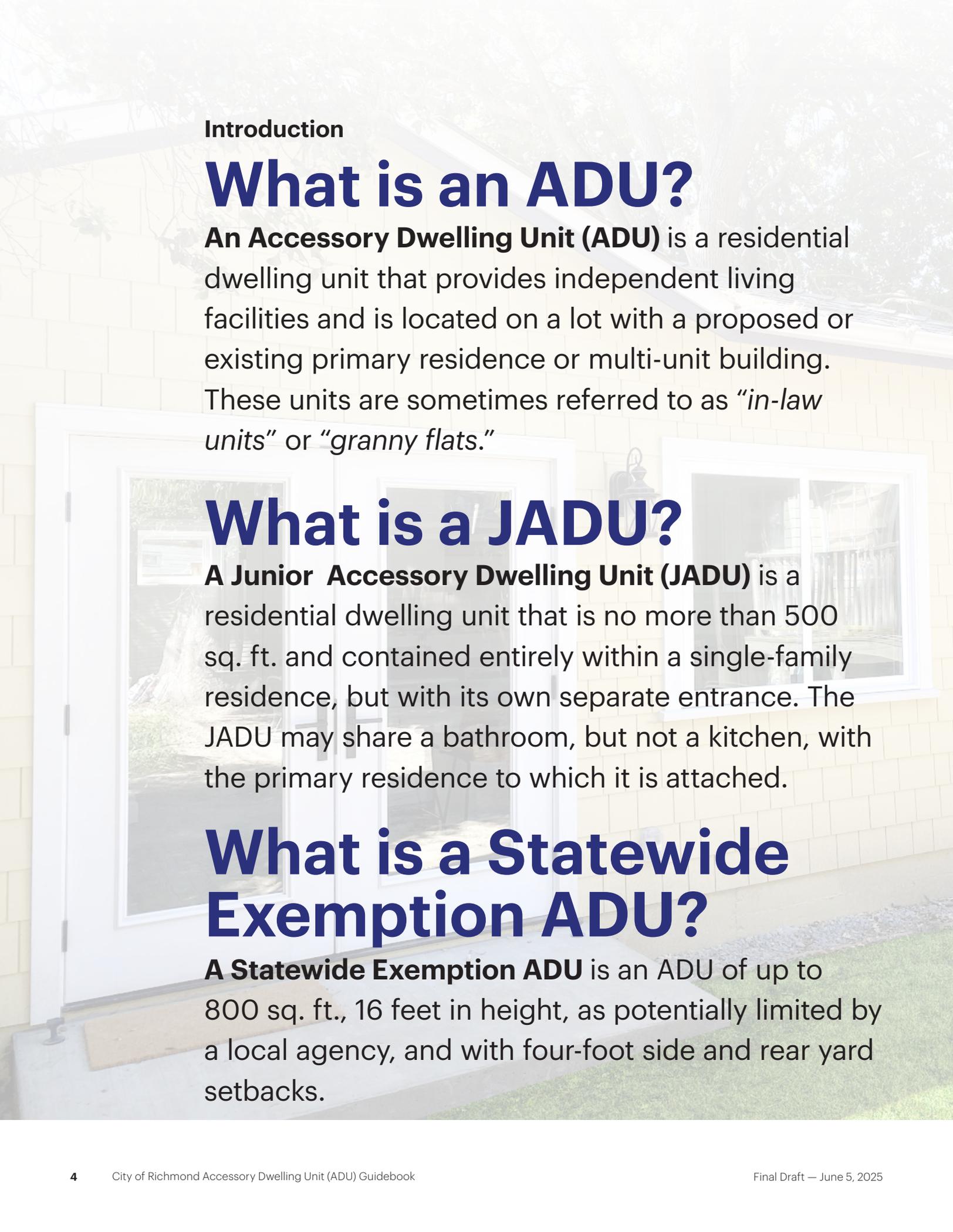
*Prepared By:* **Opticos Design, Inc.**  
2100 Milvia Street, Suite 125, Berkeley, California 94704  
510.558.6957

*This guidebook is intended as a brief summary of City of Richmond-specific requirements. Accessory Dwelling Units are governed by state law, and local law found in the Richmond Municipal Code. In the event of any omission or inconsistency in the guidebook, state and local law will govern.*

# Part A

## ADU Basics





## Introduction

# What is an ADU?

**An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)** is a residential dwelling unit that provides independent living facilities and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary residence or multi-unit building. These units are sometimes referred to as “*in-law units*” or “*granny flats*.”

# What is a JADU?

**A Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU)** is a residential dwelling unit that is no more than 500 sq. ft. and contained entirely within a single-family residence, but with its own separate entrance. The JADU may share a bathroom, but not a kitchen, with the primary residence to which it is attached.

# What is a Statewide Exemption ADU?

**A Statewide Exemption ADU** is an ADU of up to 800 sq. ft., 16 feet in height, as potentially limited by a local agency, and with four-foot side and rear yard setbacks.

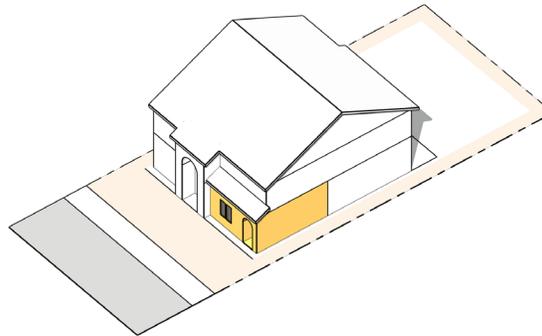
## Options

# What are the different types of ADUs?

Throughout this guidebook, we'll refer to three different types of ADUs, which each have their own variations and requirements. Those three types are:

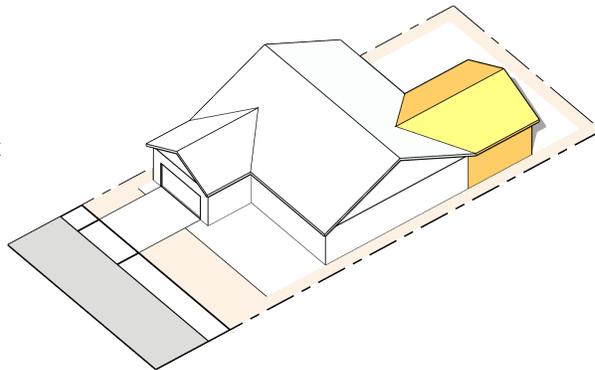
### 1 Junior ADU (JADU)

A residential dwelling unit that is no more than 500 sq. ft. and is entirely contained within a single-family residence, but with its own separate entrance. The JADU may share a bathroom, but not a kitchen, with the primary residence to which it is attached.



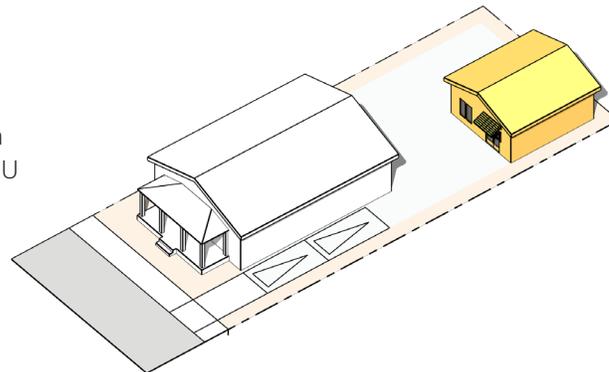
### 2 Attached ADU

An ADU that is physically attached to the primary building. Although the unit is attached, it must be accessible via a dedicated entrance that is separate from the primary unit. The Attached ADU may be attached on the first or second floor.



### 3 Detached ADU

An ADU that is physically separate from the primary building. The Detached ADU may be one or two stories.

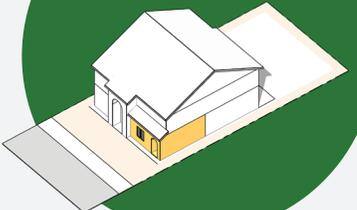
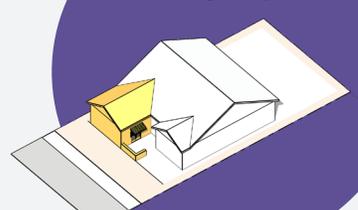
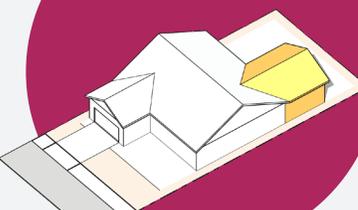
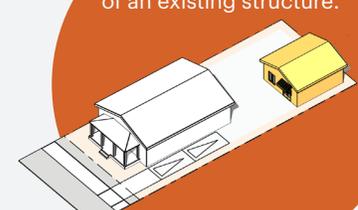
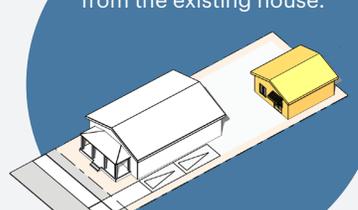


## Options

# How can I add an ADU to my property?

You can choose from several construction approaches to build your ADU, including:

- **Conversion** of an existing space such as an existing master bedroom, attached garage, storage area, or an existing lawfully established accessory structure. Conversions of illegally established accessory structures may also be eligible for legalization. Contact the Planning Division for additional guidance.
- **Addition** to your primary dwelling
- Building a **new structure**

ADU Type	Construction Options	
<b>1 JADU</b>	<div data-bbox="506 802 860 1163"> <p><b>Conversion</b> No expansion of existing building footprint.</p>  </div>	
<b>2 Attached ADU</b>	<div data-bbox="506 1171 860 1533"> <p><b>Conversion</b> No expansion of existing building footprint.</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="896 1171 1250 1533"> <p><b>Addition</b> Expansion of existing building footprint.</p>  </div>
<b>3 Detached ADU</b>	<div data-bbox="506 1541 860 1902"> <p><b>Conversion</b> May involve expansion of an existing structure.*</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="896 1541 1250 1902"> <p><b>New Structure</b> A new structure separate from the existing house.</p>  </div>

\*Expansions may have square footage limitations if the existing structure is nonconforming. See California State Law for details.

## Options

# Which ADU type should I choose?

The table on the next page provides a general comparison of ADU types based on select factors. Each ADU project will be unique and may not reflect the values in this table. Consider what factors are most important for your ADU project.

### Cost Trade-offs

Cost factors to consider when selecting an approach for your project include the complexity of the design and architectural drawings, the construction or upgrade costs whether the ADU is new construction or a conversion, and the size of the ADU which impacts construction costs as well as permitting fees (ADUs under 750 sq. ft. can waive impact fees except for school developer fees).

### Primary Dwelling or Multifamily Unit Trade-offs

ADUs that are contained fully or partially within the primary dwelling unit will reduce the overall square footage available within the primary dwelling unit. Impact on multifamily dwelling units is minimal since ADUs cannot be built within existing habitable area.

### Yard Space Trade-offs

Additions to primary dwellings and new detached dwellings may reduce the

amount of usable outdoor space. For example, ADUs may affect the amount of sunlight reaching the yard space or the amount of garden space available. Thoughtful placement of an ADU on the lot can reduce impact.

### Parking Trade-offs

Many new ADUs do not require additional parking. Conversion of existing enclosed parking spaces such as a garage or carport may reduce the amount of parking available if space for additional parking cannot be located on the site.

### Privacy Trade-offs

Different ADUs might impact sight, sound, and physical privacy differently. ADUs that are contained fully or partially within the primary dwelling, or which share a wall with the primary dwelling may be less private in terms of noise and proximity than fully detached ADUs.

### GARAGE CONVERSION

*Converting an existing attached or detached garage into an ADU can be a cost-effective way to add an ADU to your lot, with less construction disruption than may be necessary for other ADU types. Parking spaces lost as a result of converting a garage into an ADU do not have to be replaced.*

**For more information, see Design Resource B, Garage Conversions, on pages 26-28 of this guidebook.**



*Left: A detached ADU. Photo Courtesy City of Oakland*

*Right: A detached ADU and a two-story primary dwelling. Photo Courtesy The Small House Catalogue*

## Options

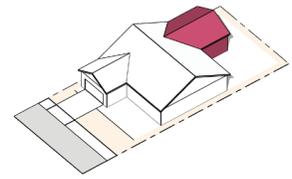
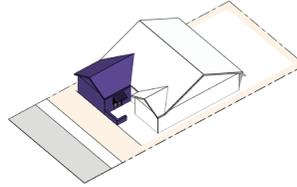
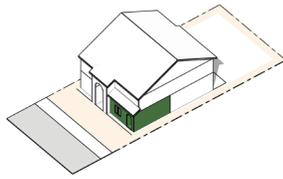
# Comparison of ADU Types

	JADU	Attached ADU (Conversion)	Attached ADU (Addition)
Cost Trade-offs	 <p>Cost may be lower than other types since new foundation, roof, and exterior walls are not needed. JADUs are exempt from requirement to install new or separate utilities and any associated fees.</p>	 <p>Costs may be lower than other types since new foundation, roof and exterior walls are not needed. New plumbing may be required for separate bathroom. Conversions are exempt from requirement to install new or separate utilities and any associated fees.</p>	 <p>Costs may be higher than a conversion since new foundation, roof and exterior walls are needed. You may need to install new or separate utilities and pay associated fees.</p>
Primary Dwelling or Multifamily Unit Trade-offs	 <p>The JADU will occupy space within the primary dwelling and an existing bathroom may be shared with the JADU. N/A for multifamily units.</p>	 <p>The ADU will occupy space within the building footprint of the primary dwelling, but will be physically separate from the interior space of the primary dwelling. The ADU cannot be added within existing habitable space for multifamily buildings.</p>	 <p>Some space within the primary dwelling may be occupied by the ADU and modifications may be necessary. The ADU cannot be added within existing habitable space for multifamily buildings.</p>
Yard Space Trade-offs	 <p>No yard space will be used for the JADU, since it is contained entirely within the footprint of the primary dwelling.</p>	 <p>No yard space will be used for the ADU, since it is contained entirely within the footprint of the primary dwelling or multifamily building.</p>	 <p>Some yard space may be used for the ADU addition to the primary dwelling or multifamily building.</p>
Parking Trade-offs	 <p>If an existing garage is converted to a JADU, parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.</p>	 <p>If an existing attached garage is converted to an ADU, parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.</p>	 <p>Existing parking is not likely to be impacted.</p>
Privacy Trade-offs	 <p>Shared interior walls and the option to share a bathroom will impact privacy between JADU and primary dwelling.</p>	 <p>Shared interior walls may impact privacy between the ADU and the primary dwelling.</p>	 <p>Shared interior walls may impact privacy between ADU and primary dwelling.</p>
Key	 <p>Negligible Impact    Lower Impact    Medium Impact    Higher Impact</p>		

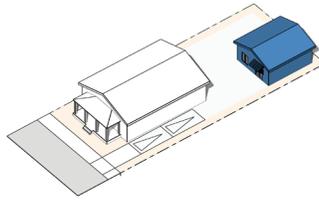
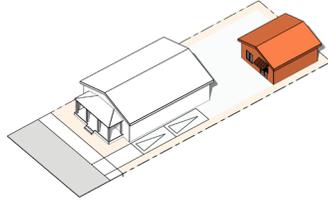
	Detached ADU (Conversion)	Detached ADU (New Construction)
Cost Trade-offs	 <p>Assuming the structure was built with permits and it is legally in existence, costs may be lower than other types if new foundation, roof and exterior walls are not needed. Costs may exceed expectations if there is a need to upgrade existing walls, electrical, plumbing, or other Building Code requirement. Conversions are exempt from requirement to install new or separate utilities and any associated fees.</p>	 <p>Costs may be higher than other types since the ADU will be built from scratch and you may need to install new or separate utilities and pay associated fees.</p>
Primary Dwelling or Multi-Family Unit Trade-offs	 <p>The ADU is completely separate from the primary dwelling or multifamily building.</p>	 <p>The ADU is completely separate from the primary dwelling or multifamily building.</p>
Yard Space Trade-offs	 <p>No yard space will be used for the ADU, since it is repurposing an existing accessory structure.</p>	 <p>Yard space will be reduced since a detached ADU will be constructed within the existing yard.</p>
Parking Trade-offs	 <p>If an existing detached garage is converted to an ADU, parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.</p>	 <p>Existing parking is not likely to be impacted.</p>
Privacy Trade-offs	 <p>Since the ADU is separate from the primary dwelling or multifamily building, visual privacy will be the primary impact depending on location of building openings (e.g. window, door, etc.).</p>	 <p>Since the ADU is separate from the primary dwelling or multifamily building, visual privacy will be the primary impact depending on location of building openings (e.g. window, door, etc.).</p>
Key		

## Regulations

# Summary of Zoning Standards for ADUs



	JADU	Attached ADU (Conversion)	Attached ADU (Addition)
<b>Zoning</b>	Zoning districts where single-family dwellings are permitted	Zoning districts where single-family or multifamily dwellings are permitted	Zoning districts where single-family or multifamily dwellings are permitted
<b>Location of ADU</b>	Entirely within a proposed or existing single-family dwelling structure.	Within a proposed or existing single-family or multi-family structure.	Attached to a proposed or existing single-family or multi-family structure.
<b>Max. # ADUs per Lot</b>	1 JADU per lot <sup>1</sup>	On a lot with a single-family structure: 1 ADU per lot. <sup>1</sup> On a lot in a multi-family zone: multiple attached ADUs up to 25% of the number of dwelling units onsite, but at least 1, per lot. Only spaces that were not previously used as livable area may be converted to ADUs.	On a lot with a single-family structure: 1 ADU per lot. <sup>1</sup> On a lot in a multi-family zone: multiple attached ADUs are allowed up to 25% of the number of dwelling units onsite, but at least 1.
<b>Min. Lot Size</b>	None (ability to satisfy setbacks may be impacted by lot size)	None (ability to satisfy setbacks may be impacted by lot size)	None (ability to satisfy setbacks may be impacted by lot size)
<b>Max. Floor Area (sq. ft.)</b>	500	No square footage limit unless the conversion includes an expansion over 150 sf (for egress or ingress); then same as Attached ADU (Addition)	850 for studio/1 bed and 1000 for 2+ bed
<b>Min. Floor Area (sq. ft.)</b>	150, excluding bathroom	n/a	n/a
<b>Max. Height (ft)</b>	n/a	n/a	25 or height limit in zoning ordinance applied to primary dwelling (which ever is lower).
<b>Max. # Stories for Unit</b>	n/a	n/a	2
<b>Min. Front Setback (ft)</b>	Same as zone <sup>3</sup>	Same as zone <sup>3</sup>	Same as zone <sup>3</sup>
<b>Min. Side Setback (ft)</b>	Same as existing structure	Same as existing structure	4
<b>Min. Rear Setback (ft)</b>	Same as existing structure	Same as existing structure	4
<b>Max. Total Lot Coverage</b>	Exempt from max. lot coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage
<b>Unit Entrance</b>	Separate Unit Entrance Required	Separate Unit Entrance Required	Separate Unit Entrance Required
<b>Parking</b>	None	None	0 or 1 space <sup>4</sup>
<b>Kitchen</b>	Efficiency Kitchen <sup>5</sup>	Full Kitchen	Full Kitchen
<b>Bathroom</b>	Full Bathroom or Access to Existing Full Bathroom in Primary Dwelling	Full Bathroom	Full Bathroom
<b>Facilities</b>	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking, Sanitation	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking, Sanitation
<b>Design Standards</b>	n/a	n/a	Exterior design must be consistent with primary dwelling's architectural design including materials, colors, roof slope, doors and windows. <sup>6</sup>



	Detached ADU (Conversion)	Detached ADU (New)
<b>Zoning</b>	Zoning districts where single-family or multifamily dwellings are permitted	Zoning districts where single-family or multifamily dwellings are permitted
<b>Location of ADU</b>	Within an existing accessory structure on the same lot as an existing or proposed single-family or multi-family dwelling.	Within a new accessory structure on the same lot as an existing or proposed single-family or multi-family dwelling.
<b>Max. # ADUs per Lot</b>	On a lot with a single-family structure: 1 ADU per lot. <sup>1</sup> On a lot in a multi-family zone: 2 ADUs per lot.	On a lot with a single-family structure: 1 ADU per lot. <sup>1</sup> On a lot in a multi-family zone: 2 ADUs per lot.
<b>Min. Lot Size</b>	None (ability to satisfy setbacks may be impacted by lot size)	None (ability to satisfy setbacks may be impacted by lot size)
<b>Max. Floor Area (sq. ft.)</b>	No square footage limit unless the conversion includes an expansion over 150 sf (for egress or ingress); then same as Detached ADU (New)	850 for studio/1 bed and 1000 for 2+ bed
<b>Min. Floor Area (sq. ft.)</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Max. Height (ft)</b>	16 <sup>2</sup>	16 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Max. # Stories for Unit</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Min. Front Setback (ft)</b>	Same as zone <sup>3</sup>	Same as zone <sup>3</sup>
<b>Min. Side Setback (ft)</b>	Same as existing structure	4
<b>Min. Rear Setback (ft)</b>	Same as existing structure	4
<b>Min. Setback From Primary Structure (ft)</b>	Same as existing structure	5 (no min. setback required for Statewide Exemption ADUs)
<b>Max. Total Lot Coverage</b>	Exempt from max. lot coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage
<b>Unit Entrance</b>	Separate Unit Entrance Required	Separate Unit Entrance Required
<b>Parking</b>	None	0 or 1 space <sup>4</sup>
<b>Kitchen</b>	Full Kitchen	Full Kitchen
<b>Bathroom</b>	Full Bathroom	Full Bathroom
<b>Facilities</b>	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking, Sanitation	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking, Sanitation
<b>Design Standards</b>	Exterior design must be consistent with primary dwelling's architectural design including materials, colors, roof slope, doors and windows. <sup>6</sup>	Exterior design must be consistent with primary dwelling's architectural design including materials, colors, roof slope, doors and windows. <sup>6</sup>

**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup>1 JADU and 1 ADU allowed if ADU is a Statewide Exemption ADU (Refer to definition on p. 42.) or ADU is contained within existing primary residence + up to 150 sq. ft. expansion.

<sup>2</sup>Up to 18 feet for a lot within 1/2 mile of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor or for a lot with an existing or proposed multistory, multifamily dwelling. Two additional feet allowed to accommodate a roof pitch that aligns with the roof pitch of the primary dwelling unit.

<sup>3</sup>Not permitted within any portion of an established front yard, as defined by RMC §15.04.610.020. Except front yard setbacks cannot preclude a Statewide Exemption ADU (up to 800 square feet) and must not unduly constrain the creation of all types of ADUs.

<sup>4</sup>No parking spaces required if the ADU is located within 1/2 mile of a public transit stop, within an historic district, or within one block of a car share vehicle, or entirely within a proposed or existing primary dwelling or accessory structure with no net floor area increase; or where on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the ADU occupant; or when an ADU permit application is submitted with an application for a new primary dwelling on the same lot and satisfies any other criteria above. Also, when a garage, carport, or covered parking structure is demolished in conjunction with the construction of an ADU or converted to an ADU, no replacement of off-street parking is required.

<sup>5</sup>Refer to definition of Efficiency Kitchen on p. 42 (from current California Building Code).

<sup>6</sup>Exception for Statewide Exemption ADUs (Refer to definition on p. 42)

## Benefits

# How can ADUs help the Richmond community?

The current production of housing in California is not enough to meet people’s needs. The lack of housing is causing average housing costs to rise, forcing people to either find affordable housing further from their workplace, or settle for smaller shared spaces that reduce their quality of life. Accessory Dwelling Units can help address the need for affordable housing by providing livable units in walkable contexts that can be developed easily, quickly, and affordably. Recent changes to State ADU Law make developing ADUs easier to help address the community's housing needs and deliver the benefits described below:

### Housing Choice

- Adds to variety of available housing options
- Can provide options for independent living and aging in place

### Neighborhood Context

- Suitable in a variety of locations and contexts
- Provides additional housing in a building form that is compatible with single-family neighborhoods

### Livability

- Can provide greater privacy for multi-generational households

### Financial Benefits

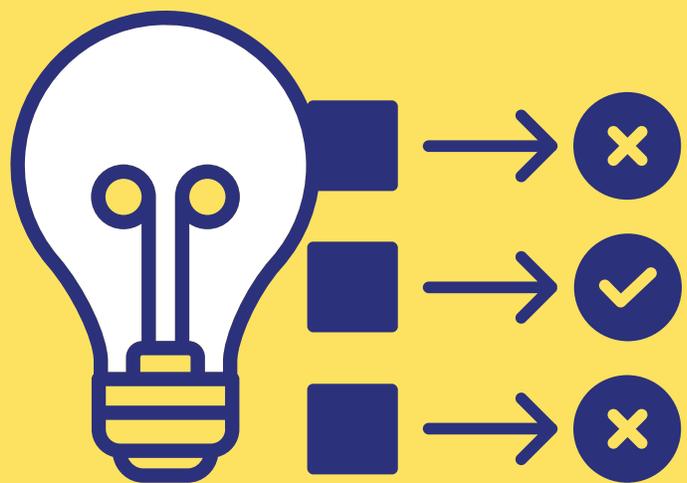
- Does not require purchase of new land or development of new infrastructure since units will fit on most single-family lots (ADU) or within existing dwellings (JADU)
- Utilize standard building materials, which may be sourced from local vendors
- Option to utilize prefabricated units and/or modular units
- Opportunity to earn supplemental income for homeowners through long-term rental agreements/programs

*Below: A detached ADU. Photo courtesy City of Pasadena.*



# Part B

## Bringing ADUs to Life

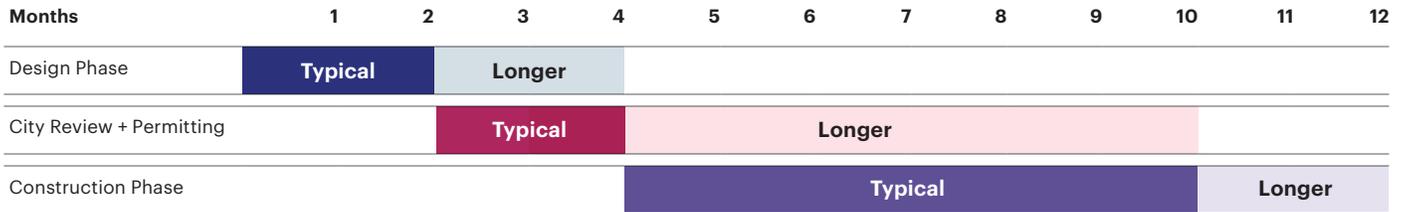


## Process + Timeline

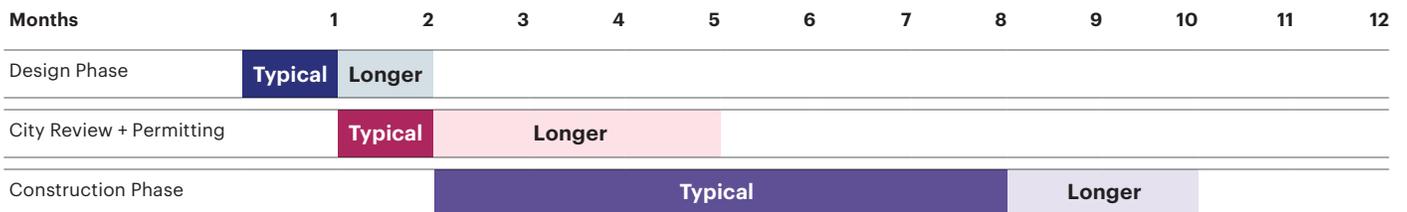
# A Step-by-Step Guide

### Development Timeline for ADUs in Richmond

ADUs need time for design, city review and permitting, and construction. The design phase typically requires two months, but can take up to four months. The city review and permitting phase typically requires two months, but can take up to eight months. The construction phase typically requires six months, but can take up to eight months.



ESTIMATED TIMELINE (for planning purposes, individual projects may take more or less time)

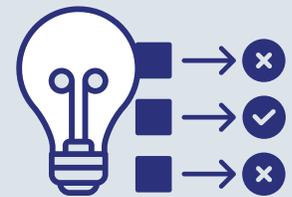


ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR PROJECTS USING CITY'S PRE-APPROVED PLANS (for planning purposes, individual projects may take more or less time)

## DESIGN PHASE (2-4 Months)

### Step 1: Possibilities and Goals

- ADUs are allowed in all of Richmond's zoning districts where single-family and multi-family dwellings are permitted. **Use the City's online interactive zoning map** or speak to a city planner to determine your zoning district.
- Familiarize yourself with the different types of ADUs (See "**What are the different types of ADUs?**")
- Brainstorm and write down project goals**
  - Will the ADU generate income? What are your financial goals (return on investment)?
  - Will the ADU be used for "aging-in-place"?
  - What will the accessibility needs be?
  - How many people will live in the ADU? Will you live there or will a tenant?
- Determine who you will need on your **project team**, which could include an architect, designer, design/build contractor or pre-fabricated ADU vendor.
- Determine your budget (how much can you afford to spend to build the ADU) and consider how you are funding the ADU (cash, loans, grants, or other financial assistance). See "**Helpful Resources for ADUs**" for links to resources that can help with funding, or contact contractors to help estimate what your ADU would cost. Review **Design Resource E** for an example of different cost scenarios.



# DESIGN PHASE (CONTINUED)

(2-4 Months)



## Step 2: Design Your ADU

- 1 See the **"ADU Brainstorming Checklist"** to identify what type of ADU can fit on your lot.
- 2 Decide what type of ADU you want to build.
- 3 See **"Summary of Zoning Standards for ADUs"** to review the development standards for ADUs.
- 4 Work with an architect, designer, design/build contractor or pre-fabricated ADU vendor as needed to **develop and finalize ADU design**. Consult §15.04.610.020 - *Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units* in the Richmond Municipal Code and applicable City, State and Federal building codes.

OR

**Use one of the City of Richmond's free-to-use pre-approved ADU designs.** See page 18 in this guidebook for more information on the pre-approved design, and visit the City's website to download the plan set.

- 5 If **additional modifications** need to be made to the site to accommodate the ADU, such as grading and/or construction of retaining walls to provide flat space for the ADU, you must submit these plans to the Building Division for review and approval. This review is subject to Building permit fees.
- 6 Determine whether the **existing sewer and/or water** has the capacity to support the ADU. If you decide to connect your ADU sewer and/or water directly into public infrastructure, then you may be subject to impact fees. Fees will vary on a case-by-case basis.
- 7 See the City's **ADU Info Sheet** for information and tools and consult with the city staff in the Planning, Building, and Engineering Divisions as needed. Contact information:
  - **Planning:** [planning@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:planning@ci.richmond.ca.us) (510) 620-6706
  - **Building:** [permittechs@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:permittechs@ci.richmond.ca.us) (510) 620-6868
  - **Engineering:** [engineering@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:engineering@ci.richmond.ca.us) (510) 307-8091



## Step 3: Evaluate Budget

- 1 Develop a **cost estimate**, working with your architect, designer, design/build contractor or prefabricated ADU vendor as needed.
- 2 Note that constructing an ADU may increase your property taxes due to a higher assessed property value.
- 3 Utility bills such as electricity, gas, water, sewer, and trash may increase as a result of an ADU.

- 4 It may be necessary to refine the ADU design created in Step 2 based on available budget.
- 5 **Secure funding** to fund the development of the desired ADU(s).



## CITY REVIEW + PERMITTING PHASE

(2-8 Months)

### Step 4: Prepare and Submit Permit Application

- 1** Finalize building design and **prepare construction plans** for review by the City's Community Development Department.
- 2** **Obtain a planning and building permit.** Submit your permit application through the City's online permitting portal, **IMS** or in person at the permit center:
  - Scan the QR code or click the link above and register for a free account.
  - Apply for a new application under Planning/ Zoning and/or Building Permits. Applicants using pre-approved plans will submit directly to the Building Division.
  - Submit all required documents and pay online via credit or debit card
- 3** **Pay fees.** All fees, including plan check, permit fees, applicable impact fees, and those collected by external agencies, must be paid before the permit can be issued. See **Appendix B** for a breakdown of typical fees applicable to ADUs.
- 4** Plan check comments will be sent to you or whoever you have designated as your agent within **30 days** of receiving a complete application. You will need to revise your plans to address all your plan check comments before the City issues a building permit for your ADU.



## CONSTRUCTION PHASE

(6-8 Months)

### Step 5: Construction + Inspections

- 1** With your building permits issued, you can **start construction of your ADU!**
- 2** Your contractor or pre-fabricated ADU vendor will need to schedule **inspections** as required.
- 3** **Final Inspection and Occupancy Permit** is required to move in and use the space.



### Step 6: Move into Your ADU!

- 1** Building occupancy is allowed only after Final Inspection is complete.
- 2** If renting the ADU, fulfill landlord obligations for habitable premises per California Civil Code §1941. Find more resources on **Richmond Rent Program**.
- 3** Perform regular maintenance of ADU as needed.



# Part C

## Compiled ADU Resources



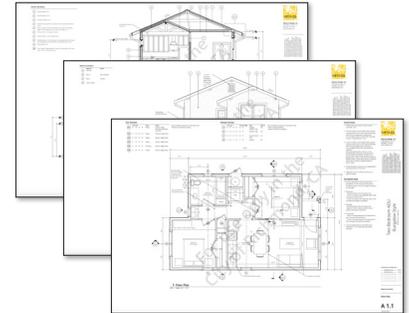
## Permit Application Resource

# Richmond's Pre-Approved ADU Plans



Scan QR code to access the plan

The City of Richmond partnered with local architects to create a pre-approved ADU plan available for you to use free of charge, saving you time and money in designing an ADU for your backyard. All you need to do is download the pre-approved set, add a site plan on the designated page, and apply for a building permit. Note that while this plan was designed to be suitable for most homeowners in Richmond, the City does not guarantee that it will be suitable for your site. This plan set does not include site specific foundations. *Site specific foundation details are required for ADUs in the City of Richmond.* The applicant must hire a general contractor or civil engineer to prepare site specific foundation details and include the details with the application for approval from the City of Richmond.



## Plan A

### Key Specifications

- Detached ADU
- 493sf
- 1 bedroom
- 1 bathroom
- Compact in-unit washer and dryer
- Compliant with California energy code requirements

### Design Features

- Open living, dining, and kitchen space
- Window placement increases natural light and cross-ventilation
- Narrow plan designed to fit on typical lots in Richmond
- Optional overdoor to increase visual interest and provide entryway cover

## Plan B

### Key Specifications

- Detached ADU
- 745sf
- 2 bedroom
- 1 bathroom
- In-unit washer and dryer
- Compliant with California energy code requirements

### Design Features

- Large windows illuminate an open living, dining, and kitchen space
- The two bedrooms do not share a wall, enhancing privacy
- Option for second bedroom to open from the living room for use as flex space or office

**Both plans come in four style variations typical to the Richmond area: Bungalow, Spanish, Tudor, and Contemporary.**

# How to Draw a Site Plan

## What is a site plan?

A site plan is a bird's eye view sketch of your property that shows where your new ADU will be located.

## Do I need to draw/add a site plan if I use the Pre-Approved ADU Plan?

Yes. Page 2 of the downloadable permit set has a space set aside for you to draw or paste your site plan.

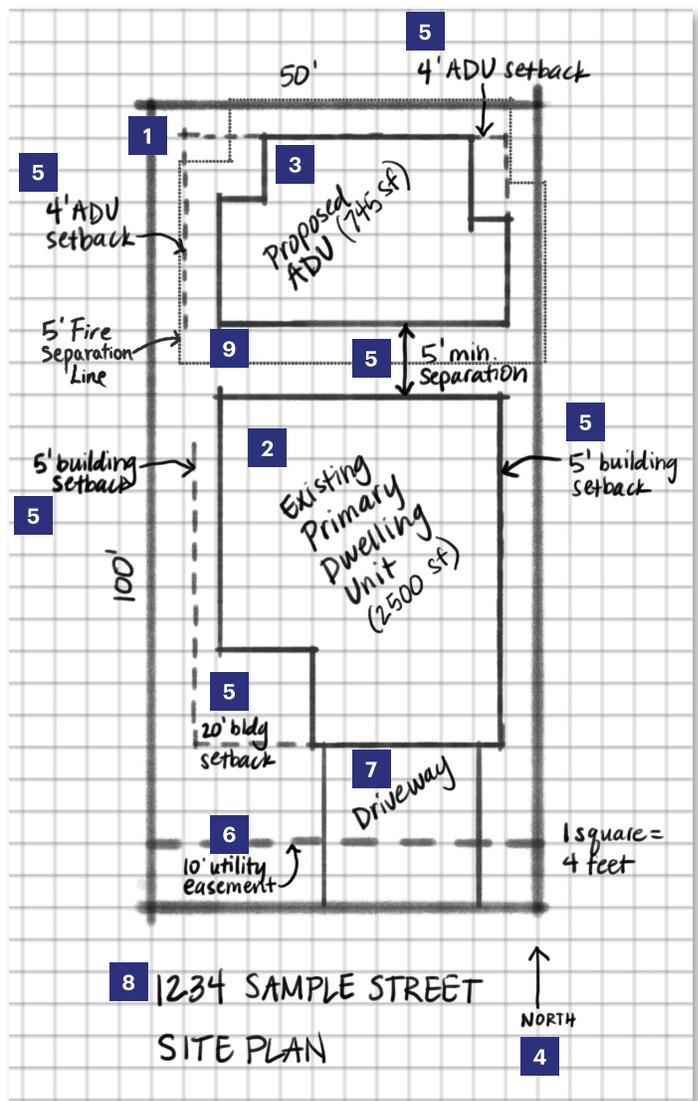
## What am I required to show in a site plan?

- 1 Property boundary lines
- 2 Existing structures (labeled, with square footages and dimensions)
- 3 Proposed structures (labeled, with square footages, and dimensions)
- 4 Arrow pointing north
- 5 Setback lines for all existing and proposed structures (refer to Chapter 15.04.200 of the Richmond Municipal Code for required setbacks)
- 6 Easement location(s) (refer to a recent Title report to locate any easements)
- 7 Driveway location
- 8 Property address
- 9 Fire Separation lines adjacent to exterior walls\*
- 10 Location of paths, landscaping, mechanical equipment, fences, and exterior trash

\*A minimum of 5' is needed to eliminate the need for fire-rated construction. The distance is measured from the building face to one of the following: To the closest interior lot line; To the centerline of a street, an alley or public way; To an imaginary line between two buildings on the lot. The distance shall be measured at a right angle from the face of the wall. If fire protection is required, provide a different graphical representation for the fire-rated walls, and note the requirements for openings and projections.

## Can I draw my own site plan?

It is strongly recommended you engage an architect, designer, design/build contractor or prefabricated ADU vendor to prepare a site plan. It may be appropriate for you to draw your own site plan if your property is flat and does not contain any special features like a creek.



Example Site Plan



# 4

## Determine maximum allowed ADU footprint

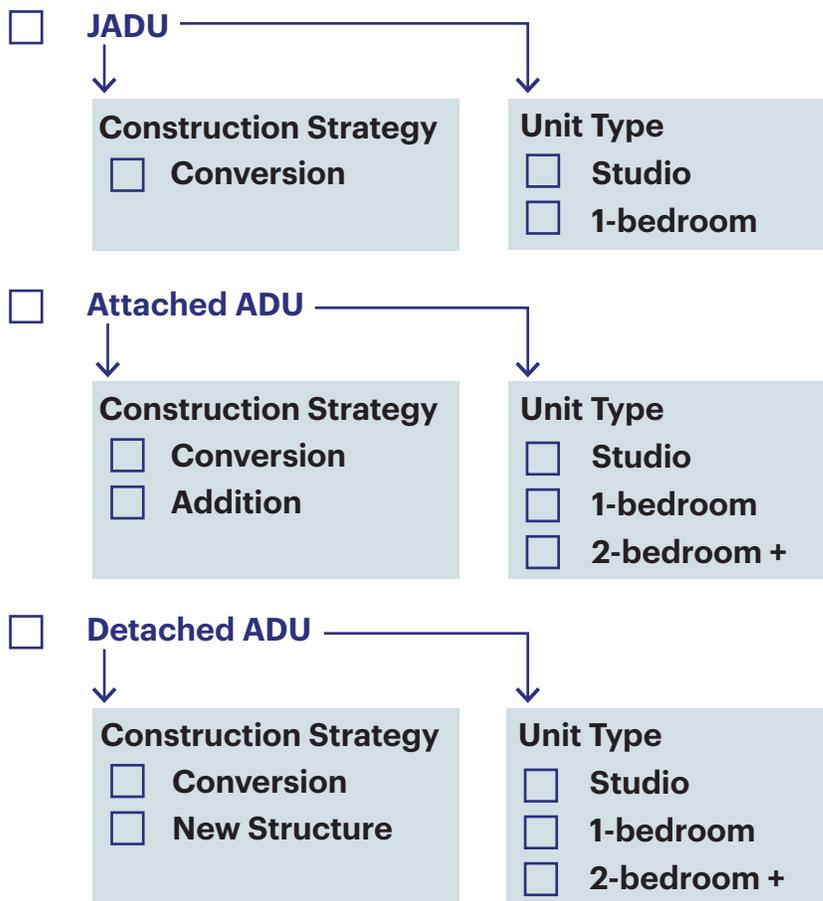
The City’s zoning standards set a maximum square footage (floor area) for each type of ADU. If your buildable area (for an addition or new construction) is bigger than this, then this rule tells you the maximum size of your ADU. If your buildable area is smaller than or equal to this, then you may build on your entire buildable area.

- I’m building a JADU:** Maximum allowed size is 500 sq ft
- I’m building an ADU:** See zoning standards on pages 10-11

# 5

## Choose construction approach and determine ADU unit type(s)

See pages 6-9 of this guidebook for more information on construction options. Choose a unit type that would fit within the maximum ADU footprint indicated in step 4 and the buildable area determined in step 3.



**Q CLOSER LOOK**

See below for typical sizes of different unit types:

**Studio**  
150 - 400 sq ft

**1-bedroom**  
400 - 750 sq ft

**2-bedroom+**  
750 - 1000 sq ft

For example, if your buildable area was 400 sq ft, then you could build a large studio or a small 1-bedroom, so long as you are also meeting the zoning standards (pg 10-11) for that unit type.

# 6

## Indicate parking approach

**No parking for ADU/JADU is required if any one of these is true:**

- The unit type is a JADU
- The ADU will be located within 1/2 mile of a transit stop (see AC Transit for current bus stop locations and BART for current train stations)
- The ADU will be located within one block of a carshare vehicle (see the City’s [website](#) for carshare options and vehicle sharing locations)
- The ADU will be located within a historic district (see the City’s Zoning District Map)
- The ADU will be located where on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the ADU occupant
- You created your ADU/JADU by converting an area previously used for parking (for example, you converted your garage into a dwelling unit)

**One parking space is required if none of the above apply to your ADU/JADU.**

Indicate number of required parking spaces: \_\_\_\_\_  
SPACES

**Indicate proposed changes to parking on development lot:**

Parking removed \_\_\_\_\_ Parking added \_\_\_\_\_  
SPACES SPACES

**Indicate proposed total parking:**

Parking for primary dwelling \_\_\_\_\_  
NEW + EXISTING SPACES

Parking for accessory dwelling(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
NEW + EXISTING SPACES

# 7

## Meet floor plan room layout requirements

The following room layout requirements and considerations are meant to provide an overview of the required entrance, bathroom and cooking facilities for JADUs and ADUs. Consult §15.04.610.020 - Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units in the Richmond Municipal Code and applicable building codes for specific requirements.

- All ADU types require a separate entrance from the primary dwelling, a bathroom, and a kitchen.
- JADUs may have access to a full bathroom in the primary dwelling in lieu of a private full bath and an efficiency kitchen in lieu of a full kitchen.

# 8

## Consider solar system installation

According to the California Department Housing and Community Development’s ADU handbook “newly constructed ADUs are subject to the Energy Code requirement to provide solar panels if the unit(s) is a newly constructed, non-manufactured, detached ADU.” This means unless you are doing a garage conversion, using modular or prefabricated units, or building an addition to the primary dwelling, you will need to provide solar panels.

- Identify where you will place the solar panels. They may be installed on the ADU or on the primary dwelling.
- Consider the orientation of the ADU and the slope of the roof to best maximize the efficiency of the solar panels.

# 9

## Incorporate design recommendations

### Access to Unit

- Shortest, clear, and obvious pedestrian connection to sidewalk/street
- Shortest, clear, and obvious pedestrian connection to parking area
- Route of access and interior spaces that are accessible to people with limited mobility
- Design for universal access, providing access to all people to the greatest extent possible, especially if to be used for aging in place

### Privacy

- Locate windows and doors away from primary dwelling and neighbors to maximize privacy
- Use skylights, light tubes, and clerestory windows to provide light and air without compromising privacy
- Privacy for outdoor spaces – will Accessory Dwelling Unit and primary dwelling share an outdoor space or will outdoor spaces be separated?
- Consider landscaping buffers such as trees or hedges as privacy screens and to absorb noise



A garage converted to a JADU provides direct pedestrian access to the sidewalk. Photo courtesy Consulting & Construction Services, Inc.



An attached ADU with screening to provide privacy from neighboring buildings. Photo courtesy Hammer and Hand.

## **Quality of Life**

- Locate windows to maximize light and airflow
- Maximize efficiency of closets and cabinets to accommodate storage needs in a small space
- For JADUs and Attached ADUs, place compatible activities on either side of shared walls to avoid noise pollution between units (for example, a kitchen or bathroom should avoid sharing a wall with a bedroom)

## **Site Design**

- Access to laundry facilities, either within the unit or shared with the primary dwelling
- Building placement and unit layout relative to location of existing utilities (such as water, sewer and electricity)
- Consider providing private open space in backyard for tenants living in a backyard ADU

# Garage Conversions

## Getting your garage conversion permitted

You are required to obtain a building permit to change the use of your garage to an ADU. The permitting process follows the same development timeline as listed on pages 14-16 and is contingent on bringing the structure up to building code for the new residential use. No pre-construction inspections are required. Floor plans need to show existing and proposed configuration as well as how the proposed portion will conform to the applicable code requirements. However, you will not have to provide any replacement parking and can build the ADU to the existing footprint regardless of ADU floor area maximums and setbacks.

## Bringing your garage up to code

Building codes make sure structures are safe for their intended use. Changing uses from vehicle storage to residence might involve significant changes. See below a table of applicable buildings codes organized by topic and a list of commonly required upgrades to help inform what you will need.

Applicable Building Codes		
Topic	Code	Services
General construction standards (structure, fire safety, electrical systems, plumbing, ventilation)	RMC Article 6 Building Regulations - <b><u>Building Code of the City of Richmond</u></b>	
Health and safety	RMC Article 6 Building Regulations - <b><u>Housing Code</u></b>	
Building envelope energy performance	<b><u>California Building Energy Efficiency Standards</u></b> - Title 24	
Fire safety	RMC Article 8 Fire - <b><u>Fire Prevention Code</u></b>	
Zoning, program and design standards	RMC Article 15 Zoning and Subdivision - <b><u>ADU Ordinance</u></b>	
Utility Requirements	<b><u>IRC 2024</u></b> Regulations	<b><u>PG&amp;E Requirements</u></b>

Note that the recommendations on this spread apply to converting a **permitted** garage into an ADU. An unpermitted structure converted to an ADU is treated as a new build and must comply with state and local standards rather than conversion standards.

# Commonly required upgrades

## Foundations and Floor

- If slab has insufficient concrete strength and thickness, **underpin the foundation**
- If insufficient moisture barrier between slab and flooring, **add waterproofing membrane to slab**

## Walls

- If structural integrity is compromised (especially in earthquake-prone zones), **reinforce studs or add wall bracing**
- If wall R-value (the capacity of insulation within the walls to resist heat flow) does not meet energy code, **add insulation**

## Roof

- If additional loads from new mechanical equipment, lighting and finishes compromise structural integrity, **reinforce structure**
- If roof R-value does not meet energy code, **add insulation and make sure to ventilate attic space if not conditioned**

## Openings

- If any planned bedrooms do not have direct access to the exterior, **add a window with a minimum clear opening of 5.7 sq. ft. to meet egress code requirements**
- If habitable spaces are not meeting lighting and ventilation requirements, **add openings as needed with consideration of privacy and sun orientation**

## HVAC

- JADUs are not considered separate dwellings and are exempt from HVAC requirements.
- If structure lacks heating and cooling, **add HVAC system (many use a minisplit system separate from primary residence)**

## Utilities

- JADUs are not considered separate dwellings and are exempt from separate utility requirements.
- ADU conversions are exempt from separate utility connection requirements however depending on increased loads, you might **consider upgrading water, sewer and electrical lines to a service with greater capacity**

## Fire Safety

- JADUs are not considered separate dwellings and are exempt from fire separation requirements.
- If structure is not compliant with minimum fire setbacks from property line and primary residence (5 feet, IRC 2024), **add fire rated walls.**
- Fire sprinklers are not required if the primary dwelling does not have sprinklers; **smoke alarms are required in each bedroom**

# ADUs on Multifamily Lots

## Can I have ADUs on a multifamily lot?

**Yes!** State law SB897 allows both attached ADUs and detached ADUs to be built on multifamily lots.

### How many?

- If you have a duplex, triplex, or fourplex you can build one attached ADU and up to two detached ADUs.
- If you have a multifamily unit with 5 or more units you may build multiple attached ADUs (up to 25% of the number of dwelling units onsite, but at least 1) or two detached ADUs (which can be attached to each other).

### Where?

- Detached ADUs can be built in available rear yard so long as they have 4 feet of setbacks from property lines and 5 feet from primary structure, and meet height requirements.
- An attached ADU can be an addition or conversion but it cannot be built in any space assigned to existing residential dwelling units in the multifamily structure. This means impact on multifamily dwelling units is minimal since ADUs cannot be built within existing habitable area. Spaces typically converted to ADUs are underutilized storage or garages within the multifamily structure.

## Are there any multifamily specific standards?

### Yes, here are some things to keep in mind:

- ADUs added to your property do not count towards your lot's density total, so long as they follow ADU standards.
- A **multistory**, multifamily dwelling is allowed a height increase to 18 feet for detached ADUs.
- If adding an attached ADU to a multifamily structure that has setbacks less than 4 feet, you are not required to update the building to meet code.
- Adding an ADU to your multifamily lot cannot trigger a requirement for fire sprinklers to be installed in existing multifamily dwelling.

Standards listed previously in this document and in Richmond Municipal Code that are not affected by items mentioned in this section also apply to developing ADUs on multifamily lots.

# Legalizing Unpermitted ADUs

## Why legalize your unpermitted ADU?

**Health and safety:** Unpermitted structures are often not built to safety standards in the building code which puts both the ADU and primary dwelling residents at higher risk of fire, collapse, poor living conditions, etc. Not having record or legal address for unpermitted ADUs also makes them harder to locate for emergency services.

**Higher property value:** An unpermitted ADU may diminish the value of a property.

**Insurance coverage:** Insurance companies may deny a claim when an unpermitted ADU is damaged from fire, floods or earthquakes.

**Tenant legal action:** Legalizing an ADU reduces legal and financial risk and allows for an aboveboard process to lease and earn income from your ADU.

## Process to legalize

1

### Step 1: Pre-Application (8 weeks)

- **Learn about the local process.** Explore [Richmond’s ADU resources](#).
- **Determine feasibility.** Does the accessory structure meet the minimum features to be considered a safe, legal unit? See [zoning and program requirements](#) on pages 10-11.
- **Evaluate the project.** Get professional advice from a contractor, private building inspector or architect to get a sense of what might be required to legalize the unit. This would include them creating as-built plans for the unit including Title 24 (energy code) and structural calculations.



**Decision time:** Apply for permit? If moving forward with the application know that there is a chance you may not be able to permit your ADU and will have to stop using it as living space.

## 2

### Step 2: Permit Review (6+ weeks)

- **Submit permit application.** Include the as-built plans and proposed plan plus any other documents required as part of the permitting process described in page 16.
- **Review.** Expect 3-5 rounds of staff comments and feedback review before the decision to issue a building permit.
- **Cost estimate.** At this stage, you will have a more accurate cost estimate of the changes required to decide whether it is feasible to move forward with the project.

**Decision Time:** Proceed with project? Here are your options:

- Proceed with work to get permit, pay any applicable fees and connection charges.
- Negotiate list of modifications required to lower costs.
- If the unit cannot be remediated, demolish or shut down as residential use.
- If the unit can be legalized but it is not within your budget, you may request to delay code enforcement for up to five years as long as the noncompliance of the unit is not a health and safety issue.

## 3

### Step 3: Construction (1-12+ months)

- **Start construction.** If you move forward with the project and acquire a building permit, you may start the construction process. If there are any tenants in the unit, they will have to find other accommodations during this time.
- **Ongoing inspections.** Expect inspectors to visit the construction site to ensure it is complying with the approved permit.
- **Utilities.** Local jurisdiction will approve connections for utilities on behalf of the companies.

## 4

### Step 4: Final Inspection: Ready for Occupancy

- **Move in.** After the inspector has ensured all requirements have been met, they will issue a Certificate of Occupancy for the ADU.

# Cost Estimates for ADUs

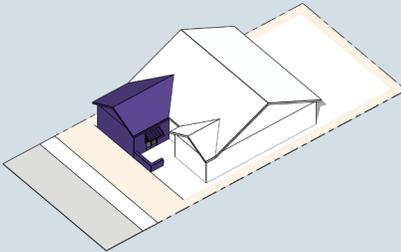
## How much will it cost to build an ADU on my property?

There are multiple factors that may impact the cost of adding an ADU to your property. Your design team will help you get the closest estimate for your individual circumstances. However, the City of Richmond has provided the following cost scenarios in this guidebook as an example of what costs may come up in the process. The City is also working on a customizable cost calculator to help you estimate costs. This tool will be really helpful at the beginning stages of a project to help prepare for potential costs but should not be used as a final quote.

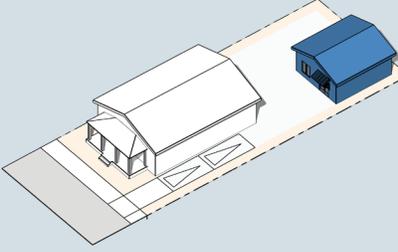
### Methodology

The following scenarios were created using cost estimates from ADU companies practicing in southern California and the Bay Area and fee estimates provided by individual departments in the City of Richmond. Appendix B of the guidebook has an example plan check and permit fee estimate for each scenario to provide a better understanding of how the City fees breakdown.

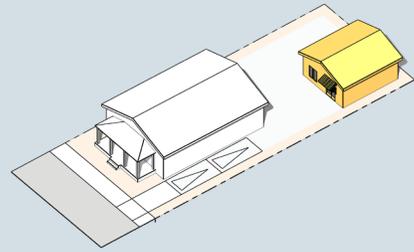
These scenarios are meant to give a general idea of the cost factors involved in adding an ADU to your property in a Richmond context, but they are not representative of every exact situation and can fluctuate based on the lot conditions, ADU type and size, and market costs.



**Scenario A**  
Conversion  
**Total Cost:**  
**\$169,875 - \$230,485**

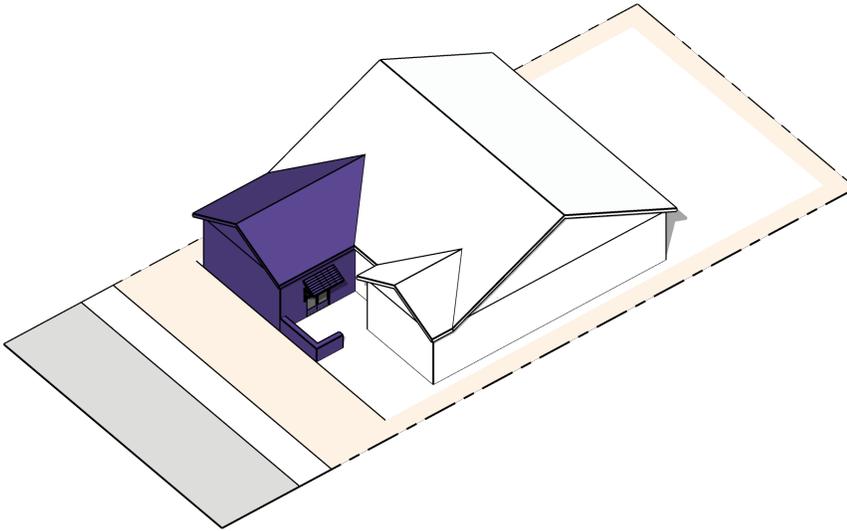


**Scenario B**  
Detached New Construction  
**Total Cost:**  
**\$364,435 - \$494,170**



**Scenario C**  
Pre-approved plan  
**Total Cost:**  
**\$341,360 - \$446,880**

# Scenario A - Conversion



## Site Assumptions

Lot: 50 ft x 100 ft

Slope: none

## ADU Assumptions

Area: 450 sf

Unit type: 1-Bed

Stories: 1

Construction type:

Conversion

## ADU Cost Factors

- **Building Design:** Architect fees range from 10-15% of construction costs, about **\$11,250 - \$23,625**.
- **Site Plan Design:** This costs about **\$3,000** and is usually part of the architect fees.
- **Sitework:** Assuming the site is relatively flat and all utility tie-ins can occur within property boundaries, this is about **\$25,000**.
- **Construction:** California ADU companies estimate hard costs for a conversion to be \$250-\$350/sf which is about **\$112,500 - \$157,500** for a 450sf unit.
- **Utilities:** Conversions are not required to provide separate utilities, however, PG&E requires separate electrical panels and metering per unit on a lot which can cost about **\$12,000**.
- **Solar Panels:** Conversions are not required to install a solar system.
- **Plan Check + Permit Fees:** For this size ADU can be about **\$10,000**. See Appendix B for more information on City fees.
- **Property Tax:** Homeowner will pay their original yearly property tax plus 1-1.5% of ADU construction cost which is an increase of about **\$1,125 - \$2360** on yearly taxes.

Sources: [Revival ADU](#), [SnapADU Design Build](#), [Cottage](#), [Beachfront Property Management](#)

## Total: \$169,875 - \$230,485

## Potential Additional Costs

### Site plan

Survey: \$4,000 - \$10,000

Soil report: \$3,000

### Sitework

Slope (grading, retaining wall, soil exports):  
\$25,000 - \$40,000

### Utilities

Sewage pump: \$5,000

# Scenario B - Detached New Construction

## Site Assumptions

Lot: 50 ft x 100 ft

Slope: none

## ADU Assumptions

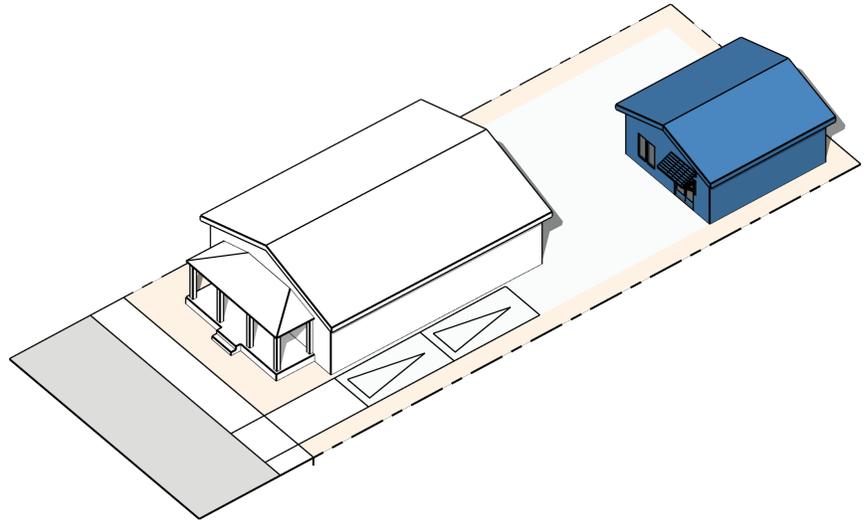
Area: 745 sf

Unit type: 2-Bed

Stories: 1

Construction type:

New Construction



## Potential Additional Costs

### Site plan

Survey: \$4,000 - \$10,000

Soil report: \$3,000

### Sitework

Slope (grading, retaining wall, soil exports):

\$25,000 - \$40,000

### Utilities

Sewage pump: \$5,000

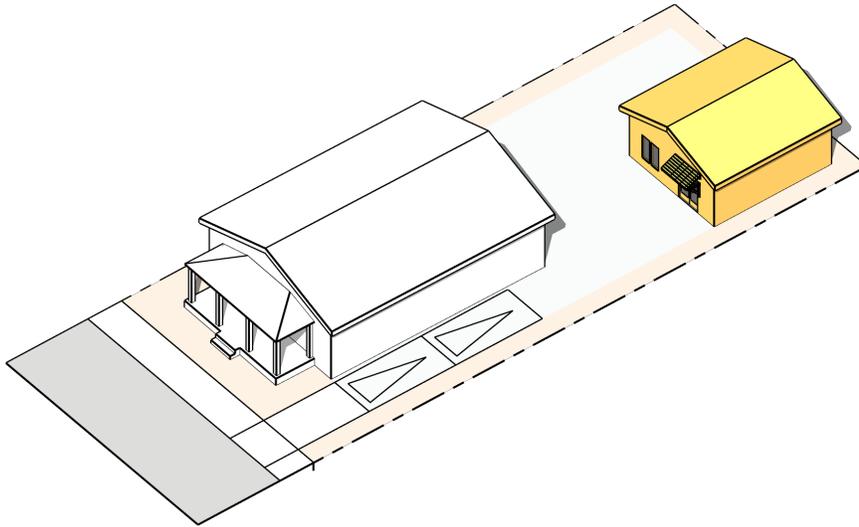
## ADU Cost Factors

- **Building Design:** Architect fees range from 10-15% of construction costs, about **\$26,075 - \$50,290**.
- **Site Plan Design:** This costs about **\$3,000**, and is usually part of the architect fees.
- **Sitework:** Assuming the site is relatively flat and all utility tie-ins can occur within property boundaries, this is about **\$25,000**.
- **Construction:** California ADU companies estimate hard costs for a new construction to be \$350-\$450/sf which is about **\$260,750 - \$335,250** for a 745sf unit.
- **Utilities:** Estimate **\$30,000 - \$50,000** in separate utility installations.
- **Solar Panels:** New construction ADUs are required to install a solar system which can cost around **\$12,000 - \$18,000**
- **Plan Check + Permit Fees:** For this size ADU can be about **\$10,600**. See Appendix B for more information on City fees.
- **Property Tax:** Homeowner will pay their original yearly property tax plus 1-1.5% of ADU construction cost which is an increase of about **\$2,610 - \$5,030** on yearly taxes.

Sources: [Revival ADU](#), [SnapADU Design Build](#), [Cottage](#), [Beachfront Property Management](#)

**Total: \$364,435 - \$494,170**

# Scenario C - Pre-Approved Plan



## Site Assumptions

Lot: 50 ft x 100 ft

Slope: none

## ADU Assumptions

Area: 745 sf

Unit type: 2-Bed

Stories: 1

Construction type:

New Construction

## ADU Cost Factors

- **Building Design:** The ADU plan is already designed so there would be no design fees.
- **Site Plan Design:** This costs about **\$3000** and is required even with the use of the pre-approved plan.
- **Sitework:** Assuming the site is relatively flat and all utility tie-ins can occur within property boundaries, this is about **\$25,000**.
- **Construction:** California ADU companies estimate hard costs for a new construction to be \$350-\$450/sf which is about **\$260,750 - \$335,250** for a 745sf unit.
- **Utilities:** Estimate **\$30,000 - \$50,000** in separate utility installations.
- **Solar Panels:** New construction ADUs are required to install a solar system which can cost around **\$12,000 - \$18,000**.
- **Plan Check + Permit Fees:** For this size ADU can be about **\$10,600**. See Appendix B for more information on City fees.
- **Property Tax:** Homeowner will pay original yearly property tax plus 1-1.5% of ADU construction cost which is an increase of about **\$2,610 - \$5,030** on yearly taxes.

Sources: [Revival ADU](#), [SnapADU Design Build](#), [Cottage](#), [Beachfront Property Management](#)

## Total: \$341,360 - \$446,880

## Potential Additional Costs

### Site plan

Survey: \$4,000 - \$10,000

Soil report: \$3,000

### Sitework

Slope (grading, retaining wall, soil exports):

\$25,000 - \$40,000

### Utilities

Sewage pump: \$5,000

## Links

# Helpful Resources for ADUs



The following is a list of third-party ADU resources, programs and vendors. Vendors included on this list are not endorsed by or affiliated with the City, and their work is not guaranteed by the City. This list is intended as a helpful starting point for researching different ADU options for your property.

## City of Richmond Links

**[Building Permit Forms](#)**

**[Richmond's Pre-Approved ADU Plans](#)**

**[IMS](#)**

**[Planning Permit Form](#)**

## General Educational Resources for ADUs

**[California Department of Housing and Community Development \(HCD\)](#)**

Comprehensive resource for general JADU and ADU information, including links to funding options, ADU handbook, and additional guidance documents.

**[Maxable](#)**

Provides a concierge package to support property owners through all phases of an ADU project, including services like contractor recommendations and products like floor plans. They also offer an ADU E-course and free tools to start learning about ADUs.

**[How-to ADU \(YouTube\)](#)**

Founder Ryan O'Connell provides videos on an array of ADU-related topics, including state laws, grants and other funding sources, applicable building and municipal codes, and answers to frequently asked questions.

## Financial Resources for ADUs

### **ADU Financing in California**

Information on the costs of building an ADU and a comprehensive list of options for how to finance your ADU.

### **ADU Educational Workshop**

Webinars and other resources about ADU construction, financing, and property management, as well as a link to an ADU construction cost calculator.

### **California Housing Finance Agency ADU Grant**

Information on eligibility, application, and contacts for the CalHFA ADU Grant Program, which provides up to \$40,000 in assistance to reimburse homeowners for pre-development costs necessary to build and occupy an ADU, as well as general ADU information.

### **California Community Economic Development Association (CCEDA)**

Additional information for the CalHFA ADU Grant Program, including assistance with applying and a helpful FAQ section.

### **Local Housing Trust Fund (LHTF) Program**

Matching funds to local and regional housing trust funds. Funds may also be used for the construction, conversion, repair, reconstruction or rehabilitation of ADUs or JADUs (HCD LHTF program).

### **CalHome Program**

State funds to local public agencies and nonprofit corporations for first-time homebuyer mortgage assistance including a home purchase with an ADU or JADU; owner-occupied rehabilitation assistance including rehabilitation of ADUs or JADUs; ADU/JADU assistance including construction, repair, and reconstruction; and homeownership development project loans including pre-development and carrying costs during construction related to ADUs and JADUs (HCD CalHome program).

### **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)**

Federal funds allocated to non-entitlement jurisdictions, and non-entitlement jurisdictions that partner with non-federally recognized Native American communities for community development activities including single- and multi-family rehabilitation and potential local ADU rehabilitation and planning programs. Applicants must be income qualified in low- to moderate-income households for rehabilitation and areas for planning. Contact your local jurisdictions for more information.

## FAQ

# ADU Frequently Asked Questions



### 1. What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU)?

An “Accessory Dwelling Unit” (“ADU”) is an attached or detached residential dwelling that provides complete independent living facilities, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation, and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary residence. These units are sometimes referred to as “in-law units” or “granny flats.”

A “Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit” (“JADU”) is a unit no larger than 500 square feet and contained entirely within a single-family residence. A JADU includes an efficiency kitchen, sleeping facilities, and may include its own bathroom or it may share a bathroom within the existing structure.

### 2. What is the permit process like?

ADU and JADU applications do not require a public hearing and are reviewed through the City’s building permit application process. See pages 14-16 for a step-by-step guide.

### 3. How many ADUs and JADUs are allowed?

For existing lots with a single-family residence only one JADU or one detached unit (ADU) is allowed unless the detached ADU is a statewide exemption ADU, then one JADU and one detached ADU are allowed. For existing lots with multi-family dwellings, attached ADUs may be added up to a 25% increase in units (but at least one), and no more than two detached ADUs may be added.

### 4. What are the setbacks and height limitations?

Minimum side and rear setbacks for detached ADUs are four feet (this setback is different than the fire separation distances of the building code), with a general building height of up to 16-feet (certain criteria allow an increase up to 25-feet). All other setback requirements defined by the base zoning district are still applicable.

### 5. Is parking required?

No parking (including replacement parking) is required for attached ADUs, JADUs and garage conversions. No parking (including replacement parking) is required for ADUs located within a half-mile walking distance of public transit (including bus stops, BART stations, or carshare stations). Otherwise, one parking space is required.

### 6. How do I legalize an existing unpermitted unit?

The City has created a resource to help you with this process. See Design Resource C, “Legalizing Unpermitted ADUs,” on pages 30-31 of this guidebook.

### 7. Can I convert my garage into an ADU?

The City has created a resource to help you with this process. See Design Resource B, “Garage Conversions” on pages 26-28 of this guidebook.

### 8. Can I rent my JADU or ADU?

Yes, however, you must comply with the tenancy restriction set forth in Section 15.04.610.020 of the Richmond Municipal Code which states no ADU shall be rented for a term of 30 days or less.

### 9. What is the process to issue a new address for an ADU?

The City will issue a new address during the permitting process. Any ADU or JADU attached to the main dwelling

shall be assigned the parent address and Unit 2. For example, an attached ADU or JADU at 123 Main Street will now be assigned 123 Main Street Unit 2. Any ADU detached from the main dwelling shall be assigned the parent address and Unit A. For example, a detached ADU at 123 Main Street will now be assigned 123 Main Street Unit A.

## 10. What is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program?

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is designed to make market-rate housing affordable for low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The Housing Authority of the County of Contra Costa (HACCC), the administering body for the program in Richmond, pays a housing subsidy directly to the landlord on behalf of the participating tenants. Landlord benefits from this program include guaranteed HACCC's portion of rent payments, free advertising of units to families in the program, choosing your own tenants, free inspections, and flexible lease terms. If you are looking to lease your ADU, this is a great way to guarantee tenant payment and increase the pool of affordable housing. Learn more at [Becoming a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Landlord](#)

## 11. Can I perform construction work for an ADU on my property?

Yes. Please confirm with the Building Division as to whether there are any limitations for your project/lot.

## 12. If I rent out an ADU on my property, may I use part of the ADU for my own storage?

You may not use part of the rental unit as storage unless the storage has exterior access separate from the tenant's unit access. JADUs and ADUs are required to have a dedicated entrance. Your storage access cannot be through the ADU unit entrance.

## 13. How do fire separation standards apply to ADUs?

ADUs located less than 10' from primary dwelling unit require fire-rated construction, which may add costs. Fire separation must be noted on site plan and construction drawings. JADUs do not require fire separation.

## 14. Are solar panels required for newly constructed ADUs?

Yes, according to the California Department of Housing and Community Development's ADU handbook "newly constructed ADUs are subject to the Energy Code requirement to provide solar panels if the unit(s) is a newly constructed, non-manufactured, detached ADU." This means if you are doing a garage conversion, using modular or prefabricated units, or building an addition to the primary dwelling, you do not need to provide solar panels. To meet the requirement, solar panels may be installed on the ADU or on the primary dwelling.

## 15. Am I required to provide separate utilities for my ADU?

Each building must be equipped with utilities as per the California plumbing and electrical codes. Separate utilities for an ADU will be determined based on capacity and specific circumstances directly with your local utility provider.

## 16. How do I apply for a Building Permit for a JADU or ADU?

You may apply for a building permit online using the City's [IMS portal](#). If you have questions on how to use the City's eTrakit, please call (510) 620-6868 during counter hours to speak to a Permit Technician or email your contact phone number to [permittechs@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:permittechs@ci.richmond.ca.us)

## 17. How do I contact the Planning, Building, and Engineering Divisions?

- **Planning:** [planning@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:planning@ci.richmond.ca.us)  
(510) 620-6706
- **Building:** [permittechs@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:permittechs@ci.richmond.ca.us)  
(510) 620-6868
- **Engineering:** [engineering@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:engineering@ci.richmond.ca.us)  
(510) 307-8091

This page intentionally left blank

# Part D

## Definitions



# Definitions

## Easement

A portion of land created by grant or agreement for specific purpose; an easement is the right, privilege, or interest which one party has in the land of another. (RMC 15.04.104.020)

## Efficiency Kitchen

A kitchen including a cooking facility with appliances; and a food preparation counter and storage cabinets that are of a reasonable size in relation to the size of the junior accessory dwelling unit. (RMC 15.04.610.020)

## Floor Area

The total horizontal enclosed area of all the floors below the roof and within the outer surface of the walls of a building or structure, including basements, mezzanines, interior balconies, and upper stories or levels in a multistory building unless otherwise stipulated. (RMC 15.04.104.020)

## Lot

A parcel, tract, or area of land whose boundaries have been established by a legal instrument, such as a deed or map recorded with Contra Costa County, and is recognized as a separate legal entity for purposes of transfer of title, except public easements or rights-of-way. (RMC 15.04.104.020)

## Public Transit Stop

A location, including, but not limited to, a bus stop or train station, where the public may access buses, trains, subways, and other forms of transportation that charge set fares, run on fixed routes, and are available to the public. (City of San Rafael)

## Major Transit Stop

A site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods. (CA Public Resources Code)

## Statewide Exemption ADUs

An ADU of up to 800 sq. ft., 16 feet in height, as potentially limited by a local agency, and with four-foot side and rear yard setbacks. (Government Code sections 66310-66342)

# Appendix A

## ADU Application



**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)  
APPLICATION**  
Submittal Checklist

The following materials are required at minimum in order to submit an application for a new accessory dwelling unit and/or junior accessory dwelling unit. Additional materials may be required by the Community Development Director depending on the complexity of the project.

- PLANNING APPLICATION FORM**
- PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FEES**
- SUBMITTAL PLANS REQUIRED FOR INITIAL REVIEW**
  - 1 digital planset
  - 1 reduced-sized set of plans at 11" by 17"
- TITLE SHEET (PAGE #:\_\_\_\_) - Include:**
  - Title block with the project name, address, assessor's parcel number and contact information
  - Project description with a proposed scope of work
  - Vicinity map with north arrow, project location and major cross streets
  - Data table with the general plan designation, zoning district, lot size and lot width, as well as the existing and proposed total floor area, building height, percent interior yard space, and number of parking spaces
- SITE PLAN (PAGE #:\_\_\_\_) (1'-0" = 1/8" min. scale) - Show:**
  - Property boundaries and dimensions
  - Footprints, dimensions and setbacks of existing/proposed structures, decks, stairs and patios
  - Slope and direction of existing/proposed roofs
  - Adjacent streets, sidewalks, curbs, curb cuts, driveways, parking spaces, walks and landscaping
  - Existing/proposed trash enclosures and storage areas
  - Existing/proposed fences and fence heights
  - Existing/proposed mechanical equipment
  - Easements and waterways, if any
- FLOOR PLAN (PAGE #:\_\_\_\_) (1'-0" = 1/8" min. scale) - Provide a floor plan of all existing/proposed floors with all rooms, dimensions and floor sizes labeled.**
- ELEVATIONS (PAGE #:\_\_\_\_) (1'-0" = 1/4" min. scale) - Provide elevations of all four existing/proposed exterior walls with all dimensions labeled. Show:**
  - Exterior features and openings including roofing, roof eaves, roof brackets, siding, doors, trim, sills, windows, vents, gutters, downspouts, scuppers, skylights, chimneys, fences and railings
  - Window and door types, sizes, models and colors
  - Type, finish, material and color of exterior surfaces
  - Exterior mechanical equipment

**By signing the below line you acknowledge that this application has all the required materials and is therefore complete.**

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

- PLANNING DIVISION USE -	
Project:	Notes:
Location:	
Staff :	
Date:	

This page intentionally left blank

# **Appendix B**

## Plan Check + Permit Fee Estimate Example



# CITY OF RICHMOND

450 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA • RICHMOND, CA 94804  
(510) 620-6868

## INVOICE

### OPTICO DESIGN CASE STUDY A ESTIMATE

Permit Number: **ESTIMATE-JJ8**

450 SF CONVERSION; \$157,500 VALUATION

Address:

Invoice Date: January 31, 2025

Permit Tech: JJ2

#### BLD REGULATIONS PERMIT FEES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
TECHNOLOGY FEE	15063619320248	0	\$295.31
OCCUPANCY PROGRAM FEE	15063619340403	0	\$334.50
FILING 2 OR MORE RES ADDS ALL OTHERS	15063619320232	0	\$372.00
COST TO ADMIN SB1473	15063619320232	0	\$0.70
CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY	15063619320232	0	\$126.00
BLDG - BUILDING PERMIT FEE	15063619320232	0	\$3,345.00
<b>Subtotal for BLD REGULATIONS PERMIT FEES</b>			<b>4,473.51</b>

#### BLDG PLAN CHECK FEES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
PLAN CHECK RESIDENTIAL	15063619320239	0	\$3,144.00
<b>Subtotal for BLDG PLAN CHECK FEES</b>			<b>3,144.00</b>

#### BLDG PLUMBING/ELECTRICAL/MECHANICAL FEES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
PLUMBING NEW CONSTRUCTION	15063619320235	0	\$362.00
MECHANICAL NEW CONSTRUCTION	15063619320243	0	\$276.00
ELECTRICAL NEW CONSTRUCTION	15063619320234	0	\$432.00
<b>Subtotal for BLDG PLUMBING/ELECTRICAL/MECHANICAL FEES</b>			<b>1,070.00</b>

#### CA STATE BUILDING STANDARDS

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
SMIP RESIDENTIAL FEES	150 208812	0	\$20.48
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FEE	15062019340457	0	\$295.31
CAL ADMIN REVOLVING FUND	150 208813	0	\$7.00
<b>Subtotal for CA STATE BUILDING STANDARDS</b>			<b>322.79</b>

#### FD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION-NEW BUILDINGS & TENANT IMPROVEM

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
FDPR-3.2 MINIMUM PLAN REVIEW BASE FEE.	01203022340439	0	\$659.00
<b>Subtotal for FD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION-NEW BUILDINGS &amp; TENANT IMPROVEM</b>			<b>659.00</b>

#### WASTEWATER HOURLY RATES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
WSTW - WASTEWATER CONTRACT/CONSULTANT	40322831320231	1	\$232.00
<b>Subtotal for WASTEWATER HOURLY RATES</b>			<b>232.00</b>

AMOUNT PAID:	_____	.00
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE:	_____	\$9,901.30



**Expiration of Plan Review. Applications for which no permit is issued within 180 days following the date of application shall expire by limitation, and plans and other data submitted for review may thereafter be returned to the applicant or destroyed by the Building Official.**

Fees are assessed in accordance with the provisions set forth in the fee schedule adopted by resolution by the City of Richmond.

Visit <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2503/Master-Fee-Schedule>

The laws of the City of Richmond are codified in its City Charter and Municipal Code, which is comprised of ordinances passed by the City Council.

Visit <https://library.municode.com/ca/richmond>

~ The City of Pride & Purpose ~



# CITY OF RICHMOND

450 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA • RICHMOND, CA 94804  
(510) 620-6868

## INVOICE

### OPTICO DESIGN CASE STUDY B/C ESTIMATE

Permit Number: **ESTIMATE-JJ9**

745 SF DETACHED ADU: \$335.250 VAL

Address:

Invoice Date: January 31, 2025

Permit Tech: JJ2

#### BLD REGULATIONS PERMIT FEES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
TECHNOLOGY FEE	15063619320248	0	\$628.59
OCCUPANCY PROGRAM FEE	15063619340403	0	\$334.50
FILING 2 OR MORE RES ADDS ALL OTHERS	15063619320232	0	\$372.00
COST TO ADMIN SB1473	15063619320232	0	\$1.40
CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY	15063619320232	0	\$126.00
BLDG - BUILDING PERMIT FEE	15063619320232	0	\$3,345.00
<b>Subtotal for BLD REGULATIONS PERMIT FEES</b>			<b>4,807.49</b>

#### BLDG PLAN CHECK FEES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
PLAN CHECK RESIDENTIAL	15063619320239	0	\$3,144.00
<b>Subtotal for BLDG PLAN CHECK FEES</b>			<b>3,144.00</b>

#### BLDG PLUMBING/ELECTRICAL/MECHANICAL FEES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
PLUMBING NEW CONSTRUCTION	15063619320235	0	\$362.00
MECHANICAL NEW CONSTRUCTION	15063619320243	0	\$276.00
ELECTRICAL NEW CONSTRUCTION	15063619320234	0	\$432.00
<b>Subtotal for BLDG PLUMBING/ELECTRICAL/MECHANICAL FEES</b>			<b>1,070.00</b>

#### CA STATE BUILDING STANDARDS

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
SMIP RESIDENTIAL FEES	150 208812	0	\$43.58
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FEE	15062019340457	0	\$628.59
CAL ADMIN REVOLVING FUND	150 208813	0	\$14.00
<b>Subtotal for CA STATE BUILDING STANDARDS</b>			<b>686.17</b>

#### FD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION-NEW BUILDINGS & TENANT IMPROVEM

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
FDPR-3.2 MINIMUM PLAN REVIEW BASE FEE.	01203022340439	0	\$659.00
<b>Subtotal for FD BUILDING CONSTRUCTION-NEW BUILDINGS &amp; TENANT IMPROVEM</b>			<b>659.00</b>

#### WASTEWATER HOURLY RATES

Fee Description	Account	Units	Amount
WSTW - WASTEWATER CONTRACT/CONSULTANT	40322831320231	1	\$232.00
<b>Subtotal for WASTEWATER HOURLY RATES</b>			<b>232.00</b>

AMOUNT PAID:	_____	.00
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE:	_____	\$10,598.66



**Expiration of Plan Review. Applications for which no permit is issued within 180 days following the date of application shall expire by limitation, and plans and other data submitted for review may thereafter be returned to the applicant or destroyed by the Building Official.**

Fees are assessed in accordance with the provisions set forth in the fee schedule adopted by resolution by the City of Richmond.

Visit <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2503/Master-Fee-Schedule>

The laws of the City of Richmond are codified in its City Charter and Municipal Code, which is comprised of ordinances passed by the City Council.

Visit <https://library.municode.com/ca/richmond>

~ The City of Pride & Purpose ~

