



Accessory Dwelling Unit Workshop

Richmond, California

Public Workshop
September 3, 2025



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ADU Toolkit Overview

SECTION

1

What is the purpose of the ADU Toolkit?

Provide resources for Richmond residents to learn about ADUs, including:

- **ADU Guidebook**
- **Pre-Approved ADU plans**





Introduction to ADUs

SECTION

2

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)?

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

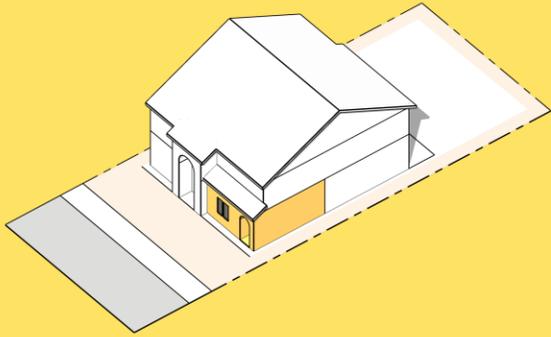


How can ADUs help the Richmond community?

The current production of housing in California is not enough to meet people's needs. **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**. They can deliver the following benefits:

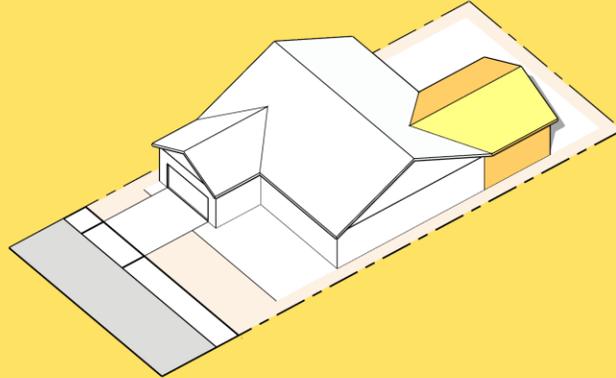
- **Housing Choice.** Adds variety of available housing opening options for independent living and aging in place.
- **Neighborhood Compatibility.** Additional housing in a building form that is compatible with single-family neighborhoods.
- **Livability.** Can provide greater privacy for multi-generational households.
- **Financial Benefits.** Does not require purchase of new land. Opportunity to earn supplemental income for homeowners through long-term rental agreements/programs.

What are the different types of ADUs?



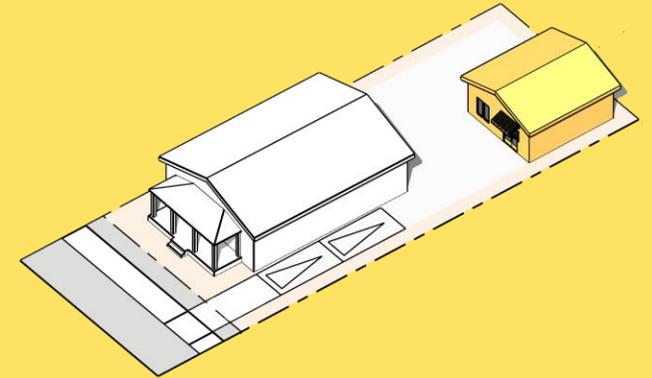
1. Junior ADU

- 500 sf or less
- Entirely contained within a single-family residence
- May have an interior connection and share a bathroom with the primary residence



2. Attached ADU

- Physically attached to the primary building
- Accessible from a separate, dedicated entrance
- May be on first or second floor



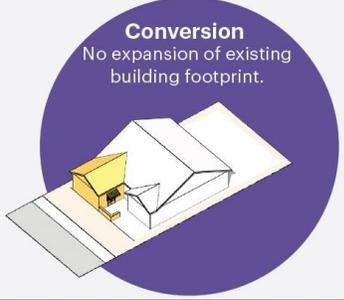
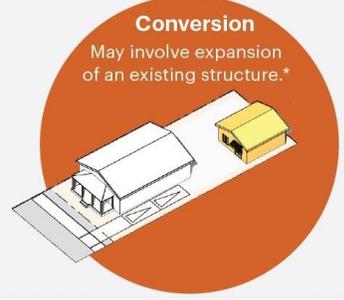
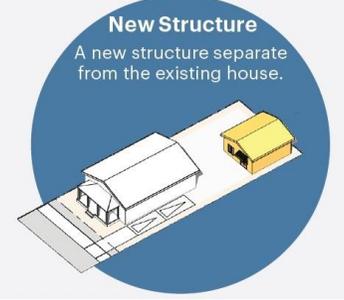
3. Detached ADU

- Physically separate from the primary building
- May be one or two stories

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)
- **Addition** to your primary dwelling
- Building a **new structure**

ADU Type	Construction Options	
1 JADU	Conversion No expansion of existing building footprint. 	
2 Attached ADU	Conversion No expansion of existing building footprint. 	Addition Expansion of existing building footprint. 
	Conversion May involve expansion of an existing structure.* 	New Structure A new structure separate from the existing house. 

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

Can I convert my garage into an ADU?

Yes, you can!

To convert your garage into an ADU you must apply for a permit. As a result of this process, you may be required to upgrade aspects of the structure to bring it up to code.

For more information refer to Design Resource B in the ADU Guidebook.

Design Resource B
Garage Conversions

Getting your garage conversion permitted

You are required to obtain a building permit to change the use of your garage to ADU. The permitting process follows the same development timeline as listed on pages 15-16 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 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
General construction standards (structure, fire safety, electrical, systems, plumbing, ventilation)	RMC Article 8 Building Regulations - Building Code of the City of Richmond
Health and safety	RMC Article 8 Building Regulations - Housing Code
Building envelope energy performance	California Building Energy Efficiency Standards - Title 24
Fire safety	RMC Article 8 Fire - Fire Prevention Code
Zoning, program and design standards	RMC Article 16 Zoning and Subdivision - ADU Ordinance

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

- 1 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**
- 2 Walls**
 - If structural integrity is compromised (especially in earthquake-prone zones), **reinforce studs or add wall bracing**
 - If wall R-value, capacity of insulation within the walls to resist heat flow, does not meet energy code, **add insulation**
- 3 Roof**
 - If additional loads from new mechanical equipment, lighting and finishes compromise structural integrity, **add more structure**
 - If roof R-value does not meet energy code, **add insulation and make sure to ventilate**
- 4 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**
- 5 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)**
- 6 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**

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Can I add an ADU to my multifamily lot?

Yes! Both attached ADUs and detached ADUs can be built on multifamily lots.

How many?

Up to 25% of existing dwelling units (but at least one) for attached ADUs and up to two detached ADUs.

For more information refer to Design Resource C in the ADU Guidebook.

Design Resource C
ADUs on Multifamily lots

Can I have ADUs on a multifamily lot?
Yes! State law SB807 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 can build up to 25% of existing dwelling units and two detached ADUs.

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, so long as they follow ADU standards, do not count towards your lot's density total.
- 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.

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What should I do with my unpermitted ADU?

You can (and should) legalize your unpermitted ADU. Why?

- Health and safety
- Higher property value
- Insurance coverage
- No risk of tenant action

Process to legalize follows similar path as applying for an ADU permit. **For more information refer to Design Resource D in the ADU Guidebook.**

Design Resource D
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.

No risk of tenant action: Tenants may choose to sue if they are renting an unsafe, unpermitted ADU. Legalizing makes it a safer and smoother 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** earlier in this guidebook.
- **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 (8+ 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 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.

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ADU Guidebook

SECTION

3

What is in the ADU Guidebook?

Part A: Overview

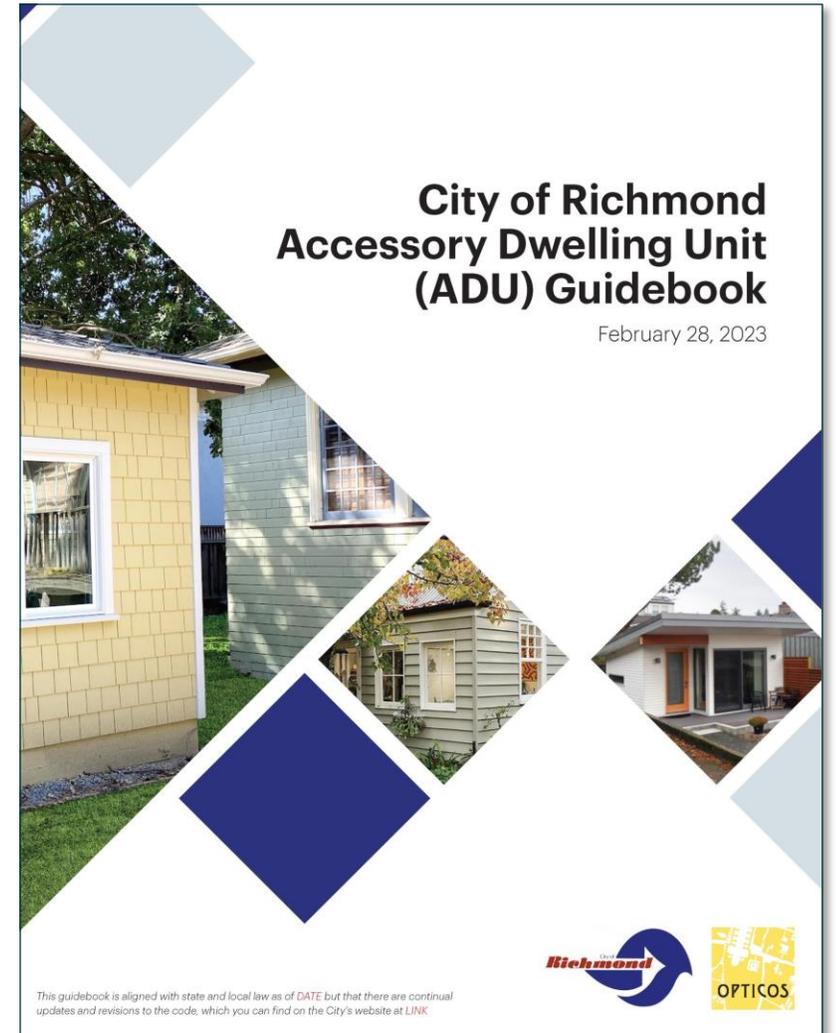
- Introduction
- Options
- Regulations
- Community benefits

Part B: Step-by-Step

- Step-by-step guide to ADU design and permitting in Richmond

Part C: Resources

- Richmond's pre-approved ADU plans
- ADU design resources including garage conversions, legalizing ADUs and ADUs on multifamily lots
- Frequently-asked questions
- Additional resources



Comparison of ADU types

Options Comparison of ADU Types			
	JADU	Attached ADU (Conversion)	Attached ADU (Addition)
Key	Negligible Impact	Lower Impact	Medium Impact Higher Impact
Impact on Cost	 Costs 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.	 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.	 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.
Impact on Primary Dwelling or Multi-Family Unit	 The JADU will occupy space within the primary dwelling and an existing bathroom may be shared with the JADU.	 The ADU will occupy space within the building footprint of the primary dwelling, but will be physically separate from the interior space within the primary dwelling.	 Some space within the primary dwelling may be occupied by the ADU and modification to the primary dwelling may be necessary.
Impact on Yard Space	 No yard space will be used for the JADU, since it is contained entirely within the footprint of the primary dwelling.	 No yard space will be used for the ADU, since it is contained entirely within the footprint of the primary dwelling.	 Some yard space may be used for the addition to the primary dwelling where the ADU will be located.
Impact on Parking	 If an existing garage is converted to a JADU, parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.	 If an existing garage is converted to a ADU, parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.	 Existing parking is not likely to be impacted.
Impact on Privacy	 Shared interior walls and the option to share a bathroom will impact privacy between JADU and primary dwelling.	 Shared interior walls may impact privacy between the ADU and the primary dwelling.	 Shared interior walls may impact privacy between ADU and primary dwelling.

	Detached ADU (Conversion)	Detached ADU (New Construction)
Key	Negligible Impact	Lower Impact Medium Impact Higher Impact
Impact on Cost	 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.	 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.
Impact on Primary Dwelling or Multi-Family Unit	 The ADU is completely separate from the primary dwelling.	 The ADU is completely separate from the primary dwelling.
Impact on Yard Space	 No yard space will be used for the ADU, since it is repurposing an existing accessory structure.	 Yard space will be reduced since a detached ADU will be constructed within the existing yard.
Impact on Parking	 If an existing detached garage is converted to an ADU, parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.	 Existing parking is not likely to be impacted.
Impact on Privacy	 Since the ADU is completely separate from the primary dwelling, visual privacy will be the primary impact depending on location of building openings (e.g. window, door, etc.).	 Since the ADU is completely separate from the primary dwelling, visual privacy will be the primary impact depending on location of building openings (e.g. window, door, etc.).

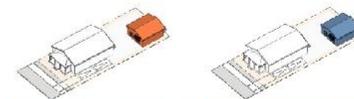
Summary of ADU zoning standards

Regulations

Summary of Zoning Standards for ADUs



	JADU	Attached ADU (Conversion)	Attached ADU (Addition)
Zoning	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.
Location of ADU	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.
Max. # ADUs per Lot	1 JADU per lot ¹	On a lot with a single-family structure: 1 ADU per lot. ¹ On a lot in a multi-family zone, multiple attached ADUs up to 25% of the number of dwelling units create, but at least 1, per lot. Only spaces that were not previously used as livable area may be converted as ADUs.	On a lot with a single-family structure: 1 ADU per lot. ¹ 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.
Min. Lot Size	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)
Max. Floor Area (sq. ft.)	600	No square footage limit unless the conversion includes an expansion over 150 sq ft (for egress or ingress), then same as Attached ADU (Addition)	850 for studio/1 bed and 1000 for 2+ bed
Min. Floor Area (sq. ft.)	150, including bathroom	n/a	n/a
Max. Height (ft)	n/a	n/a	25 or height limit in zoning ordinance applied to primary dwelling (whichever is lower). Cannot exceed 2 stories.
Max. # Stories for Unit	n/a	n/a	n/a
Min. Front Setback (ft)	Same as zone ²	Same as zone ²	Same as zone ²
Min. Side Setback (ft)	Same as existing structure	Same as existing structure	4
Min. Rear Setback (ft)	Same as existing structure	Same as existing structure	4
Max. Total Lot Coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage
Unit Entrance	Separate Unit Entrance Required	Separate Unit Entrance Required	Separate Unit Entrance Required
Parking	None	None	0 or 1 space ⁴
Kitchen	Efficiency Kitchen ⁵	Full Kitchen	Full Kitchen
Bathroom	Full Bathroom or Access to Existing Full Bathroom in Primary Dwelling	Full Bathroom	Full Bathroom
Facilities	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking, Sanitation	Living, Sleeping, Eating, Cooking, Sanitation
Design Standards	n/a	n/a	Exterior design must be consistent with primary dwelling's architectural design including materials, colors, roof slope, doors and windows. ⁶



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

Footnotes

¹JADU and 1 ADU allowed if ADU is a Statewide Exemption ADU (refer to definition on p. 154) or ADU is constructed within existing primary residence up to 1600 sq. ft. expansion.

²Up 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 multi-family residential dwelling. Two additional feet allowed to accommodate a roof pitch that aligns with the roof pitch of the primary dwelling unit.

³Not permitted within any portion of an established front yard, as defined by 189C15.04 SRADU. Except front yard setbacks cannot exceed 10 feet wide. Exemption ADU (up to 600 square feet) and must not unduly constrain the creation of all types of ADUs.

⁴No 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 on-site within a proposed or existing primary dwelling or accessory structure with a net floor area increase, or where on-street parking permits are available 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 constructed from ADU, no replacement of off-street parking is required.

⁵Full kitchen includes of Efficient Kitchen, or U. 38 from current California Building Code.

⁶Exception for Statewide Exemption ADUs (Refer to definition on p. 159)

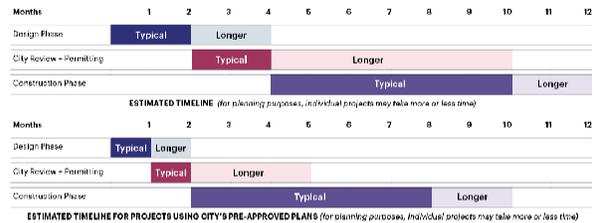
Step-by-step guide to ADUs

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.



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 it be rental?
- 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.

DESIGN PHASE (CONTINUED) (2-4 Months)

Step 2: Design Your ADU

- See the ["ADU Brainstorming Checklist"](#) to identify what type of ADU can fit on your lot.
- Decide what type of ADU you want to build.
- See ["Summary of Zoning Standards for ADUs"](#) to review the development standards for ADUs.
- Work with an architect, designer, design/build contractor or pre-fabricated ADU vendor as needed to **develop and finalize ADU design**. Contact: (510) 620-6990 - Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units in the Richmond Municipal Code and applicable City, State and Federal building codes.
- 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.
- 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 will be subject to impact fees.
- 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@richmond.ca.us (510) 620-6996
 - Building:** permits@richmond.ca.us (510) 620-6866
 - Engineering:** engineering@richmond.ca.us (510) 307-8091

Step 3: Evaluate Budget

- Develop a **cost estimate**, working with your architect, designer, design/build contractor or pre-fabricated ADU vendor as needed.
- Note that constructing an ADU may increase your property taxes due to a higher assessed property value.
- Utility bills such as electricity, gas, water, sewer, and trash may increase as a result of an ADU.
- It may be necessary to **refine the ADU design** created in Step 2 based on available budget.
- Secure funding** to fund the development of the desired ADU(s).

Continue to **Step 4**

CITY REVIEW + PERMITTING PHASE (2-8 Months)

Step 4: Prepare and Submit Permit Application

- Finalize building design and **prepare construction plans** for review by the City's Community Development Department.
- Obtain a building permit.** Submit your permit application through the City's online permitting portal, [eTrack](#) or in person at the permit center.
 - Scan the QR code or click the link above and select Apply for New Application under Permit Application
 - Register for a free account under Public Login
 - Submit all required documents and pay online via **credit** or **debit** card
- Pay fees. See ["Accessory Dwelling Unit Fees"](#) to determine fee amounts owed.
 - Pay Building Permit Fee upon permit issuance
 - Pay Impact and/or Engineering fees w/ permit issuance.
- 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

- With your building permits issued, you can **start construction of your ADU!**
- Your contractor or pre-fabricated ADU vendor will need to schedule **inspections** as required.
- Final Inspection and Occupancy Permit** is required to move in and use the space.
- Pay **Impact Fees** if not paid at permit issuance in Step 4.

Step 6: Move into Your ADU!

- Building occupancy is allowed only after final inspection is complete.
- If renting the ADU, fulfill landlord obligations for habitable premises per California Civil Code §1941.
- Perform regular maintenance of ADU as needed.

Design Resources

A. ADU Brainstorm Checklist

B. Garage Conversions

C. ADUs on Multifamily Lots

D. Legalizing Unpermitted ADUs

Design Resource A
ADU Brainstorming Checklist

- Determine number and type of ADUs allowed**
What is the primary structure on your lot?
 Single-family house: You may have a Statewide Exemption ADU. See [link].
 Multi-family structure: You may have up to [number] ADUs, one for each of the number of dwelling units it (which can be attached to each).
- Measure backyard**
(If you're building an attached ADU or a detached ADU)
Yard width = _____
Yard depth = _____
- Determine ADU location**
An ADU cannot be located within a setback unless it is through the corner of a recent fire report or reach out to the appropriate locations of any public utility setbacks: one 4 ft and a detached ADU structure, to determine buildable areas your backyard dimensions.
Buildable width: _____ 8 ft _____
Buildable depth: _____ 9 ft _____

Design Resource B
Garage Conversions

Getting your garage conversion permitted

You are required to obtain a building permit to change the use of your property. The permitting process follows the same development timeline as listed on the permit application. Pre-construction inspections are required. Floor plans need to show the configuration as well as how the proposed portion will conform to the requirements. However, you will not have to provide any replacement of the ADU to the existing footprint regardless of floor area maximums.

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 building codes organized by topic and a list of commonly required upgrades to help inform what you will need.

Topic	Code	Services
General construction standards (structure, fire safety, electrical systems, plumbing, ventilation)	RMC Article 9 Building Regulations Building Code of the City of Richmond	
Health and safety	RMC Article 8 Building Regulations Housing Code	
Building envelope/energy performance	California Building Energy Efficiency Standards - Title 24	
Fire safety	RMC Article 11 Fire - Fire Prevention Code	
Zoning, program and design standards	RMC Article 16 Zoning and Subdivision ADU Ordinance	
Utility Requirements	IRC 2021 Regulations	PG&E Requirements

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.

Design Resource C
ADUs on Multifamily lots

Can I have ADUs on a multifamily lot?

Yes! State law SB889 allows both attached ADUs and detached ADUs on multifamily lots.

How many?

- If you have a duplex, triplex, or fourplex you can build one attached and one detached ADU.
- If you have a multifamily unit with 4 or more units you can build up to 4 detached units and two detached ADUs.

Where?

- Detached ADUs can be built in available rear yard so long as they are 5 feet 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 assigned to existing residential dwelling units in the multifamily structure. On multifamily dwelling units is minimal since ADUs cannot be built in areas, spaces typically converted to ADUs are unoccupied storage in multifamily structures.

Are there any multifamily specific standards?

Yes, here are some things to keep in mind:

- ADUs added to your property, so long as they follow ADU standards, your lots comply total.
- A **multistory**, multifamily dwelling is allowed a height increase to 75 feet.
- If adding an attached ADU to a multifamily structure that has setbacks are not required to update the building to meet code.
- Adding an ADU to your multifamily lot cannot trigger a requirement to install in existing multifamily dwelling.

Standards listed previously in this document and in Richmond Municipal Code are also applicable to multifamily structures.

Design Resource D
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.

No risk of tenant action: Tenants may choose to sue if they are renting an unsafe, unpermitted ADU. Legalizing makes it a safer and smoother process to lease and earn income from your ADU.

Process to legalize

- 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 requirements to be considered a safe, legal unit? See zoning and program requirements earlier in this guidebook.
 - 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.



Pre-Approved ADU Plans

SECTION

4

What is a pre-approved ADU plan?

- **Completed building designs already approved** by the planning and building departments for use on suitable sites
- **Saves money and time**
- The plan is **available for free** to Richmond residents, **saving you design fees**
- You save time with an **accelerated permitting process**
- **If your lot is suitable, complete a site plan** to show where the ADU fits on your site



What kinds of plans are available?

Four styles have been developed for detached ADUs. The program (size and number of rooms) is based the most common kinds of detached ADUs recently constructed in Richmond.

- **1-bedroom, 1 bathroom;
400-450 sf**
- **2-bedroom, 1 bathroom;
700-750 sf**





Thank you!

Any questions?