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Accessory Dwelling Unit Defined

An accessory dwelling unit, or ADU, is a second residential dwelling located on the same property as another home. An ADU can be located within or added to the main house, or it can be located within a separate accessory structure (e.g., garage) on the property. In all cases, an ADU is built and used as a complete, independent residential dwelling. In Longmont, if three or more of the following are present, the structure or portion of a structure will be considered an ADU and will need to be permitted as such: separate entrance, cooking facilities, sanitary facilities, and/or separate heat and ventilation.

Importance of Accessory Dwelling Units

ADUs play a vital role in helping communities meet their housing goals by offering a flexible, cost-effective way to increase the supply of housing within existing neighborhoods. By utilizing existing lots, ADUs provide opportunities for infill development without the need for large-scale infrastructure expansion or new land consumption.

ADUs support housing diversity, allowing for more affordable options for renters, multigenerational families, and aging residents who wish to remain in their communities. They can also contribute to more sustainable urban development by reducing sprawl, promoting walkability, and optimizing the use of existing utilities and services.

Can I build an Accessory Dwelling Unit on My Property?

Yes, if you meet the following requirements. To apply for a permit to construct an ADU, you must:

1. Provide proof of Longmont residency. At the time of application, the applicant must provide the following documentation to prove residency in the City of Longmont:
 - a. A valid Colorado driver's license or a valid Colorado state identification card
 - b. At least two of the following additional documents:
 - i. Proof of motor vehicle registration
 - ii. Proof of voter registration
 - iii. Federal or state tax returns or other financial documentation
 - iv. A utility bill
2. Own a detached home in the City of Longmont that was legally permitted at the time of construction. Zone districts that allow ADUs include Rural Residential (R-RU), Residential- Single Family (R-SF), Residential- Mixed Neighborhood (R-MN), Residential- Multifamily (R-MF), Mixed Use- Downtown (MU-D), and Nonresidential- Agricultural (N-AG). Please refer to Table 15.04.020 in the Land Development Code for a list of all zone districts that allow ADUs as an accessory use.

Accessory Dwelling Units and HOAs

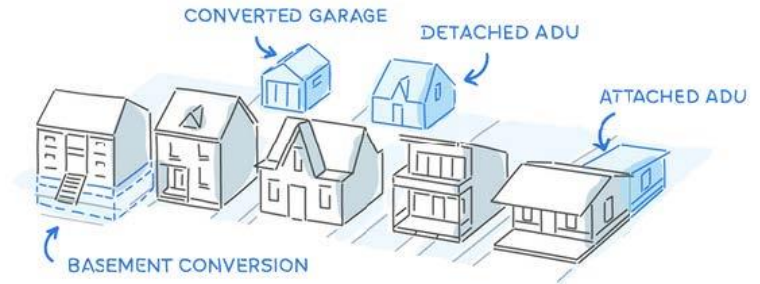
Homeowners in HOA communities should be aware that HOAs can no longer prohibit ADUs and any HOA covenants prohibiting ADUs are now unenforceable. It is recommended that homeowners submit ADU plans for HOA review and approval prior to application submittal. This optional review and approval must be based on reasonable standards and cannot be used to restrict a code-compliant ADU. If you have received HOA approval, please submit this approval with your permit application.

General Criteria for Accessory Dwelling Units

ADUs are considered an accessory use and are regulated by the City's Land Development Code. See Sections 15.04.040 and 15.02.080.E for information on standards applicable to ADUs.

1. Location and Use

- Permitted as accessory to a single detached dwelling (i.e., "main house")
- May be integrated into or added onto the main house or located in a detached, accessory structure such as a garage
- The accessory dwelling unit shall be located on the same lot as the main house
- Mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and travel trailers cannot be used for accessory dwelling units
- If the principal structure is a designated historic landmark, further Historic Preservation approval will be required.



2. Number and Size

- One accessory dwelling unit is allowed on a lot, in addition to the main house
- Regardless of the principal dwelling's size, an ADU may total up to 800 square feet
- An ADU may be larger than 800 square feet if the proposed ADU does not exceed 50% of the finished, above-ground floor area of the principal dwelling (i.e., "main house")
- The total floor area of all accessory structures, including ADUs, shall not exceed 75% of the total floor area of the principal structure
- If an ADU is proposed as part of a garage structure- such as above, adjacent to, or integrated within the garage, the entire square footage of the garage and the ADU will be counted towards ADU square footage. This means that the combined area of the garage and habitable ADU space must not exceed 800 square feet, or 50% of the finished, above-ground floor areas of the principal dwelling, whichever is greater.
- If an ADU is integrated with or attached to the principal dwelling, the square footage of the ADU does not count toward the accessory structure square footage limit, which is capped at 75% of the principal dwellings above-ground floor area. This exemption only applies to attached or internal ADUs, and not to detached ADUs.
- If the ADU is located in an existing basement, the size restriction does not apply.

3. Height

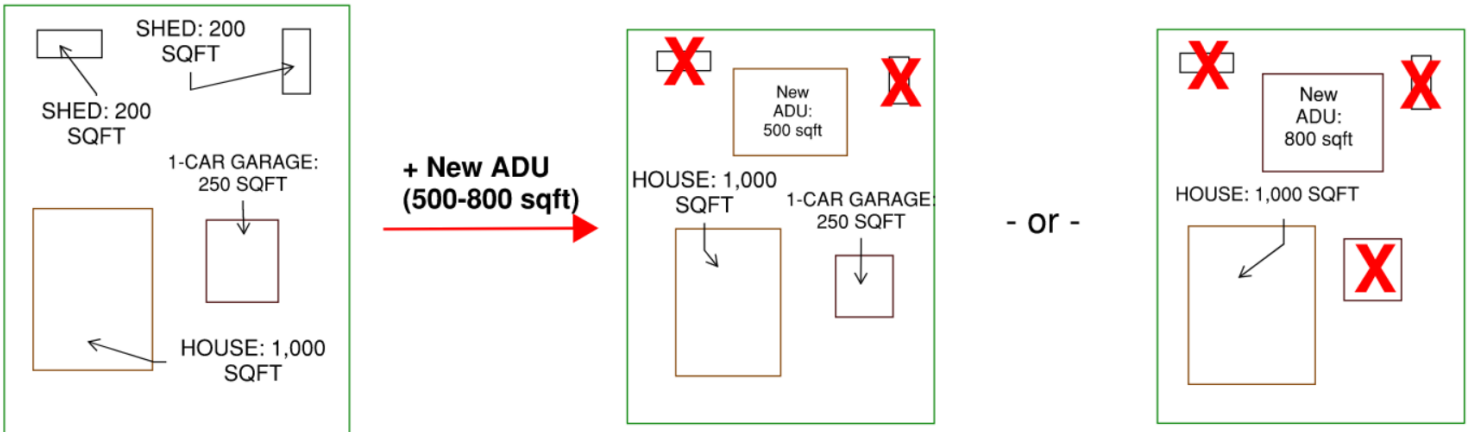
- An accessory dwelling unit located in a detached structure cannot exceed the height of the main house

4. ADU Access to Public Right-of-Way

- A three-foot sidewalk connection made of concrete, or similar all-weather material must link the ADU entrance to the adjacent public sidewalk.
 - If the principal dwelling does not front a public street or have an adjacent public sidewalk, the owner must construct a sidewalk connection from the public access point to the ADU entrance.
- If the ADU entrance is not visible from the public right-of-way, the owner must install wayfinding signage to guide public safety personnel to the unit entrance.

5. Accessory Structure Compliance and Removal Requirement

- When proposing a new ADU, applicants must account for the square footage of all existing accessory structures on the property. If the combined floor area of the new ADU and existing accessory structures exceeds 75% of the floor area of the principal dwelling, one or more existing accessory structures may need to be removed, reduced in size or modified to bring the property into compliance.
- Accessory Structure Compliance will be evaluated during the building permit review process. Applicants must provide accurate square footage calculations and site plans to avoid delays or required revisions.



6. Setbacks

- **New Detached ADU:** A new detached ADU needs to comply with the following setbacks from property lines:
 - **Front:** ADUs shall not be located closer to the front property line than the principal dwelling unit
 - **Rear:** 5 feet
 - **Side:** 5 feet
 - For multiple frontage lots, including corner lots, the ADU may be located closer to the front property line than the principal dwelling unit as long as the ADU meets the setback requirements that are applicable to principal structures in the underlying zone district. All sides of the lot with street frontage shall comply with applicable front setback requirements.
- **ADUs located in Existing Detached Structure:** An accessory dwelling unit located in an existing detached structure (e.g., garage) does not have to meet new setback standards, unless the structure is expanded.
- **Attached ADU:** An accessory dwelling unit that is attached or integrated into the main house needs to meet the following setbacks from property lines:
 - **Front:** Attached ADUs shall not be located closer to the front property line than the principal structure and must meet principal dwelling setbacks
 - **Rear:** 5 feet
 - **Side:** 5 feet

7. Limit on Sale, Tenancy and Occupancy

- a. Accessory dwelling units shall not be sold separately from the principal dwelling
- b. Accessory dwelling units may not be leased or rented for tenancies of less than 30 days (No short-term rentals allowed)

8. Parking

- a. An accessory dwelling unit shall not provide more than two off street parking spaces and is not required to provide any off-street parking, unless the property does not have any existing off-street parking spaces or is located on a block where;
 - i. The property has no public street frontage,

- ii. Takes vehicular access from an alley, or
- iii. On-street parking is prohibited for any reason including ensuring access for emergency services. In these instances, a minimum of 1 new parking space is required.

9. Cost Overview

- a. Fees for ADUs vary depending on the specific project and will be calculated through the building permit process. Fees paid to the city typically range from \$5,000 - \$10,000 and include plan review and permit fees, City and County taxes and a number of community investment fees. The costs associated with an ADU are generally 65% less than constructing a new single-family home.

Once you've decided that building an ADU is the right choice for you, use the process steps and submittal checklists on the following pages to start the ADU planning, review and approval process.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Process Steps

STEP 1

Review Submittal Checklist Below and Start Compiling Required Documents

Before submitting your ADU application to the City of Longmont, carefully review the submittal checklist to ensure you understand what is required. Begin compiling the necessary documents, including site plans, floor plans, and engineered drawings. A complete and accurate submittal will help streamline the review process and avoid potential delays.

STEP 2

If You Have Questions, Reach Out to The Applicable Department for Assistance and Clarification

If you have any questions about ADU standards, building codes, mandatory documents, required utility infrastructure, emergency services or the application process, don't hesitate to contact the City of Longmont. All city staff are here to help. Please use the contact information below to contact specific departments to discuss ADU requirements and information. City staff can provide guidance to help ensure your plans meet local codes and requirements before you submit. Reaching out early can save time and help avoid costly revisions later in the process.

Building Services: building.inspection@longmontcolorado.gov / 303-651-8332

Planning: longmont.planning@longmontcolorado.gov / 303-651-8330

Public Works: Josh.Sherman@longmontcolorado.gov / 303-651-8626

Emergency Services: marc.sampson@longmontcolorado.gov / 303-651-8434

Longmont Power and Communications: LPC@longmontcolorado.gov / 303-651-8386

STEP 3

Submit Your Building Permit Application

Once you've compiled all required documents and confirmed that your plans meet the City of Longmont's ADU standards, you're ready to submit your building permit application. Applications can be submitted directly to the Building Department at building.inspection@longmontcolorado.gov or in person at the Development Services Center located at 385 Kimbark Street, Longmont, Colorado. Make sure all materials are complete to help ensure a smooth and timely review process.

STEP 4

Plan Check, Review, Revisions and Resubmittal

After an ADU application is submitted, it enters the Plan Check phase. During this step, city departments, including Public Works, Building, Planning, LPC and Emergency Services review the submitted plans to ensure they comply with all applicable building codes, zoning regulations, and safety standards. If any issues or discrepancies are identified, the applicant will receive comments outlining the required changes. The applicant or their design professional must then revise the plans accordingly and resubmit them for further review. This back-and-forth process may occur multiple times until all requirements are met. Once the plans are approved, the project can move forward to the permitting stage, and a building permit will be issued.

STEP 5

Pay All Required Fees and Receive Building Permit to Construct your ADU

After your application has been reviewed and approved, you will receive your building permit from the City of Longmont. This permit authorizes you to begin construction on your ADU in accordance with the approved plans. Be sure to have approved plans on-site and follow all inspection requirements throughout the building process to remain in compliance with city regulations.

Submittal Checklist for Accessory Dwelling Units

The submittal materials required for your Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) vary depending on the type of ADU you plan to construct. Different ADU types have specific design, zoning, and permitting requirements that influence the documentation and plans you'll need to provide. Please see submittal requirements for each type below.

Detached ADU:

- Proof of Residency
- Engineered, stamped foundation plan and shear wall design
- Detailed framing information
- Architectural Drawings
- Energy Compliance Path
- Manual J, Manual D, Manual S
- Soils Report
- Survey/ ILC showing existing structures and all property lines
- Site sketch showing existing structures, proposed structures, drainage, grading and all property lines
 - Example site sketch worksheet provided below
- Square footage/ footprint of the primary structure on the property
- Total number and square footage/ footprint of existing accessory structures on the property
- Documentation that applicable school fees have been paid
 - For questions about this requirement, please contact Ryan Kragerud at Kragerud_ryan@svvdsd.org or 303-682-7317
- HOA Approval, not required but strongly recommended

Interior Remodel/ Basement Finish ADU:

- Proof of Residency
- Description/ scope of work
- Existing and proposed layouts
 - Drawings must show the entire basement layout, with rooms labeled and the dimensions of each room provided, including unfinished areas
- Asbestos testing report, required if there will be demolition totaling greater than 32 square feet
- Underdrain Variance Application, if sump pit installed
- Documentation that applicable school fees have been paid
 - For questions about this requirement, please contact Ryan Kragerud at Kragerud_ryan@svvdsd.org or 303-682-7317
- HOA Approval, not required but strongly recommended

Addition to Existing House for ADU:

- Proof of Residency
- Engineered, stamped foundation plan, shear wall design and detailed framing information
- Architectural Plans
- Energy Compliance Path
- Survey/ ILC showing existing structures and all property lines
- Site sketch showing existing structures, proposed structures, drainage, grading and all property lines
 - Example site sketch worksheet provided below
- Asbestos testing report, required if there will be demolition totaling greater than 32 square feet
- Soils Report
- Underdrain Variance Application, if sump pit installed
- Documentation that applicable school fees have been paid
 - For questions about this requirement, please contact Ryan Kragerud at Kragerud_ryan@svvdsd.org or 303-682-7317
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