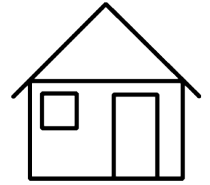


March 2019

NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

Community Development

Accessory Dwelling Units—ADUs



ADUs are a second dwelling located on a lot where a home already exists. They have been permitted in Northfield since 2012, but few have been built.

ADUs are permitted in a structure that is separate (detached) from the existing home, so long as it's the upstairs portion of a garage. More detail about the current policy is available on the next page.

Why Changes Are Being Considered:

In 2018, the Northfield City Planning Commission evaluated why more ADU's were not being developed in the City, and identified options for expanding this housing choice in the community. Guided by the City's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan, the evaluation identified several factors limiting some property owners from pursuing ADU's. Those include:

- Limited rental licenses within some areas of the City, limits this option in those areas of the City;
- Building Area Ratio limits lot coverage to 30% max., making this option difficult to accommodate in many locations;
- Current policy requires an ADU be part of a garage, which makes it more difficult to consider single level homes accessible to people of all abilities and seniors;
- Some properties do not have an option for a detached garage due to lot size or configuration;
- Converting a garage, or portion of a garage, to a dwelling can be more difficult to meet the Building code than if a new stand alone structure.
- Current aesthetic requirements of the code add costs
- The current requirement to add parking for an ADU is not always feasible, and can be too expensive, or not needed

There is a strong need for housing units in Northfield, and different avenues will need to be explored to add housing stock to the community.

City Council Considering Policy Changes

The Northfield City Council is considering changes to the ADU policies. Changes could relax some requirements, creating more opportunities for building ADU's in the City. Several public hearings have been held on this topic, including the most recent at the February 12, 2019 City Council meeting.

Several alternatives are under consideration, and will be discussed at the April 9, 2019 Council work session. After that, the Council will make a determination on the pending changes.

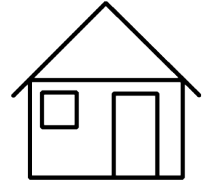
The Northfield City Council will discuss this topic at a work session on April 9, 2019

March 2019

NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

Community Development

Summary of Current Policy



Currently, ADU's are permitted in a structure that is separate (detached) from the existing home, so long as a portion of the structure is a garage. **Current policy includes the following requirements for ADU's.**

Setbacks

- Can not be located within a front yard,
- Must maintain a front and corner side setbacks at least as great as the setback of the principal building,
- Must maintain a 5 foot min. separation from other accessory structures, and 10 min. separation from the principal building (home)

Size and Height Limits

- Detached garages will not exceed 18 feet in height, or 24 feet in height if the structure includes an accessory dwelling unit.
- An ADU may have a footprint of 864 square feet and a height of 24 feet, which allows a floor area of 1728 square feet, but part of it must be a garage. (Height is measured at the midpoint of a pitched roof.)

Additional Standards

- ADUs must provide an extra parking space and structures are included in calculating the Building Area Ratio (lot coverage) of the property.
- ADUs can currently be rented by the owner of the property if *a rental license is available*.
- Only one accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted on a lot, and the unit is included in the maximum number of allowable dwelling units on a property;
- Property must be a minimum of 8,000 square feet;
- ADU's must contain separate kitchen and bathroom facilities

Past communications and public process on this topic includes:

- * Item considered by the Planning Commission as an agenda item on:
 - 7/19/18
 - 8/23/18
 - 10/18/18
 - 11/15/18 – published Public Hearing
 - 1/1/19

- * Housing and Redevelopment Authority agenda item 11/27/18
- * Included in Administrator's Memo on 9/21/18 and 11/16/18
- * Discussed at multiple meetings of Age Friendly Northfield and Affordable Housing Task Force
- * Seven articles in Northfield News (Feb 12 & Jan 10, 2019, Nov 20, 13, Aug 30, Jun 26, 2018, & Dec 23, 2017)
- * City Council agenda 2/5/19; 2/12/19

Variables to Consider



Since the introduction of the ordinance recommend by the Planning Commission, several alternate policy options were considered by the City Council. Alternates A-D, plus one introduced by a Council member, were considered by the City Council on February 12, 2019.

- A. **Staff Recommended:** Does not exempt ADUs from the 20% rental restriction, or the owner occupied requirement. Staff will work on a more broad review of the rental ordinance related to these issues for future consideration.
 - B. **Alternate Staff Recommended:** Does not exempt ADUs from the 20% rental restriction, but does remove the provision for owner occupied requirement. Staff will work on a more broad review of the rental ordinance related to these issues for future consideration.
 - C. **Planning Commission Recommended:** Exempts ADUs from the 20% rental restriction and the rental parking requirement, and allows rental properties to add an ADU.
 - D. **Original First Reading Adopted:** Not recommended for adoption due to necessary clarifications.
- Councilor Grabau Option:** Similar to “C” as it Exempts ADUs from the 20% rental restriction and the rental parking requirement. Is different in that the rental is subject to the primary unit being owner occupied.

The City Council wished to have additional time to consider the policy options, and also expressed interest in discussing other items listed in the section below. They will discuss these items during their work session on April 9, 2019.

Variables to Consider



Additional variables to consider include:

Parking: is currently required for residential development, including ADU's. Not requiring additional parking for an ADU could add flexibility to use existing parking or on-street parking if needed.

Whether or not to require parking for ADUs is a policy consideration.

Size/Scale: currently, an ADU may have a footprint of 864 square feet and a height of 24 feet, allowing a floor area of 1,728 square feet, as long as it is part of a garage. Allowing a stand alone ADU (not part of a garage) is being considered. There has been policy discussion about whether an ADU should be required to be smaller than the existing dwelling, whether to limit the total sq. ft. or whether to only limit the footprint and height.

Lot Coverage: Currently, there is a lot coverage limit of 30%. Whether ADUs should be exempt from the maximum lot coverage is being considered. Another option would be to modify the maximum lot coverage for properties with ADUs to make it more flexible, yet ensure greenspace/open areas by applying a different maximum to these lots.

Design, materials, and/or colors: Current policy requires ADUs meet general compatibility, and be complimentary to the primary dwelling. To make it easier to incorporate ADUs onto properties, removing this requirement is being considered.

Rental/Owner Occupancy: The current rental ordinance restricts some areas of the City to no more than 20% rental within a block. The Council could consider modifying this policy to suspended the 20% limit when there is owner occupancy of one of the dwellings on the lot. Removing this requirement could also be considered.