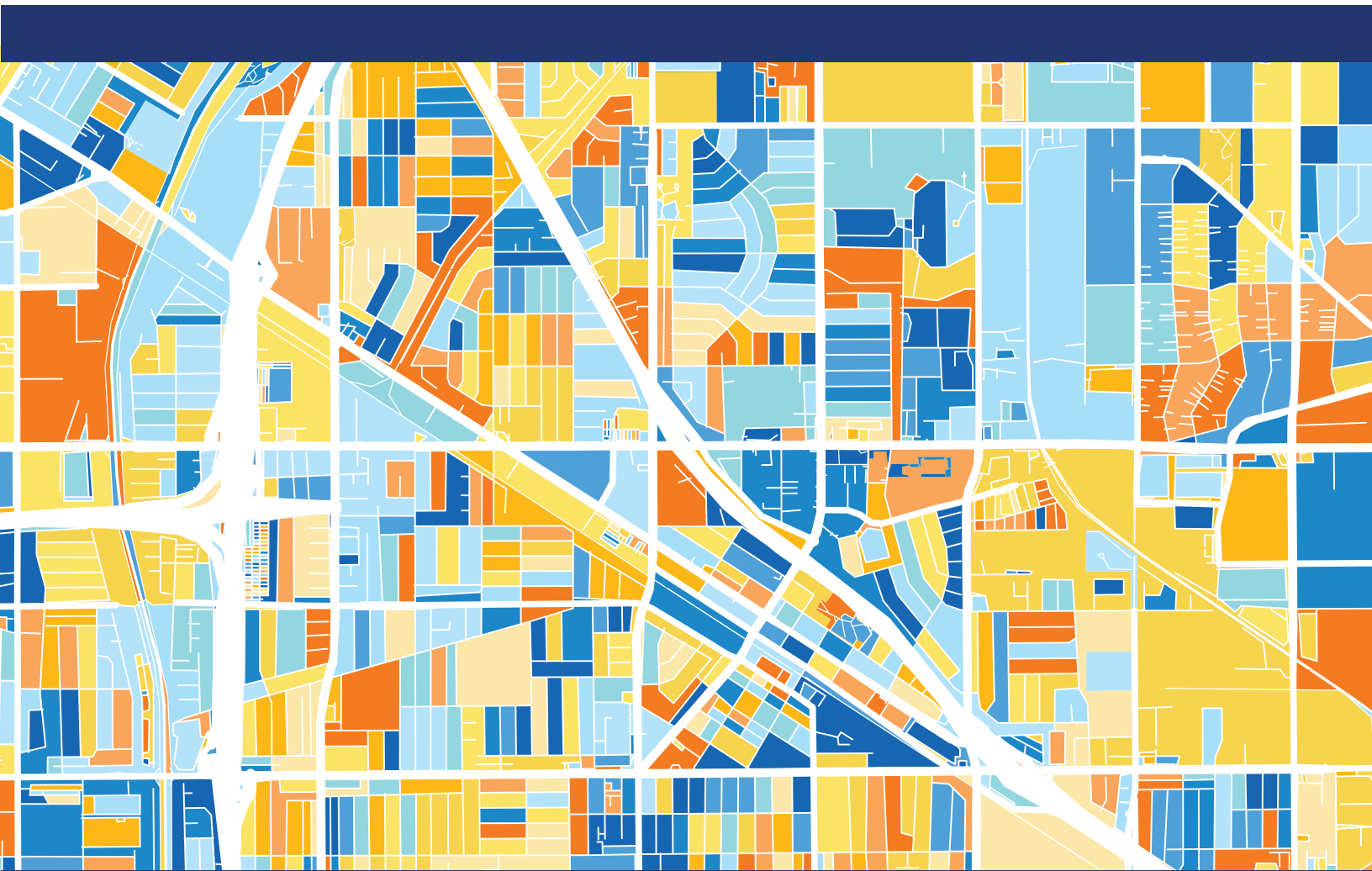




# RESOURCE GUIDE FOR

## Accessory Dwelling Units



PLAN | DESIGN | REVIEW | BUILD

## **1** ADUs in Norwalk

**Pages 3-4**

- ☐ Definition and Benefits
- ☐ City Resources
- ☐ Types of ADUs

## **2** Design & Planning

**Pages 5-12**

- ☐ ADU Quick Facts
- ☐ Terms to Know
- ☐ Attached ADUs
- ☐ Detached ADUs
- ☐ Junior ADUs
- ☐ Multi-Family ADUs

## **3** Process, Permits, & Resources

**Pages 13-16**

- ☐ ADU Process & Timeline
- ☐ Applying for ADU Approval
- ☐ Frequently Asked Questions

# ADUs in Norwalk



## ADU Benefits & Definition

The City of Norwalk and State legislature recognize the housing challenges facing California families, created in part by insufficient housing stock and the high costs of living. Over the last several years, new policies have been adopted to promote the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units, also referred to as ADUs. Regulatory relief has made building ADUs even more affordable and are an important strategy to keep pace with the housing demand. ADUs and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs) can often be built at a fraction of the price of a new single-family home, and homeowners may use their existing lot to create additional housing.

### What is an ADU?

An ADU is accessory to a primary residence and has complete independent living facilities for one or more persons. An ADU may be attached or detached from the primary residence or converted from existing space.

### What is a JADU?

A specific type of conversion of existing space that is contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family residence.

This guidebook was created to assist homeowners with the review process for ADUs and ultimately to support Norwalk's goals for creating more affordable housing options.

## City Resources

**City Website:** [www.norwalk.org](http://www.norwalk.org)

**Planning Division Website:**

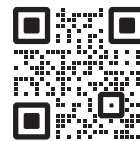
[www.norwalk.org/departments\\_services/community\\_development/planning\\_and\\_zoning.php](http://www.norwalk.org/departments_services/community_development/planning_and_zoning.php)

**Email ADU Questions to:** [planning@norwalkca.gov](mailto:planning@norwalkca.gov)

**Zoning Map & Zoning Code available on Planning Division website.**

### More information:

Please scan this QR code to visit the Planning Division ADU website



# Types of ADUs

ADUs and JADUs may be designed in various configurations. Prior to preparing a design, read below about the various types of ADUs, since each type has specific development standards. Below is a summary of each type of ADU. The development standards for each type will be detailed in later pages.

## Attached ADU

An independent living unit attached to the primary structure. Two sub-types of attached ADUs are:

### Attached ADU Additions

Additional square footage added to a primary structure, creating an independent living unit.

### Attached ADU Conversions

Space such as a garage or master bedroom that is converted into an independent living unit.

## Detached ADU

An independent living unit separated from the primary structure. Two sub-types of detached ADUs are:

### New Detached ADUs

Construction of a new accessory structure, creating an independent living unit.

### Detached ADU Conversions

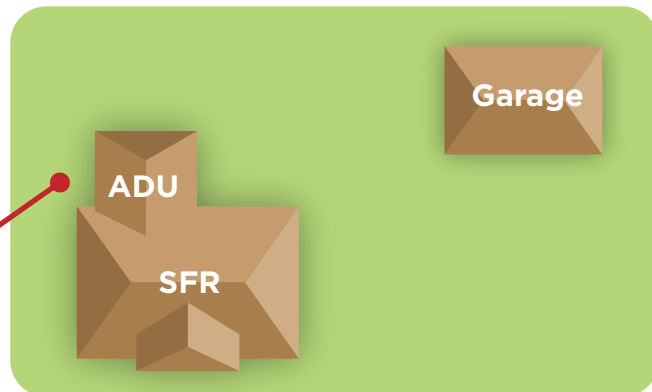
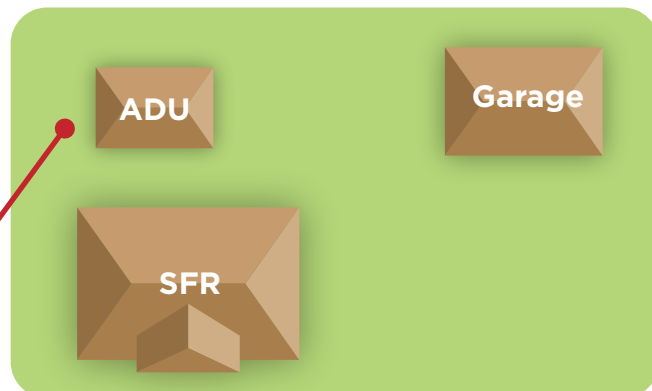
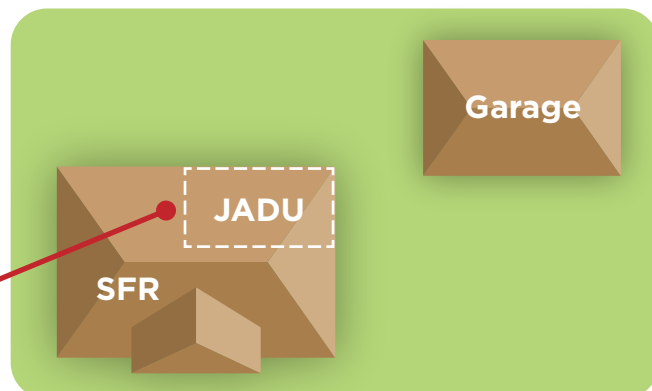
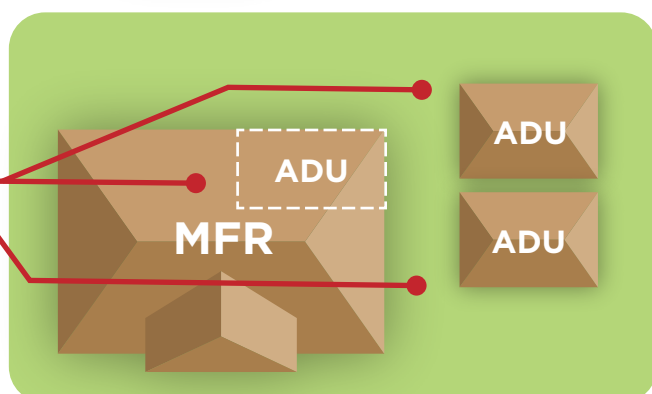
Existing accessory structure that is converted into an independent living unit such as a detached garage.

## Junior ADU

A Junior ADU (JADU) is a type of existing space conversion that is contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family residence and limited to 500 sq. ft. in size.

## Multi-Family ADU

An attached or detached ADU on a multi-family property. Junior ADUs are not allowed within multi-family developments.





## ADU Quick Facts

- ☐ ADUs may be built within existing or proposed single-family or multi-family developments.
- ☐ Permits, costs, and timelines for ADU construction depend on the complexity of the ADU design.
- ☐ ADUs shall not be used for short-term or vacation rentals (less than 30 days).
- ☐ ADUs may be rented separate from the primary residence.
- ☐ Up to two detached ADUs are allowed on multi-family lots.
- ☐ For a JADU, the property owner must occupy either the primary dwelling unit or the JADU. ADUs do not have owner occupancy requirements.
- ☐ ADUs up to 800 square feet, 16 feet in height, and with no more than 4 foot rear and side setbacks must be allowed in all local jurisdictions statewide.
- ☐ New construction ADUs that are physically separated from the primary dwelling unit (detached ADUs) can be combined on the same single family lot with a JADU.

### Off-Street Parking Requirements



**One space is required per dwelling unit.**

**Unless one of the following conditions apply:**



The ADU is a garage conversion.

**OR**



ADU is located within 1/2 mile walking distance of public transit stop.

# Terms to Know



## Residential Zones

Standards like setbacks, height, and floor area are dependent on the residential zone and can be found generally in the Norwalk Municipal Code [Title 17- Zoning](#).



## Existing Garage

Some existing garages are located within the setback area, these existing structures can be converted to an ADU without having to comply with setback requirements.

## Primary Dwelling

The main house on the property to which the ADU or JADU is secondary.

## Property Line

The outer boundary of your land that determines where setbacks for ADU construction begin.

## Setbacks

A setback is the minimum distance a building or structure needs to be located away from the property line. Required setbacks vary between the front, side and rear yards per ADU type and zoning ordinance. Please review the ADU setback requirements on the following pages.

## Exempt ADU

An Exempt ADU is a type of ADU that property owners may build by state law, provided they meet the specific minimum requirements set forth by state regulations. These requirements vary depending on the type of ADU.

## Major Transit Stop

A site includes any of the following: a rail or bus rapid transit station, a ferry terminal served by bus or rail transit service, or an intersection of two or more major bus routes with a service frequency of 20 minutes or less during peak morning and afternoon commute periods.

## High-Quality Transit Corridor

A corridor with fixed-route bus service operating at intervals of no longer than 15 minutes during peak morning and afternoon commute hours.

# Attached ADUs

## What is an Attached ADU?

Attached ADUs are units that share at least one wall with the primary dwelling. There are two main project types:

**1. Convert a space within an existing house or an attached garage (conversion)**

**2. Addition to an existing home (new construction)**

## Attached Garage Conversion

An attached garage ADU conversion involves transforming an existing garage that is physically connected to the primary dwelling into a fully functional ADU. This process typically includes modifications such as adding insulation, plumbing, electrical systems, and interior finishes to create a separate living space. Since the garage is already part of the main structure, this type of ADU conversion can be more cost-effective and require fewer structural changes compared to detached units.

An expansion of 150 SF is may be allowed for the purpose of ingress and egress.

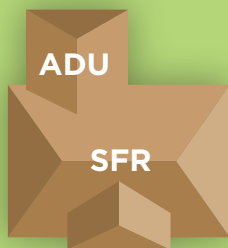
### New Construction

Garage



Before

Garage



After

### Conversion



Before



After

# Attached ADU Requirements

## Max Height

- ☐ **Maximum Building Height**  
Shall not exceed 25 feet.

## Setbacks

- ☐ **Front Setback**  
Determined by zoning. Please review your property's zone district and zoning ordinance for front setback requirements.
- ☐ **Side and Rear Setbacks**  
4 feet from property lines (conversions of existing detached garages may be reduced to less than 4 feet).

## Dwelling Size

- ☐ **Floor Area of Attached ADU**  
Allowed up to 50% of the size of the existing primary dwelling. Yet per State ADU Law, ADUs of at least 850 square feet (or at least 1,000 square feet for ADUs with more than one bedroom) must be allowed.
- ☐ **Number of ADUs Allowed**  
One attached ADU allowed on single-family lot.

## Parking & Circulation

- ☐ **One Off-Street Parking Space Required**  
See special conditions for eliminating parking requirements on Page 5.
- ☐ **No Passageway Requirements**  
A separate pathway is not required from the street to the entrance of the ADU.

## Exempt Attached ADU

Per State ADU Law, existing residential property in Norwalk is allowed an ADU within the space of an existing or proposed single family dwelling.

## Floor Plan & Amenities

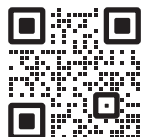
- ☐ **Separate Address Required**
- ☐ **Independent Exterior Access**
- ☐ **Independent Sanitation Facility**
- ☐ **Laundry Facilities**
- ☐ **Kitchen**  
Must include sink, cooking appliances, and food preparation counter.
- ☐ **Fire Sprinklers** (if primary dwelling contains fire sprinklers).

## Other Requirements

- ☐ **Rear Yard Open Space**  
An open space of 500 SF located in the rear half of property, no less than 10 feet in width is required for newly constructed ADUs.
- ☐ **Development Requirements**  
The ADU must conform to all zoning specific development requirements (e.g., space between buildings), except for the minimum lot area per dwelling requirement.
- ☐ **Construction Requirements**  
The ADU must conform to Norwalk construction requirements specified in Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) in the Municipal Code.

### More information:

Please scan this QR code to visit the Planning Division ADU website



# Detached ADUs

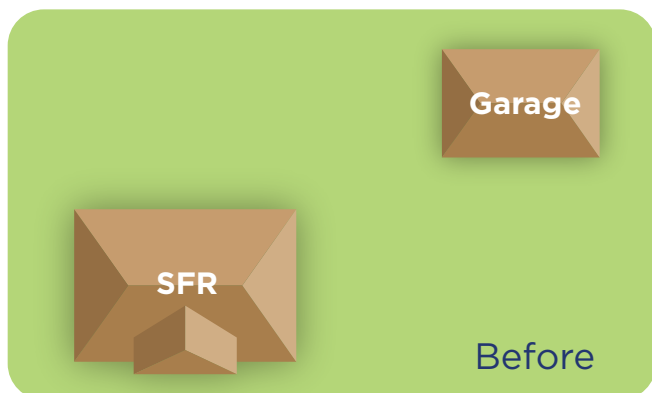
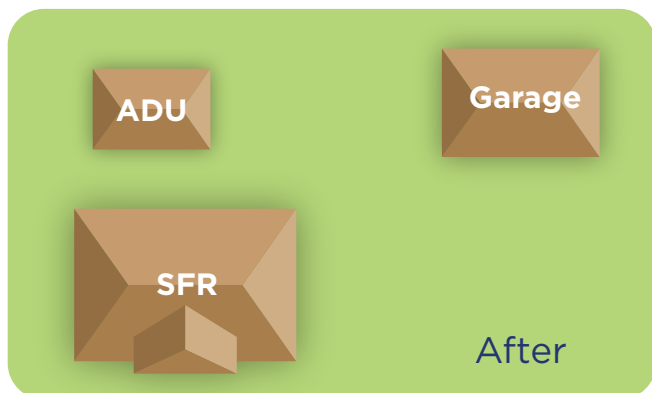
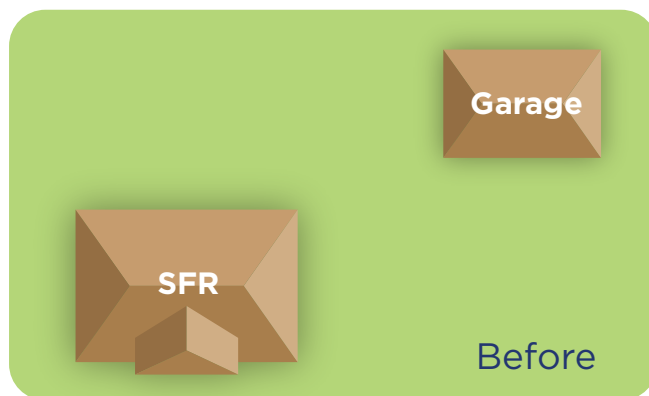
## What is a Detached ADU?

A detached ADU is a stand-alone ADU separate from the primary home. It can be newly built or created by repurposing an existing detached structure, like a garage, carport or barn.

## Detached Garage Conversion

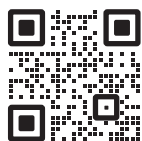
A detached garage conversion to an ADU transforms a standalone garage into a fully functional living unit. This process involves repurposing the existing structure by adding insulation, plumbing, electrical systems, and interior finishes, creating a separate and independent space from the primary home.

An expansion of 150 SF is may be allowed for the purpose of ingress and egress.



### More information:

Please scan this QR code to visit the Planning Division ADU website



# Detached ADU Requirements

## Max Height

- ☐ **Maximum Building Height**
  - 16 feet\*
  - 18 feet if located within 1/2 mile of a major transit stops or high quality corridor. An additional 2 feet may be permitted to accommodate a roof pitch that matches the primary residence.

## Setbacks

- ☐ **Front Setback**

Determined by zoning. Please review your property's zone district and zoning ordinance for front setback requirements.
- ☐ **Side and Rear Setbacks**

4 feet from property lines (this does not apply to conversions of freestanding structures, like a detached garage).

## Dwelling Size

- ☐ **Maximum Floor Area**

1,200 square feet

## Parking & Circulation

- ☐ **One Off-Street Parking Space Required**

See special conditions for eliminating parking requirements on Page 5.
- ☐ **No Passageway Requirements**

A separate pathway is not required from the street to the entrance of the ADU.

## Exempt Detached ADU

Per State ADU Law, any existing residential property in Norwalk is allowed an ADU that is/has:

- › 800 sq. ft. maximum in size
- › Applicable maximum height
- › 4 ft. minimum rear and side property setbacks
- › Not within an existing easement

## Design Standards

- ☐ **Architectural Compatibility Requirements**

Exterior building materials and architecture of ADU should be the same as the primary dwelling, as reasonably possible.

## Floor Plan & Amenities

- ☐ **Separate Address Required**
- ☐ **Independent Exterior Access**
- ☐ **Independent Sanitation Facility**
- ☐ **Laundry Facilities**
- ☐ **Kitchen**

Must include sink, cooking appliances, and food preparation counter.
- ☐ **Fire Sprinklers** (if primary dwelling contains fire sprinklers).
- ☐ **Solar Panels**

Contact Building and Safety Dept. for more information.

## Other Requirements

- ☐ **Development Requirements**

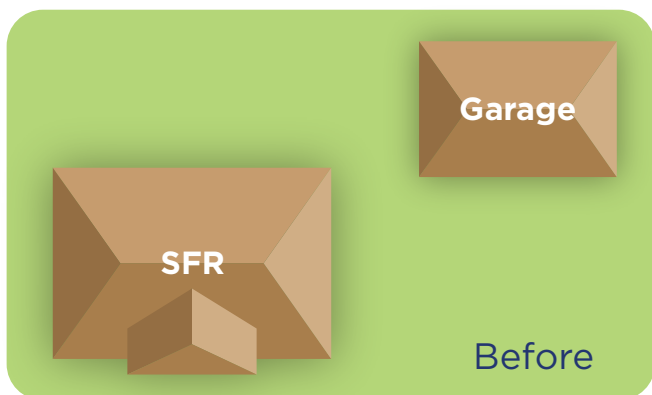
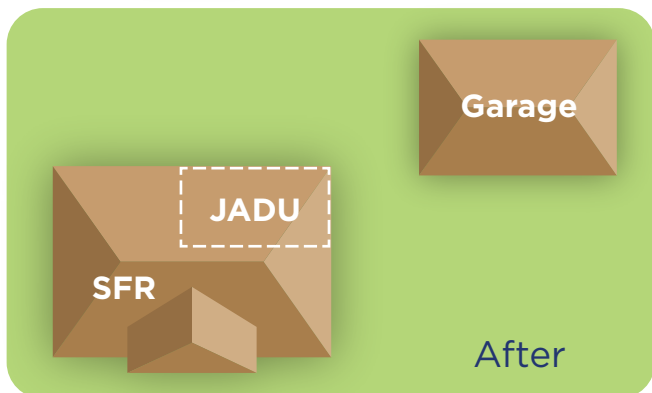
The ADU must conform to all zoning specific development requirements (e.g., space between buildings), except for the minimum lot area per dwelling requirement.
- ☐ **Construction Requirements**

The ADU must conform to Norwalk construction requirements specified in Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) in the Municipal Code.

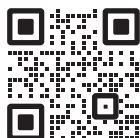
# Junior ADUs

## What is a Junior ADU?

Junior ADUs or JADUs are small units, less than 500 sq. ft., that are within a single-family dwelling or attached garage.



**More information:**  
Please scan this QR code  
to visit the Planning  
Division ADU website



## General Requirements

- ☐ JADUs are allowed on lots zoned for single-family residences with one primary dwelling.
- ☐ Must be located within existing walls of the primary home or attached garage.
- ☐ To construct a JADU, the primary dwelling must be built to code and have legal permits.
- ☐ Owner-Occupancy Requirement Property owner must permanently reside in either the primary dwelling or the JADU.
- ☐ May have separate or shared bathroom facilities with the primary dwelling (Sink, Toilet, Shower/Bath).
- ☐ JADUs can be combined with detached ADUs on the same single family lot.
- ☐ Separate Address

## JADU Size

- ☐ **Minimum Floor Area**  
150 square feet
- ☐ **Maximum Floor Area**  
500 square feet

## Efficiency Kitchen

- ☐ JADUs must include an efficiency kitchen which is defined in State ADU Law to include:
  - A cooking facility with appliances
  - A food preparation counter
  - Storage cabinets that are of reasonable size in relation to the size of the JADU

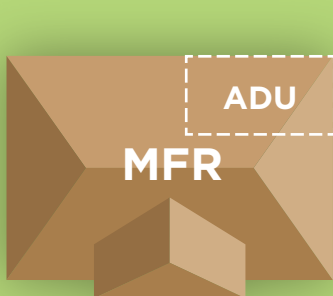
# Multi-Family ADUs

## What is a Multi-Family ADU?

A Multi-Family ADU is an ADU constructed on a property with an existing multi-family building, such as an apartment complex or duplex. These units can be created by converting non-livable spaces like basements, storage rooms, or garages within the structure, or by adding detached ADUs on the property. Multi-Family ADUs provide additional housing while utilizing existing space efficiently.



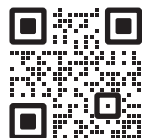
Before



After

### More information:

Please scan this QR code to visit the Planning Division ADU website



## General Requirements

- ☐ ADUs can be added to existing or proposed multi-family buildings.
- ☐ **At least one interior ADU**, up to 25% the number of dwelling units, is allowed on multi-family lots within non-dwelling areas (storage rooms, attics, basements, etc.).
- ☐ **Up to two detached ADUs** are allowed with a proposed multi-family dwelling that meet 4 feet side and rear setbacks and height allowance (see page 10) or Up to eight detached ADU are allowed with an existing multi-family dwelling that meet the 4 feet side and rear setbacks and height allowance (see page 10)
- ☐ **Shall not conflict** with any existing entitlement conditions of approval associated with the multi-family building.

## Floor Plan & Amenities

- ☐ **Separate Address**
- ☐ **Independent Exterior Access**
- ☐ **Independent Sanitation Facility**
- ☐ **Laundry Facilities**
- ☐ **Kitchen**  
Must include sink, cooking appliances, and food preparation counter.
- ☐ **Fire Sprinklers** (if primary dwelling contains fire sprinklers).
- ☐ **Solar Panels**  
Contact Building and Safety Division for more information.

# Process, Permits, & Resources

## ADU Process & Timeline



### STEP 1: Research

~1 Month

#### ☐ Confirm you can add an ADU to your property

An ADU may be established on any residential lot in any district in Norwalk that allows single-family or multi-family dwelling uses. Reference the Norwalk Zoning Map to see if your property is eligible.

#### ☐ Decide which type of ADU is right for your property

ADUs can be newly constructed or converted. Two options for establishing an ADU are described below:

**New Construction ADU:** New Detached ADUs, Attached ADU Additions.  
Consists of building a new structure on your property.

**Conversion ADU:** Detached ADU Conversions, Attached ADU Conversions, Junior ADUs.  
Renovating existing square footage of the primary dwelling (attached or detached structures).

### STEP 2: Design & Plan

1-3 Months

#### ☐ Understand your ADUs development and design standards

Development standards indicate where the ADU can be located on a property, building heights, proximity to the primary dwelling, and site requirements like parking and landscaping, etc. You can find the specific development standards for each type of ADU on pages 6-13. Development standards will vary based on your property's zoning requirements.

#### ☐ Design the ADU & create your plans

Work with a licensed local architect and general contractor to create your plans or utilize pre-approved plans that the City may have available for expedited ADU construction.

#### ☐ Review, complete, and submit ADU Checklist

# Process, Permits, & Resources

## STEP 3: Permitting

1-6 Months

The planning application submittal and review process is completely digital. You must now fill out the **ADU Application** by using the online submittal process or the Citizen Access portal.

Visit this webpage for the most up-to-date permitting information: [www.norwalk.org](http://www.norwalk.org)

### Need Assistance?

Contact Planning Division and ask for a planner to help you with your application submittal:

✉ [planning@norwalkca.gov](mailto:planning@norwalkca.gov)

☎ (562) 929-5744

📍 **Monday-Thursday: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm**  
**Alternating Fridays: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm**

#### ☐ Understand the permitting and review process

Speak to a planner to better understand the site plan review process and to ensure that you are not missing anything before submitting.

#### ☐ Submit online site plan review application and pay fees

After reviewing and preparing all materials and fees for the electronic application submittal process, [submit your application through the City's online portal](#). After you apply, the City will review your application and be in touch if any additional information is required.

#### ☐ Resubmit plans (if required) & approval

If requested, make changes to your plans and resubmit them. When approved, the City will notify the applicant.

#### ☐ Submit online building permit application & obtain all required approvals.

After your site plan is approved, you may proceed to [submit an application for a building permit at this portal](#). The City will approve and issue the building permit once it meets all code requirements, is approved by all reviewers, and all fees are paid (e.g., connection fees, school impact fees, etc.).

## STEP 4: Construction

2-12 Months

#### ☐ Begin building your ADU

You must have your approved construction document before you can start construction. Post your construction document at the construction site. Call or email the City to schedule the appropriate inspections during construction of your project. The City will finalize the permit once construction is completed in accordance with the approved plans.

# Applying for ADU Review

The following steps describe the review process for ADUs.

## 1. Planning Review Process

- ☐ **Application**  
Complete the ADU [application](#).
- ☐ **Submit Application Materials and fees**
  - Submit the completed application, site plan, elevations, floor plans, landscape plans (in higher density zones), and other plan sheets as needed to the Citizen Access Portal at [Norwalk : Citizen Access Portal](#)
  - Payment of the site plan review fee
  - Include new address request form
- ☐ **Division Review and Payment Request**
  - Planner reviews plans for accuracy and compliance with [Title 17 Zoning](#) and State law.
  - If corrections are needed, Planner will return the project to applicant for revisions.
- ☐ **Approval**  
Once the plans have been updated properly to comply with current code, the assigned planner notifies the applicant of project approval and provides digital copy of approved plans.

## 2. Building Review Process

- ☐ **Complete Online Application and Application Materials**  
Submit the completed application, stamped site plan and construction drawings to the Citizen Access Portal at [Norwalk : Citizen Access Portal](#)
- ☐ **Department Review**
  - Residential Plan Checker
  - Planning Department
  - Electrical Specialist (if applicable)
  - Public Services (if applicable)
- ☐ **Outside Agency Review and fees**
  - LA County Fire
  - Sanitation District
  - School District
  - Athens Services
  - Southern California Edison
  - Southern California Gas Company
  - Water Company
- ☐ **Approval**  
Pay Final Fees and Pull Permit

# Suggestions for a Successful ADU Application

- Review your title report and LA County Assessor map to determine if the subject property has an easements. ADUs may not be constructed over easements without proper authorization.
- Include utility posts, poles, drop down lines connecting to existing structures or supporting wires anchored into the ground on your existing site plan. It is recommended, a utility spot check be conducted prior to Planning review and during plan check if substantial changes are made to the plan.
- A garage conversion may be less expensive to build. A deed restriction may be recorded to memorialize the ADU size and expansion limits.
- If a garage foundation is damaged or deteriorated, you may need to factor in demolition and replacement. The foundation needs to be level and upgraded to current residential code standards. Ceiling joists may need to be upgraded due to additional loading of new drywall.
- Existing garage door openings must be removed and walls constructed to match the existing building. The ADU will also require an independent exterior residential entry.
- Exterior walls and windows may need to be modified to comply with fire separation rating and opening protection requirements. Interior common walls, floors, and ceilings between units must meet building code sound transmission ratings and fire separation requirements.
- Existing gas-powered furnaces or water heaters may need to be moved or enclosed.
- Existing utility services may not be of adequate size and could require upgrading gas or water lines, electric meter, or sewer lines.
- Contact the Assessor's Office to determine if your property taxes may be impacted.
- Consider the added costs for the following requirements: soils reports are required for new structures and additions over 600 sq. ft. and installation of solar panels are required for new structures in most cases.
- Homeowners who created dwelling units without the required building permits may have the opportunity to bring their ADUs into compliance. Local building officials now have the option to inspect an ADU and apply the building standards that were in effect at the time the unit was constructed. See section 17958.12 of the California Health and Safety Code for more information.
- The building permit fees for new homes are calculated by the Building and Safety Division and are based on square footage, school and fire district fees, and impact fees for your area. Contact the Building Permit Division for more information at (562) 929-5733. You can also review the document Single-Family Dwelling Building Fees Estimate for more information.
- If you have an unpermitted ADU, you may submit plans to legalize the structure. Legalization requires that the ADU still meets current building and zoning codes. If you already have an ADU or JADU on your property and would like to legalize it, contact a Planner to obtain the correct permits required for legalizing your ADU.