

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

What are ADUs?

ADUs are a separate living unit allowed as an accessory use related to a single-family house. The unit can be located inside the principal structure, within an addition, or in an accessory building, such as a cottage or above a garage. Saint Paul currently permits ADUs in the area one-half mile from University Avenue between Emerald Street and Lexington Parkway, which is in the St. Anthony Park, Union Park, and Hamline Midway Planning Districts.



Possible Expansion of ADUs

The Planning Commission has forwarded a zoning text amendment to the City Council that would:

- Allow accessory dwelling units citywide
- Eliminate the minimum lot size requirement for ADUs in principal structures
- Permit ADUs in the RL zoning district

Current ADU Requirements

The following are the standards and conditions that must be met in order to establish an ADU:

- Permitted in the R1-4, RT1-2, RM1-2, and T1-T3 zoning districts. *Note: The RL zoning district is proposed to be added.*
- Only properties within 1/2 mile of University Avenue, between Emerald Street and Lexington Parkway qualify for an ADU. *Note: This requirement is proposed to be eliminated.*
- Lot size must be at least 5,000 square feet. Lot size may include up to one-half the area of the alley for alley lots. *Note: This would need to be amended to only apply to ADUs in accessory structures.*
- No more than one family is allowed in both the principal unit and the accessory unit together. A family is a lineally related family plus two, or up to four unrelated persons.
- Owner must live in either the principal or accessory unit, and must file a deed restriction with the county and submit annual affidavit with \$67 annual fee
- The maximum size of a detached ADU is 800 square feet of floor area and the maximum height is lesser of 25 feet or the height of the principal structure. All other requirements for an accessory structure must be met.
- If the accessory dwelling unit is located within the principal unit, the principal structure must be at least 1,000 square feet and the accessory unit cannot exceed 1/3 of the total floor area of the structure. If the principal has more than one story, the maximum floor area of an accessory dwelling unit may be equal to that of the first floor, but shall be less than or equal to 50% of the total floor area of the structure.
- There must be a sidewalk from the street to the primary entrance of the accessory unit.
- An accessory unit on the upper floors of the principal structure shall have an interior stairway to the primary entrance of the accessory unit. Secondary stairways may be located on the exterior, but not on the front of the building.
- One off-street parking space on the property is required.
- All building code requirements for the accessory unit must be met and a building permit must be obtained for the change of use and/or construction work.
- The ADU cannot be sold separately from the principal structure.

Benefits of ADUs

Several community benefits are often cited in support of allowing ADU. These include:

- Potential new affordable housing, particularly in ADUs located within the principal structure
- Provides a cash stream to help offset property acquisition and maintenance costs of owner-occupied housing
- Opportunity for additional intergenerational housing to support aging in community
- Diversifies housing options for renters
- Allows for small-scale density increases that support local businesses and services