



# **Unincorporated San Mateo County ADU Regulations**



# San Mateo County ADU Regulations

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- Introduction
- County ADU regulations and updates
- Overview of basic standards
- Questions and answers
- Other information



## County ADU Regulations

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- County's regulations apply to unincorporated County only
- County has two slightly distinct sets of regulations: Non-Coastal and Coastal
- Updated 2020 (non-Coastal); Coastside updates at Coastal Commission for final approval this month
- Updates consistent with all changes to State law (County regulations are more generous in some cases)



## San Mateo County ADU Regulations

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- Where can you build ADUs
- Types of ADUs: attached, detached, junior
- ADU size, height, setbacks, and other development standards
- “State preemption” ADUs
- Required facilities
- Parking
- ADUs in combination with other ADUs
- Design standards
- Short-term rental
- Processing and approval



## Where Can You Build ADUs

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- Non-Coastal Areas: in all residential zoning districts, including those in which residential uses are only one of several allowed use (commercial, etc); may be created on properties with existing multifamily structures
  - Property where ADU is proposed must have a primary residence (existing or proposed)
- Coastal Zone: in single-family residential zones (R-1 zoning) and in some cases also within/ in addition to existing multifamily structures



## Types of ADUs

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- Types of ADUs
  - Attached: within or attached to the outside of the main house
  - Detached: stand-alone, separate from the main house
  - Junior (JADU):
    - less than 500 square feet
    - entirely within an existing house
    - JADU or main house must be owner-occupied in perpetuity



## ADU Development Standards

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- ADU Size
  - Detached ADU: 800 sq. ft. or 35% of the main house, whichever is larger, up to 1,500 square feet max
  - Attached ADU: 800 sq. ft. or 50% of the main house, whichever is larger, up to 1,500 sq. ft.
  - Junior ADU: 500 sq. ft.



## ADU Development Standards

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- Height: 26 feet (or for ADUs within the main residence, the maximum height allowed for a main residence)
- Setbacks:
  - Front: setback required by zoning
  - Side and rear: Four feet
- Minimum lot size: none
- Maximum density: none (ADUs are exempt from limits on units per acre)
- All ADUs count against allowed floor area and lot coverage, *EXCEPT* that state preemption applies



## “State Preemption” ADUs

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- Regardless of other standards, a property owner is allowed to build an ADU of:
  - A minimum of 800 square feet, if it:
    - Has 4-foot setbacks
    - Is less than 16 feet in height per State law (however, County allows 26)
- This preempts (almost) all other standards that might prohibit an ADU of this size and type
- JADUs do not qualify for preemption, and count against floor area, lot coverage, and other standards



## ADU Required Facilities

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- Living and sleeping area
- Bathroom w/ all normal facilities
- Kitchen with cooking appliance, storage, refrigerator
- Independently accessible entry/exit
- Windows/ventilation/heating/insulation/other building code standards as normally required



## Required ADU Parking

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- Attached or detached ADUs: one new parking space
- JADUs: no required parking
- Parking may be provided uncovered, tandem, compact, within the front yard
- ADUs in proximity to certain public transit are exempt from parking requirements
- If covered parking is demolished or converted in order to create an ADU, the parking required for the main house may be replaced uncovered
- Existing parking in excess of that already required for the main house counts toward ADU parking



## ADUs In Combination with Other ADUs

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- A full *detached or attached ADU* may not be combined with another full detached or attached ADU
- An *attached ADU* may not be combined with a junior ADU
- *HOWEVER*, one detached, standalone ADU may be built in combination with one JADU within the main residence
  - JADU must meet all requirements of County JADU regulations, and State JADU law



## ADU Design Standards

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- ADUs outside the Coastal Zone are not subject to design standards or design review
- ADUs within design review areas in the Coastal Zone are subject to objectively applicable design standards, applied at the staff level only



## ADUs and Short-term Rental

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- Can ADUs be used for short-term rental, such as Air BnB, VRBO, etc?
  - NO



## Processing and Approval

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- Approval of most ADUs that meet all standards requires no hearings; all review and approval is staff level, and criteria are objective
- For ADUs that are not part of a larger project (i.e. not in combination with a new house or larger home remodel), 60-day timeline for initial approval/denial of a permit (once application is complete)
- The County is creating a streamlined, expedited approval process for these ADUs, which should be in place early next year
  - Goal is 14-day plan check and initial approval



**QUESTIONS?**

**and**

**discussion**



## Additional Information

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- William Gibson: [wgibson@smcgov.org](mailto:wgibson@smcgov.org)
- County ADU Regulations: Chapter 22.5 and 22.5.1 of the Zoning Regulations:  
[https://planning.smcgov.org/sites/planning.smcgov.org/files/SMC\\_Zoning\\_Regulations.pdf](https://planning.smcgov.org/sites/planning.smcgov.org/files/SMC_Zoning_Regulations.pdf)
- Home for All Second Unit Center: <https://secondunitcentersmc.org/>
- County Planning and Building Permit Center: <https://aca-prod.accela.com/smcgov/Welcome.aspx>