

Memorandum

Date: November 10, 2022

To: West Linn Planning Commission

From: Chris Myers, Associate Planner
Ben Gardner, Assistant Planner

Subject: ADU Code Amendment Project Work Session #1

The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Code Amendments project is a policy analysis to review the City's current ADU code (*CDC Chapter 34: Accessory Structures, Accessory Dwelling Units, and Accessory Uses* ([CDC Chapter 34](#))) and make recommended changes based on whether the City wishes to facilitate or complicate the construction of ADUs. The West Linn City Council directed Planning staff to undertake this project by prioritizing it on the [Planning Docket](#).

ADUs have been utilized to provide alternative housing options that in turn foster opportunities for a greater diversity of more accessible and affordable living arrangements ([HUD Case Study](#)). ADUs are commonly identified as a viable way to help facilitate multigenerational housing, 'aging in place', and independent living for family members and renters, as well as housing for caregivers, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with special care requirements, among others. As stated above, ADUs are typically a more affordable housing option in communities because of their smaller living area and the fact they are located on a property that has a primary structure. West Linn Comprehensive Plan Goal 10: Housing contains the following housing goal, which aligns well with promoting construction of ADUs as an affordable housing option.

Goal 10: Housing

Goal 3. Encourage the development of affordable housing for West Linn residents of all income levels.

Staff has identified 11 policy questions for the PC to discuss as part of the project. The policies will be divided up into three work sessions, where the PC will work towards consensus on any proposed code amendments to CDC Chapter 34. Based on PC input, Staff will draft proposed code amendments and bring back to the next work session for review before moving on to the next set of policy questions. A fourth work session will consist of a summary of the feedback to staff and the complete package of proposed code amendments for final review before moving into the legislative process.

In preparation for the November 16, 2022 Planning Commission (PC) work session, the first four policy questions and their associated code sections are listed below. During the work session, staff will provide additional background and visual examples to illustrate the impact and implementation of the current code requirements. These policy questions were introduced previously at the October 19, 2022 Planning Commission briefing ([10.19.22 PC Briefing Memo](#)).

The goal of this work session is Planning Commission consensus on the four policy questions and any associated amendment recommendations. As stated above, staff will bring back any draft code

amendments to the next work session for final review before moving on to the next set of policy questions.

If you have questions or comments, please send them to Chris Myers (cmyers@westlinnoregon.gov or 503-742-6062) and Ben Gardner (bgardner@westlinnoregon.gov or 503-742-6057).

POLICY QUESTION 1:

Should the visual design of ADUs be regulated in relation to the existing dwelling?

CURRENT CODE:

CDC 34.030(B)(1-5)

B. Design standards for both attached and detached ADUs are as follows:

- 1. Exterior finish materials. The exterior finish material must be the same, or visually match in type, size, and placement, the exterior finish material of the primary dwelling.*
- 2. Roof pitch. The roof pitch must be the same as the predominant roof pitch of the primary dwelling.*
- 3. Trim. Trim on edges of elements on the addition must be the same in type, size, and location as the trim used on the rest of the primary dwelling.*
- 4. Windows. Windows must match those in the primary dwelling in proportion (relationship of width to height). Second-floor windows on the ADU should be placed and sized so as to achieve a reasonable amount of privacy for the abutting property owner(s).*
- 5. Eaves. Eaves must project from the building walls the same distance as the eaves on the rest of the primary dwelling.*

EXAMPLE USING CURRENT CODE: A resident wants to purchase a pre-fabricated studio structure for a grandparent to live in, but they are instead limited to a more expensive and lengthy process of custom building in order to match all the elements of their existing house.

POLICY QUESTION 2:

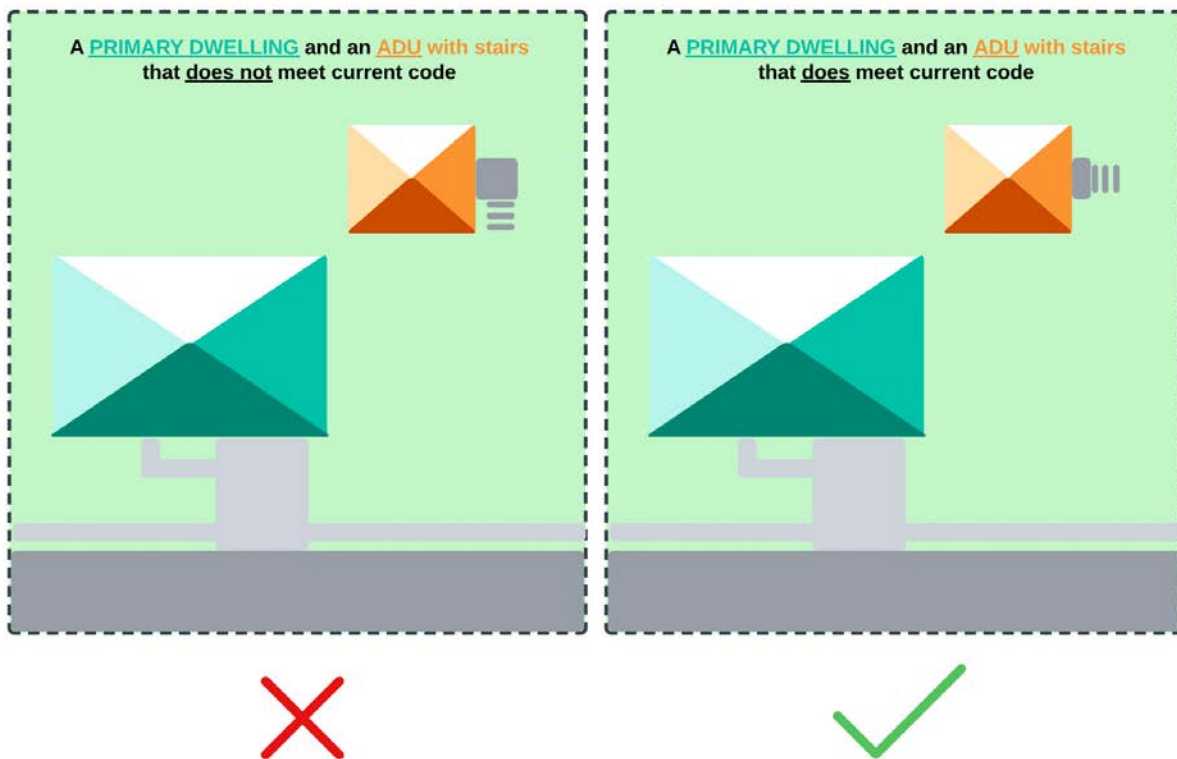
Should the placement of stairs on ADUs be limited?

CURRENT CODE:

CDC 34.030(B)(9)

9. Exterior stairs serving the ADU shall not face the front property line.

EXAMPLE USING CURRENT CODE: A homeowner wants to build an ADU on a slight upward slope in their backyard, and needs a small set of stairs at the entrance to get to the height of the door. They would have to build the stairs facing in a different direction than the front property line. In doing so, they would likely incur significant costs in engineering and design. If this structure was not an ADU, the stairs could face any direction.



POLICY QUESTION 3:

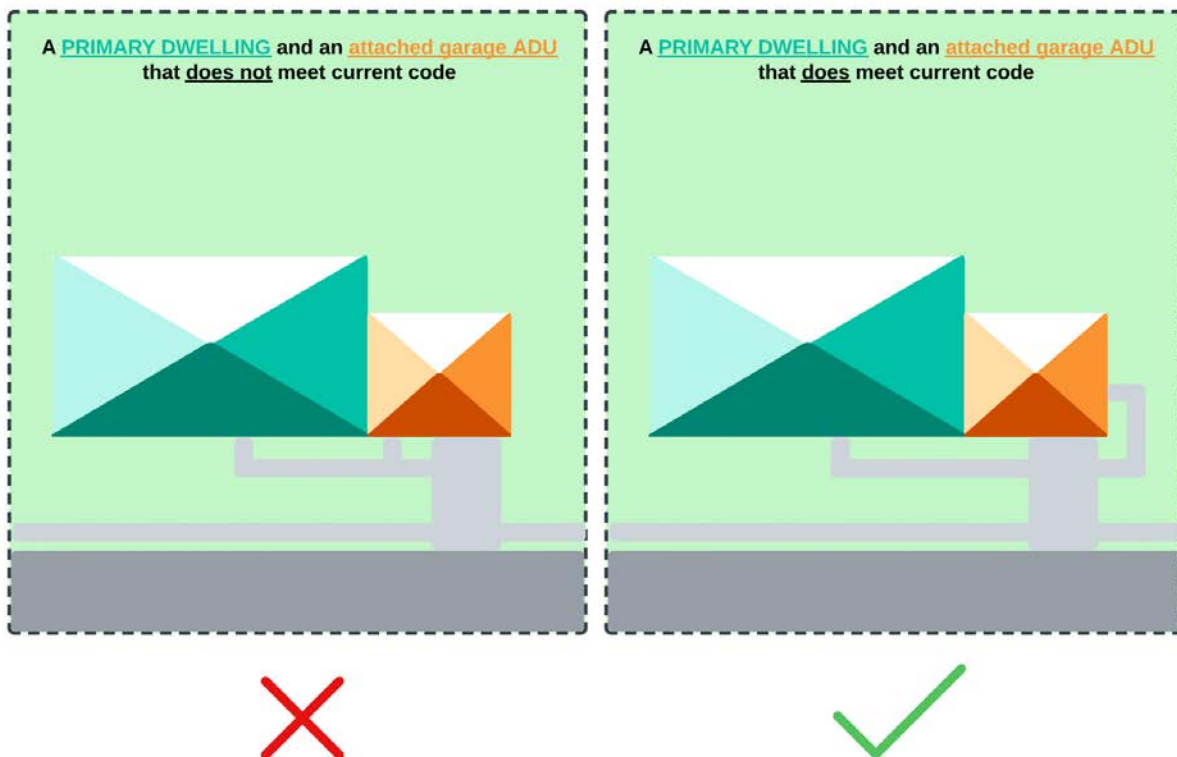
Should the location of the entrances on ADUs be limited?

CURRENT CODE:

CDC 34.030(B)(8)

8. The main exterior entrance of the ADU shall be located on either the rear or side of the ADU so that the main entrance to the primary dwelling will not be in competition with the entrance to the ADU.

EXAMPLE USING EXISTING CODE: A ranch style home has an existing attached garage. The homeowner wants to convert the garage into an ADU and utilize the existing access door located on the front of the garage as the entrance. They would not be allowed to do so—they would need to create a new door on the side of the garage.



POLICY QUESTION 4:

Should the placement of ADUs be limited in relation to the primary dwelling?

CURRENT CODE:

CDC 34.030(B)(6)

6. Setbacks. The detached ADU shall be at least 10 feet behind the front building line of the primary dwelling so as to maintain the primary status of the single-family home. The only exception allowed shall be for an ADU which is located above a detached garage, in which case, the setback of the ADU may be the same as that of the garage below.

EXAMPLE USING EXISTING CODE: A resident wants to build an ADU, and they have a large side yard that could fit it, but very little backyard. They are likely unable to build an ADU and meet setbacks because of this.

