



## ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) HANDOUT

### What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)?

An ADU is a dwelling unit located on the same parcel as a single-family dwelling, duplex, triplex, townhome or other principal housing unit. ADUs can be:

- *Detached*: a separate unit in a new or existing structure that is physically detached from the principal unit; or
- *Attached*: a separate unit located within or attached to the principal unit, including additions and internal conversions.

An ADU is an independent, self-sustaining unit that provides the basic requirements of shelter, heating, cooking and sanitation. ADUs are often referred to as "mother-in-law" apartments or "granny flats."

### City Regulations and Development Standards ([LSMC 14.44.045](#))

- Up to two ADUs – two detached, two attached, or one of each - are allowed on residential lots with a principal unit.
- Each ADU may have a gross floor area between 250 and 1,000 square feet, with minor deviations possible in certain situations.
- ADUs are subject to the development standards of the underlying zoning district identified in [Chapter 14.48 LSMC](#) for height, setbacks, impervious surfaces, etc. There are setback and impervious surface exceptions for ADUs created from existing accessory structures and setback exceptions for ADUs adjacent to a public alley.
- One parking space is required per ADU in addition to the space(s) required for the principal unit(s), subject to [Chapter 14.72 LSMC](#).
- ADUs are permanent structures and shall be located on a foundation, which precludes the use of tiny homes on wheels.
- ADUs are regulated by the International Residential Code and require a city building permit; see ADU Submittal Checklist.
- Property owners are *not required* to live in the principal unit or ADU.
- Lots with designated critical areas or buffers are regulated by [Chapter 14.88 LSMC](#), which may limit the number of permitted ADUs.
- ADUs are subject to the impact fees listed in the [city fees resolution](#), which may not exceed 50% of the principal unit.
- ADUs do not require the construction of frontage improvements or the payment of fee-in-lieu but may need to dedicate public right-of-way.
- ADUs may be conveyed (sold) separately as condominium units, subject to an approved binding site plan ([Chapter 14.18 LSMC, Part II](#)).
- ADUs used as short-term rentals are subject to the requirements, application fees, and review process identified in [LSMC 14.44.064](#).

Examples of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)  
ADUs in blue; main residence in white

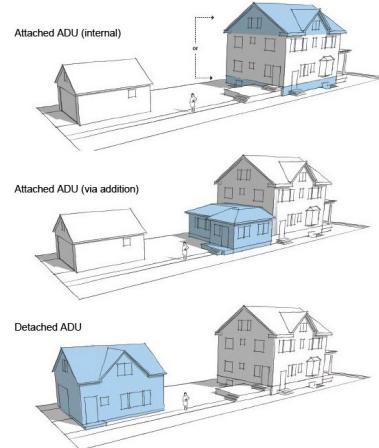


Image credit: City of Saint Paul, MN

### Application Requirements

Each ADU shall require a City of Lake Stevens residential building permit application and an ADU submittal checklist.

### Additional Requirements

Applicants shall consult with the Lake Stevens Sewer District and Snohomish County PUD on sewer and water service requirements.

### Have More Questions?

Contact the Planning and Community Development Department at [permits@lakestevenswa.gov](mailto:permits@lakestevenswa.gov) or (425) 622-9400 or schedule a pre-application conference.