

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.

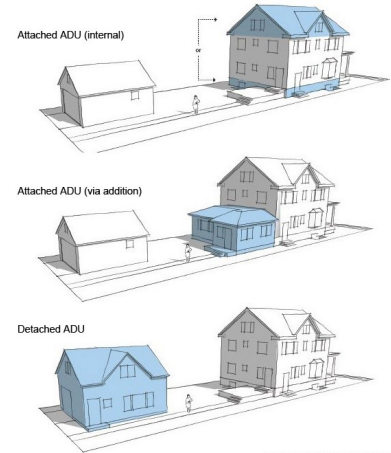
An ADU is an independent, self-sustaining unit that provides the basic requirements of shelter, heating, cooking and sanitation. ADUs are often referred to as "mother-in-law" apartments or "granny flats."

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



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 or (425) 622-9400 or schedule a pre-application conference.