
ADUs - 3 potential amendments to Chap. 29

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Hello Tim and Pat,

Thank you for your time meeting with me on 12/15/23 to discuss potential Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) policy tweaks.

While we discussed a broad range of policy changes, the following adjustments seemed to be fairly straightforward, and consistent with other existing standards. I am working with a few City Councilmembers and am hopeful that a formal process to amend Chapter 29 as outlined below may be initiated.

- **Allow an attached ADU front door to face the street.** This requirement is problematic when trying to convert an existing attached garage into an ADU. Front doors facing the street are more visible, and are arguably safer, for occupants. When I advocated for Columbia's ADU ordinance in 2013, I originally supported this requirement, thinking that it would help prevent properties from looking like duplexes. I no longer see this as a concern. It's not uncommon (and not a zoning or code violation) to see single family houses that have two doors facing the street.
- **Decrease the side yard setback from 10' to 6' in R-MF lots for ADU construction.** The 10' setback hampers ADU construction, especially on narrow lots. This change would be consistent with the 6' setback that is in place for R-1 and R-2 lots. The 10' setback could still be required for apartments. *Side note: It was not discussed in the meeting, but it would be helpful if the setback were reduced from 10' to 6' for a single family house or ADU that is being constructed on an R-MF lot. I am envisioning a vacant lot where the owner may want to build a house + detached ADU.*
- **Removing the minimum standards for lot width and lot area to build an ADU.** To qualify by-right, a lot would need to be zoned R-2 or R-MF and be a "legal lot." I understand this would be consistent with a recent text amendment making it easier to build single family houses on existing non-conforming (i.e. narrow), but otherwise "legal," lots.

I believe that these changes would be very helpful in facilitating the construction of ADUs in the neighborhoods / zones where they are already allowed by-right.

Would it be possible for the Planning Department to prepare a report for the City Council regarding the above changes?

Thank you so much!
Adrienne

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