



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 2, 2023
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance

Re: Amendment to Section(s) 8.7.2 Generally, 8.7.4 ADU, 8.7.5 Caretaker Dwelling Unit, and 13.2 Definitions of zoning ordinance.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Petitioner: Bridget Lidy, City of Savannah

File No. 22-005883-ZA

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the request with the proposed amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit and Definition sections of the ordinance as outlined in the report.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the request with the proposed amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit and Definition sections of the ordinance as outlined in the report.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10 + Chairman

Dwayne Stephens, Chairman	Jeff Notrica
Travis Coles	Joseph Welch
Laureen Boles	Tom Woiwode
Joseph Ervin	
Karen Jarrett	
Michael Kaigler	
Jay Melder	
Wayne Noha	

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (11-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 11	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Coles Boles Ervin Notrica Jarrett Kaigler Melder Noha Stephens Welch Woiwode		Coleman Epstein Watkins

Respectfully submitted,



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

/sh

Enclosure

cc: Mark Massey, Clerk of Council
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Zarina Davis, Department of Inspections
Bridget Lidy, Department of Inspections





C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

“Planning the Future - Respecting the Past”

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: The Mayor and Aldermen, City of Savannah

FROM: The Planning Commission

DATE: May 2, 2023

SUBJECT: Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
Re: Amendment to Section 8.7, 13.2 and 13.5. Accessory Structures and Uses; Defined Terms, General; Defined Terms, Historic.

Applicant: City of Savannah

Marcus Lotson, Director of Development Services

MPC FILE NO: 22-005883-ZA

ISSUE:

Proposed amendments to the Savannah Zoning Ordinance related to changes to the requirements associated with Accessory Dwelling Units, defined terms and development standards.

BACKGROUND:

In November of 2022, City of Savannah staff made a presentation to the Mayor and Aldermen during the Council Workshop specific to information on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's). The purpose of the presentation was to give Council information on the benefits, history and current ordinances that govern ADU's. In addition, to discuss how revisions to the current standards could support the City's larger affordable housing efforts within the Housing Savannah Action Plan, and to share the results of a public input survey that had been conducted earlier that year.

FINDINGS:

1. Beginning in April 2022, City staff conducted a series of six neighborhood outreach meetings in order to get feedback from stakeholders regarding the current ADU regulations and what, if any, changes should be made. After the meetings concluded, staff deployed the aforementioned survey which had a range of questions dealing with development standards like height, parking, and architectural compatibility.
2. The survey captured 690 respondents and the survey data along with other research done by City staff resulted in a series of proposed amendments to the current ADU regulations. The proposed revisions are in two categories, development standards and definitions.

3. These proposed amendments are designed to make incremental changes to the rules which govern ADU's, to make them feasible housing options in more areas of the city, and to protect adjacent properties from the impacts of over-building.
4. In addition to proposed changes in development standards, there are also proposed changes to definitions. Proposed redactions are in ~~strike through~~, proposed additions are in red and underlined.

Proposed Amendments to Definitions Section
Accessory Dwelling Unit: A structure used as an individual residential unit located on the same lot as the principal dwelling, <u>including a kitchen, bathroom and sleeping area.</u>
Accessory Structure: Any structure, including a building, that is subordinate to the permitted principal use or principal building on the same lot, and that serves a purpose clearly incidental to the lot, structure or building. <u>The term accessory structure does not include Accessory Dwelling Unit or Caretaker's Residential Unit.</u> Although subordinate, some accessory structures may not be permitted in certain zoning districts.
Caretaker's Residential Dwelling Unit: A structure constructed to residential occupancy standards in compliance with applicable building codes that is accessory to a nonresidential use. The structure serves as the residence of a caretaker, who is responsible for property management and/or security and may accommodate the caretaker's household.
<u>National Register Historic Districts without a Local Historic Overlay:</u> <u>The National Register was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Register Historic Districts that do not have a local historic overlay district include Pine Gardens, Gordonston, Bonaventure, Eastside/Meadows/Collinsville, Central of Georgia, Laurel Grove North, Laurel Grove South, Kensington Park-Groveland, and Fairway Oaks-Greenview.</u>
Building Footprint: The area within the exterior walls of a building that is under roof. <u>The building footprint shall be measured as the area at finished grade that is within the exterior faces of the exterior walls. Where buildings are attached, the measurement shall be from the centerline of the wall separating the attached buildings. In the absence of surrounding exterior walls, the building footprint shall be the ground floor area of a building that is under a roof.</u>

ARTICLE 8.0 USE STANDARDS

Sec. 8.7 Accessory Structures and Uses

8.7.1 Purpose

This Section authorizes the establishment of accessory structures and uses that are incidental and customarily subordinate to principal uses. Additional performance criteria are set forth in this

Section for particular uses and structures in order to reduce potentially adverse impacts on surrounding properties.

8.7.2 Generally

All accessory structures and uses shall be consistent with all standards of the base zoning district (Article 5.0), any applicable overlay district (Article 7.0) and any applicable use standards (Article 8.0), except as expressly set forth below. Accessory structures and uses shall:

- a. Be accessory and clearly incidental and subordinate to a permitted principal use. No accessory use may be established on a site prior to the establishment of a permitted principal use.
- b. Be located on the same property as the principal use or structure.
- c. Not involve uses or structures not in keeping with the character of the principal use or principal structure served.
- d. Be located within a district that permits the principal use.
- e. Not be erected in any required setback area, except as expressly set forth in this Ordinance.
- f. Shipping containers and tractor trailers shall be prohibited as storage buildings or structures except as permitted on an active construction site or in Industrial zoning districts (see Sec. 8.8, Temporary Uses).
- g. A parcel shall include only one accessory dwelling unit or one caretaker's dwelling unit.

8.7.4 Accessory Dwelling Units (not including Caretaker's Dwelling Unit)

One (1) accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted as an accessory use to a principal dwelling located in the A-1, RSF-, RTF-, RMF-1, TR-, TN-, TC-, D- and PD districts. Such use is not required to be included in the gross residential density calculations. Manufactured homes, shipping containers, recreational vehicles, and travel trailers shall not be used as accessory dwelling units, except that manufactured homes may be used as an accessory dwelling unit in the A-1 and Manufactured Home Overlay districts. For such use, the following shall apply:

a. Location

- i. The unit may be attached to or detached from the principal dwelling.
- ii. When the unit is attached, it shall share a common wall with and have a separate entrance from the principal dwelling or be connected by a covered walkway. When the unit shares a common wall with the principal dwelling, the entrance to the unit shall be located along the side or rear façade of the

dwelling. An attached accessory dwelling unit shall meet the setback standards for the principal dwelling unit.

- iii. Detached accessory dwelling units shall meet the same side-yard setback requirement as the principal structure. Such units shall be separated from the principal structure by at least 10 feet. Detached accessory dwelling units shall have a rear-yard setback requirement of at least five (5) feet, provided that if the accessory dwelling is located on a lot that abuts a lane the rear-yard setback requirement shall be at least three (3) feet. Within zoning districts that have no rear-yard setback requirement for the principal structure there shall be no rear-yard setback requirement for an accessory dwelling unit.

b. Lot Area

For A-1, RSF-, RTF, RMF-1 and TR- districts, the minimum lot size for such use shall be at least 125% of the minimum lot area required by the zoning district. This standard shall be variable. If a variance is pursued, the Historic Preservation Commission shall provide a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals when the parcel is located in a conservation overlay district, as provided in Section 7.15, or is located in a designated a National Register Historic District without a Local Historic Overlay, as defined in Section 13.3.

c. Building Coverage

Accessory dwelling units shall be included in the calculations for maximum building coverage permitted in the zoning district.

d. Building Size

- i. The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet. In the A-1, RSF-E, RSF-30 and RSF-20 districts, the maximum building footprint shall be 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling or 1,000 square feet, whichever is less.
- ii. The accessory dwelling unit shall contain the minimum square feet as required by the ordinances and codes of the City of Savannah regulating building construction.
- iii. The accessory dwelling unit shall contain no more than one (1) bedroom.

e. Architectural Style

Such use shall be designed in a similar architectural style as the principal dwelling. If the site is located within an overlay district, the standards of the overlay district shall apply.

f. Parking and Access

- i. If parking is provided for the accessory dwelling unit, it shall be provided on the same lot on which the principal dwelling is located.
- ii. Where there is no lane and parking is provided, the parking space shall be served by the same driveway as the principal dwelling.
- iii. Accessory dwelling units within one quarter of a mile of an established public transportation stop shall not be required to provide off-street parking.

g. Water and Wastewater Services, Electrical Meter

- i. An accessory dwelling unit may be required to connect to the water and sewer system of the principal dwelling.
- ii. A shared electrical meter between the principal dwelling and the accessory dwelling unit may be required.

h. Height

- i. When a parcel is located in a conservation overlay district, as provided in Section 7.15, or is designated a National Register Historic District without a Local Historic Overlay, as defined in Section 13.3, accessory dwelling units shall not exceed 25 feet in height or the height of principal building, whichever is less. If a variance is pursued, the Historic Preservation Commission shall provide a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- ii. Within all other permitted zoning districts, accessory dwelling units shall not exceed 25 feet or the height of principal building, whichever is less.
- iii. Any portion of an accessory dwelling unit over 15 feet in height shall be located at least 15 feet from a rear property line that does not abut a lane.

8.7.5 Caretaker Dwelling Unit (does not include Accessory Dwelling Unit)

A single residential unit is allowed as an accessory use to any nonresidential use in any zoning district and is not required to be included in the gross residential density calculations. For such use, the following shall apply:

- a. Where there is a principal building, such use may be attached or detached from the principal building.
- b. An attached caretaker residential unit shall meet the setback standards for the principal building.
- c. A parcel shall not have an accessory dwelling unit and caretaker residential unit.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

During the process of adopting the current zoning ordinance (NewZO), accessory dwellings were one of the topics discussed at great length with City Council members and residents. Because it was a new use being added to the Ordinance, there was some desire to limit the allowance to areas that historically had development patterns that included accessory dwellings. Since that time, the interest in accessory dwellings has increased and the use has become accepted as a viable housing option for those outside of the traditional neighborhoods.

Many of the standards that were put in place with NewZO were chosen with concern that single family neighborhoods, that did not historically include accessory dwellings, might be negatively impacted by allowing them. NewZO also created Caretakers Residential Units which are accessory to nonresidential use. The proposed changes would still limit ADU's in more suburban residential areas; but take another step toward broader allowance with conditions related to lot dimensions, building size and height. In review of the proposed changes.

As the City continues to address housing needs, accessory dwellings will likely be a part of increasing availability and diversity of housing options and providing a more affordable alternative in the marketplace. If ADU's are going to be more widely permitted, the regulations must assure that existing residents are not impacted by issues related to building placement, scale or the provision of off-street parking. MPC staff considers this amendment a step in the process and will look to engage further with the city to continue discussions related to accessory dwelling units.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit and Definition sections of the ordinance as outlined in the report.

Note: This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the meeting. Final decisions will be made by the Commission at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting.