

AN ORDINANCE
To Be Entitled

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE 8.0 COMMERCIAL USE STANDARDS FOR LIMITED AND SPECIAL USES, SECTIONS 8.7.3 ACCESSORY STRUCTURES AND 8.7.4 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (NOT INCLUDING CARETAKER'S DWELLING UNITS) OF CHAPTER 3, ZONING, OF PART 8, PLANNING AND REGULATION OF DEVELOPMENT, OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH, GEORGIA; TO PROVIDE FOR EFFECTIVE DATES; TO REPEAL ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HERewith AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, Georgia, in regular meeting of Council assembled and pursuant to lawful authority thereof:

SECTION 1: That Division II, Part 8, Planning and Regulation of Development, Chapter 3, Zoning (Effective September 1, 2019) of the Code of the City of Savannah, Georgia hereinafter be referenced as "Code", be amended to read as follows:

*Note: Revisions shown in red.
Text to be enacted shown in bold and underlined.
Text to be repealed shown in bold and strikethrough.*

Proposed Zoning Text Amendment

8.7.3 Accessory Structures

Accessory structures, not to include accessory dwelling units, are allowed in all zoning districts and shall be subject to the following requirements, except as expressly provided elsewhere in this Section:

a. **Building Permit**

Accessory structures having a gross floor area of more than 120 square feet shall require a building permit.

b. **Location**

Accessory structures shall be located in the side (interior) yard or rear yard of the principal building, with the exception of the following:

- i. guard or gate house;
- ii. gazebo;
- iii. pump or well house;
- iv. carports with a setback of 8 feet from the front property boundary; and
- ~~iv.~~ other similar structures.

c. **Setbacks**

- i. An accessory building or structure shall not be located within five (5) feet of the rear property line. An accessory building or structure shall meet the same side-yard setback requirement as the principal structure. s, except where no setback is required by the zoning district.. Provided however, when the building or structure is located within the side yard, such building or structure shall not

~~encroach into the side yard setback except as provided for in Sec 4.3, Exceptions and Modifications.~~

- ii. Docks shall be exempt from any setback requirement.
- iii. Any building that is used to house vehicles or watercraft, and that is accessed from a lane, shall be located at least five (5) feet from such right-of-way. The City Manager or his or her designee may reduce the setback to three (3) feet.
- iv. Where Residential property is located adjacent to a river or marsh, accessory buildings and structures may be permitted in the front yard if all of the following requirements can be met:
 - 1. The accessory building or structure is set back a minimum of 50 feet from any vehicular right-of-way and is at least 10 feet from adjoining property lines;
 - 2. The **floor-area footprint** of the accessory building or structure does not exceed 1,200 square feet or 40% of the **floor-area footprint** of the principal building, whichever is less; and
 - 3. The accessory building or structure is constructed of the same or compatible material and color as the principal building, as approved by the City Manager or his or her designee.

d. **Height**

The height of an accessory building shall not exceed the height of the principal building in a Residential district or where otherwise prohibited by this Ordinance.

e. **Building Coverage and Size**

- i. Building Coverage. Within all zoning districts, accessory structures shall be included in the calculations for maximum building coverage.
- ii. Size. Residential Districts. Within residential zoning districts, the **floor-area footprint** of an accessory structure shall not exceed 40% of the **floor-area footprint** of the principal building. **When accessory structures are attached, the footprint measurement shall include all attached accessory structures.**
- iii. Size. Nonresidential. Subject to maximum building coverage standards.

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

One (1) accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted **per lot** as an accessory use to a principal dwelling **in a single-family detached, single-family attached, two-family, three-family, or four-family building or in a townhouse building on its own lot.** Accessory dwelling units shall only be permitted in the A-1, RSF-, RTF-, RMF-1, **RMF-2**, TR-, TN-, TC-, D- and PD district. 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:

Commentary: Principal dwellings include single-, two-, three-, and four family and townhouse dwellings. Measurements for principal dwelling size when principal dwelling is a multi-family will be calculated from single unit.

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.
- iv. A variance shall not be required to convert an existing accessory structure to an accessory dwelling unit when the existing accessory structure is nonconforming only with the accessory dwelling unit setback requirements. Such conversion shall only be allowed when the extent of the nonconformity is not increased, and the height of the structure is not increased. When the subject lot does not meet the minimum lot area to allow an accessory dwelling unit, a variance shall be required for enlargement of the nonconforming accessory structure, including when such enlargement does not increase the extent of the nonconformity with setbacks.

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

b. Lot Area

For A-1, RSF-, RTF, RMF-1, RMF-2, and TR- districts, the minimum lot size for such use shall be at least ~~125%~~ **100%** 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 National Register Historic District without a Local Historic Overlay, as defined by Sec. 13.3~~

c. 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. In buildings with multiple dwelling units, the footprint percentage calculation shall be based on the footprint of a single dwelling unit.
- 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. This standard shall be variable.

e. Architectural Style

For property not in a local historic overlay district, Ssuch use shall be designed in a similar architectural style as the principal dwelling. If the site is located within a local historic overlay district, the standards of the overlay district shall apply.

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.

SECTION 2: That the requirements of Section 3.2 of the Zoning Ordinance effective the 1st of September 2019 and the law in such cases made and provided has been satisfied. An opportunity for a public hearing was afforded anyone having an interest or property right which may have been affected by this zoning amendment, said notice being published in the Savannah Morning News, on the 10th day of November 2025, a copy of said notice being attached hereto and made a part hereof.

SECTION 3: All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This ordinance shall be effective as of the date hereof.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED: ____ day of _____ 2025.

Van R. Johnson, II
Mayor

ATTEST:

Mark Massey
Clerk of Council