

Lunch with Lisa

SMALL BITES OF KNOWLEDGE

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU'S)

AKA - Granny Flats, Inlaw Units

On January 1, 2020, it will become easier to build Accessory Dwelling Units in California, thanks to a package of new bills. These bills invalidate local ADU ordinances across the state and replace them with state-mandated rules. Here are some highlights of California's new ADU law:

Reduced Costs and Burdens for Developing ADUs

- Cities must approve ADU applications within 60 days, without a hearing or discretionary review.
- For ADUs permitted by 2025, cities cannot require the owner to live at the property.
- Cities cannot charge any impact fees for ADUs under 750 sqft; fees for larger ADUs are limited.
- Homeowners associations must allow the construction of ADUs.
- ADUs can be developed at the same time as a primary unit, under most of the same rules.
- A city must delay code enforcement against an existing unlawful ADU to allow it to be legalized.
- For areas where development is county-controlled, all of these same rules apply to counties.

ADUs Subject to Automatic Approval — No Local Limits

Cities must permit certain categories of ADU without applying any local development standards (e.g., limits on lot size, unit size, parking, height, setbacks, landscaping, or aesthetics), if proposed on a lot developed with one single-family home. ADUs eligible for this automatic approval include:

- An ADU converted from existing space in the home or another structure (e.g., a garage), so long as the ADU can be accessed from the exterior and has setbacks sufficient for fire safety.
- A new detached ADU that is no larger than 800 sqft, has a maximum height of 16 feet, and has rear and side setbacks of 4 feet.
- Both of the above options (creating two ADUs), if the converted ADU is smaller than 500 sqft.

“ANY FOOL CAN KNOW. THE POINT IS TO UNDERSTAND.”

~ALBERT EINSTEIN~



ADUs Subject to Ministerial Approval — Minimal Local Limits

Even if not subject to automatic approval, a city generally must approve any attached or detached ADU under 1,200 sqft unless the city adopts a new ADU ordinance setting local development standards for ADUs. If a city adopts such an ordinance, it must abide by the following restrictions:

- No minimum lot size requirements.
- No maximum unit size limit under 850 sqft (or 1,000 sqft for a two-bedroom ADU).
- No required replacement parking when a parking garage is converted into an ADU.
- No required parking for an ADU created through the conversion of existing space or located within a half-mile walking distance of a bus stop or transit station.
- If the city imposes a floor area ratio limitation or similar rule, the limit must be designed to allow the development of at least one 800 sqft attached or detached ADU on every lot.

Adding Units to Multifamily Properties

For the first time, the new laws allow units to be added to multifamily buildings. Cities must permit these types of units in multifamily buildings without applying any local development standards:

- New units within the existing non-living space of a building (e.g., storage rooms, basements, or garages). At least one unit and up to ¼ of the existing unit count may be created this way.
- Two new homes on the same lot as the multifamily building but detached from it, with 4-foot side and rear setbacks and a 16-foot maximum height.

Information gathered from Californians for Home Ownership
CAforhomes.org



Sign up for a FREE lunch with me!

Once a week I would love to have lunch with a reader! It can be a learning lunch, a shoot the breeze lunch or just munching in silence (a meditative lunch). Shoot me a message to reserve a time!

EMAIL sendtolisa@att.net (707) 688-4694 TEXT





Aging In Place

With new laws making it easier to place ADU's next to existing home it brings to mind about aging in place. Should you move or stay put after retiring? What about moving before retiring? Is an ADU the way to go? Here are a few things to consider to help determine your next step.

Take a look at the financial, emotional and physical sense to stay put. Taxes, insurance and maintenance will rise with inflation. At some point you will need to hire someone to handle small jobs that physically you no longer are able to manage. It doesn't make sense to keep a large home that will eat up your savings. Placing an ADU next to your kids might be the best decision economically and health wise.

Your current home may become isolating for an older you. Will that 15 minute drive to your friends, store or the doctor still be manageable when you are 80 or 90? With increasing traffic, it may eventually become a 30+ minute drive. If you are open to it, maybe renting out rooms to supplement income would be great along with keeping you social and younger renters can help with tasks you no longer want to do.

Your current home may not be so accommodating for an older you. Stairs, narrow halls and doorways, tubs or small showers may be difficult to maneuver. You might consider renovating now if you plan on aging in your current home. Just plan on having what you borrowed for upgrades to be paid back before you retire. Also, be cautious about reverse mortgages if you do end up needing to move in the future. All your equity could be gone, holding you hostage in a home that no longer works for you.

For some people downsizing years before retirement may be the best route to go. If your children are gone and you no longer need the room, buying the perfect home now may be more sensible while you do still have an income. Current low interest rate along with less maintenance, insurance and utility expenses may allow you to sock away even more retirement savings. Plus, if the future prices keep going up, you will have bought in during bargain times.

Early education and careful planning will help make for better aging and a happier retirement in the best home possible during your golden years!

What to look forward to in my Next Issue...

COVID 19's effect on the housing market.



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