

ADU Universal Checklist

Are you thinking about building an ADU? This checklist will help you understand where ADUs are allowed, and whether your ADU concept complies with the Zoning Code and permitting requirements. We encourage homeowners, designers, and construction professionals alike to understand how the variables covered in this checklist may affect a specific ADU project, before you create building plans.

The ADU Ally is here to help. If you need help with the questions on this checklist, please reach out to our ADU Ally at the Permit Center, at adu.ally@sanjoseca.gov or 408-793-5302.

Online help. For the questions about property designations, visit www.sjpermits.org and tap “Permits & Property Information.” Enter your address; on the next screen, click on your property; and then select “Property Information,” a list of designations will then appear.

Learn more: www.sanjoseca.gov/ADUs

QUESTION	YES	NO	OUTCOME/ACTION
SECTION A. PROPERTIES THAT QUALIFY FOR AN ADU			
1. Minimum Lot Size. Is the property at least 3,000 sq. ft.?			If yes, an ADU is allowed. If no, an ADU is not allowed.
2. Zoning. Is the property in a residential zone that begins with R-1, R-2, or R-M? Or, is the property in a Planned Development (PD) zone that allows ADUs? Find zoning designation: www.sjpermits.org For PD Zones, to find out what is allowed, speak with a Planner at 408-535-3555 or visit the Planning Counter in the Permit Center.			If yes, an ADU is allowed. If no, an ADU is not allowed.
3. One Single-Family Home. ADUs are allowed only on properties with one single-family home. Is there one, and only one, single-family home on the property?			If yes, an ADU is allowed. If no, an ADU is not allowed.
SECTION B. PROPERTY DESIGNATIONS			
4. Easements. Does the property have any dedicated easements? Easements are most accurately described on the Title Report that came with the purchase of your home (if necessary, you can purchase a new report from a title company). Tract and parcel maps may also show easements; find these maps at the County Surveyor Record Index tool at http://bit.ly/2ZhGjXc .			Do not construct the ADU within the easement.
5. Historic Districts. Is the property located in a Historic District identified on the California Register of Historic Resources? Find historic designations: www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/			If yes, speak with a Planner. You may need a Planning Permit.
6. Geohazard Zone. Is the property in a designated “geohazard” or “landslide” zone? Designations: www.sjpermits.org			If yes, you need a Geologic Hazard Clearance. Contact Public Works: 408-535-7802 or pwgeneralinfo@sanjoseca.gov
7. Flood Zones. Is the property in Flood Zones A, AE, AH, or AO? <i>Note: Properties designated D or X are excluded from these requirements.</i> Designations: www.sjpermits.org Questions: 408-535-7803 or floodzoneinfo@sanjoseca.gov			If yes, see flood zone design requirements in Bulletin #211, found at www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=39040

continued >

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SECTION C. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS - Municipal Code Section 20.30.150: http://bit.ly/33Knz6c													
<p>A great way to ensure your proposed ADU complies with the Zoning Code Development Standards in this next section is to meet with a City Planner. This can help avoid designing plans that will not be approved. Find Planner service hours at www.sanjoseca.gov/planning. Come to the Permit Center, and please bring this Universal Checklist and a rough sketch of your property showing dimensions and the location of the main home and location of the proposed ADU.</p>													
<p>8. Location. Is your proposed ADU located as follows?</p> <p>Attached units: Must share a wall with main residence, or share a roof structure with main residence and be separated by no more than 10 feet.</p> <p>Detached units: Must be located in the rear yard or 60 feet from the front property line, with a minimum 6-foot separation from the main dwelling unit. The ADU may be attached to an existing or proposed detached garage or accessory building; no direct access between the two is allowed..</p>			<p>If yes, your planned location for the ADU is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>										
<p>9. Size. Does the size of the proposed ADU comply within the maximum limits expressed in the City’s Zoning Code, as shown in the table below?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="168 814 688 982"> <thead> <tr> <th>Lot Size</th> <th>Maximum Floor Area</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3000 - 5,444 sf</td> <td>600 sq. ft.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5,445 - 9,000 sf</td> <td>700 sq. ft.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9,001 - 10,000 sf</td> <td>800 sq. ft.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10,001 - and up sf</td> <td>900 sq. ft.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Lot Size	Maximum Floor Area	3000 - 5,444 sf	600 sq. ft.	5,445 - 9,000 sf	700 sq. ft.	9,001 - 10,000 sf	800 sq. ft.	10,001 - and up sf	900 sq. ft.			<p>If yes, your planned ADU size is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>
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<p><i>SKIP this question unless your proposed ADU is an attached unit.</i></p> <p>10. Size/Area Limitation for Attached ADU. The area may not exceed 50% of the primary dwelling unit area. The square footage of all living areas (existing or proposed) connected by a door or other opening counts toward the allowable square footage of the ADU. Does the size of your attached ADU comply with this rule?</p>			<p>If yes, the size of your attached ADU size is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>										
<p>11. Rear Yard Coverage Limit, May Affect ADU Size. The total coverage of the rear yard — including cumulative coverage by the ADU, accessory buildings, and structures such as a shed, gazebo, etc. — may not exceed 40% of the rear yard. This may affect the size of your ADU. Does your project comply with this rule?</p> <p>Definition of a rear yard: Municipal Code Section 20.200.1460 at http://bit.ly/31SzcGh</p>			<p>If yes, your project is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>										
<p>12. Setbacks. Does your proposed ADU comply with these rules for setbacks?</p> <p>Attached units: Same setback requirements as apply to the main house.</p> <p>Detached units: Must be set back 60 feet minimum from front property line. Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rear and side setbacks less than 3 feet are subject to fire mitigation measures, see p. 4. - A second story must be set back 5 feet from both rear and side property lines. <p>Corner lots: A 10-foot setback is required on the street side.</p> <p>Lots ½ acre or greater along riparian corridors: Minimum 100-foot setback required.</p>			<p>If yes, the setbacks for your ADU are in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>										
<p>13. Height. Does your proposed ADU comply with these height limitations?</p> <p>Attached units: Same height requirements and limitations as main house.</p> <p>Detached units: One-story - 18 feet maximum. Two-story - 24 feet maximum.</p>			<p>If yes, the height of your ADU is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>										

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SECTION C. - CONTINUED						
<p>14. Sleeping Area. Does the sleeping area or bedroom/s planned for the ADU comply with the standards shown in the table below?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="167 331 863 449"> <tr> <td data-bbox="167 331 863 369">Required - Studio (living/sleeping area) or 1 bedroom.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="167 369 863 407">2 bedrooms are only allowed in ADUs from 800 to 900 sq. ft.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="167 407 863 449">Maximum bedroom size: 400 sq. ft.</td> </tr> </table>	Required - Studio (living/sleeping area) or 1 bedroom.	2 bedrooms are only allowed in ADUs from 800 to 900 sq. ft.	Maximum bedroom size: 400 sq. ft.			If yes, your layout for the sleeping area is allowed. If no, your plans will not be approved.
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2 bedrooms are only allowed in ADUs from 800 to 900 sq. ft.						
Maximum bedroom size: 400 sq. ft.						
<p>15. Kitchen, Bathroom, Storage. Does your proposed ADU comply with these rules for the kitchen, bathroom and storage areas?</p> <p>Kitchen - Must have a sink, food preparation counter, storage, cabinets, and permanent cooking facilities such as oven and range or cooktop</p> <p>Bathroom - Only one bathroom is allowed. It must include a sink, toilet, and shower and/or bath facilities. No half bathroom is allowed.</p> <p>Storage - A closet or other enclosed storage area cannot exceed 60 sq. ft.</p>			If yes, your ADU concept is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.			
<p>16. Front Yard ADUs - If you are proposing an attached ADU in the front yard, does it comply with this rule?</p> <p>For an attached ADU, the front door cannot be on same street-facing façade as that of primary residence, with some exceptions. Speak with a Planner concerning exceptions. Detached ADUs are not allowed in the front yard.</p>			If yes, this front yard ADU is allowed. If no, this design for a front yard ADU is not allowed.			
<p>17. Second Story Window Sill Height. If you have a second story ADU, the sill height for any openings must be a minimum 5 feet from the floor for walls nearest to rear and side property lines. Does your project comply with this rule?</p>			If yes, this window design is allowed. If no, the plans will not be approved.			
<p>18. Historic Area Design Standards - Is the property is listed on the California Register of Historic Resources?</p> <p>Find historic designations: www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/</p> <p>Note: The historic area design standards apply to both attached and detached ADUs.</p>			If yes, the ADU must incorporate the main unit’s architectural style, materials, and colors, including but not limited to roofing, siding, windows, and doors.			
<p>19. Parking Requirements for the ADU. Does your proposed ADU comply with the either the requirement to provide a parking space OR qualify for an exemption?</p> <p>Exemptions: Many ADUs qualify for a parking exemption in accordance with state law. Please see the Parking Requirements page at www.sanjoseca.gov/ADUs for a list of the exemption criteria.</p> <p>Parking space location: If you are required to provide a parking space, it must be located on a surface free of mud or dust, and may be located within the front and side setbacks of the property, with a minimum driveway length of 18 feet.</p>			Your project will be evaluated for compliance with parking requirements. Either provide a space or demonstrate that it qualifies for an exemption.			
<p>20. Parking Requirements for Main Home after a Garage Conversion. If you converted a garage to an ADU, does your project comply with these requirements?</p> <p>If a garage is converted to an ADU, the main dwelling parking spaces must be replaced; they may be uncovered and located in front or side setback areas. The homeowner may be eligible for a reduction of one space of required parking per Municipal Code Section 20.90.220.B.1.b: http://bit.ly/30bFcct</p>			Either replace the main dwelling parking spaces or demonstrate that it qualifies for an exemption as allowed by the Municipal Code.			

QUESTION	YES	NO	OUTCOME/ACTION
SECTION D. FIRE SAFETY & EMERGENCY ACCESS			
Your ADU project will be reviewed for compliance with the California Fire Code (CFC) so that projects are built for safety and ease of access during an emergency. For questions relating to fire requirements and safety, call the City's Fire Prevention Bureau: 408-535-7750			
21. Fire sprinklers. Is the primary residence protected by fire sprinklers?			If yes, the ADU must have a fire sprinkler system.
22. Fire sprinklers and Attached ADUs. Is the project an Attached ADU greater than 500 square feet AND does the overall gross floor area with the main unit exceed 3,600 square feet?			If yes, the entire house and ADU are required to be protected with a fire sprinkler system.
23. ADU Address. Does the ADU have its own address and is the address visible and legible from the street? Premises Identification guidelines: www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=9323 . On the Site Plan for plan submittal, show the address location on the primary dwelling unit and on the ADU.			If no, please complete Form #302, found at www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=25943
24. ADU Access. Is the distance from the street curb of the lot to all portions of the proposed ADU no greater than 200 feet as measured along a minimum 3-foot clear path to all sides of the ADU? On the Site Plan for plan submittal, show the distance along the minimum 3-foot clear path from the front property line to the ADU's farthest exterior side or projection, whichever is farthest.			If "No" to questions 24, 25 or 26, your project may require a Fire Variance that entails additional safety measures. Contact Fire Permit staff at 408-535-7750 for direction.
25. Hydrant Proximity. Are all exterior walls of the ADU within 400 feet of a fire hydrant? On the Site Plan Vicinity Map for plan submittal, mark one or more locations of fire hydrants closest to the project. Indicate the distance from the hydrant/s to the farthest exterior wall of the ADU, using the minimum 3-foot clear path of travel.			Variance application: www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=9343
26. Hydrant Water Flow. Is a minimum flow of 1,000 gpm at 20 psi available from the closest hydrant? You must submit a letter from your Water Company that contains this water flow data with your building permit application. Instructions for contacting your Water Company are at www.sanjoseca.gov/ADUs on the Fire Requirements webpage.			If the flow is other than 1,000 gpm at 20 psi, Fire staff will perform flow calculations and make recommendations accordingly.
SECTION E. MISCELLANEOUS			
27. Tree Removal. Will constructing an ADU require removal of an ordinance-size or heritage tree? Rules for removing trees: www.sanjoseca.gov/treep permit			If yes, you must obtain a tree removal permit.

ADU ALLY - HERE TO HELP YOU

Our ADU Ally is a staff member that's here to:

- Answer your questions
- Connect you to other staff who may be of assistance
- Schedule your appointment for plan review

Email: adu.ally@sanjoseca.gov

Phone: 408-793-5302