ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is an extra living unit on your property, complete with kitchen, bathroom and sleeping facilities. An ADU may be attached to or detached from the primary single detached dwelling unit or middle housing unit(s) on your property.

What are the basic Code requirements for ADUs?

- **Zoning.** ADUs are allowed as an accessory use to a single-detached dwelling unit in any zone or middle housing in any Residential Zone.
- **Number of ADUs per Lot**. ADUs are counted towards the total number of allowed dwelling units on the lot. A maximum of two accessory dwelling units are permitted per lot. This may be any combination of attached or detached accessory dwelling units. The total number of units allowed on a lot is dependent on the zone in which the property is located (BMC 19.15).
- **Maximum Size and Height.** Internal or attached and detached ADUs may not exceed 1,000 square feet.
  - Note: The Community Development Director may make exceptions to size limitations to allow for the better utilization of existing spaces. Buildings must be at least 5 years old to be eligible for an exception to the size limitation.
- **Parking Requirements.** No additional parking is required for ADUs.
- **Impervious Surface Coverage**. An impervious surface is any surface that is artificially covered or hardened which prevents or impedes water from penetrating the soil. This includes both built structures and covered surfaces, such as your home, driveway, shed, and patio. The maximum impervious surface coverage is dependent on the zone in which the property is located (BMC 19.15).
- **Setbacks.** The front setback is dependent on the development standards for the zone in which the property is located (BMC 19.15). The minimum distance between the structure and the interior property lines is typically 5 feet with some exceptions:
  - Detached ADUs are allowed to be sited at the rear lot line when abutting a public alley that isn't plowed routinely.
  - Conversions of existing structures to an ADU are exempt from setback requirements.
- **Existing Accessory Dwelling Units.** ADUs existing without City approval may be legalized, provided the homeowner applies for all applicable permits.
- **Tree Retention.** Significant and Exceptional trees are required to be retained and protected (BMC 19.26). Tree removal requires a Major Tree Removal Permit.

What are the Building Code Requirements for ADUs?

- **Applicable Codes.** The same requirements for new single-family construction are applicable to detached ADUs. These can be found in the Burien Municipal Code Title 15 or at www.burienwa.gov. When the ADU is attached, the building code requirements are dependent on the total number of attached units.
- **What Permits are Required?** In most cases the construction of a new ADU or the conversion of an existing space into an ADU only requires a building permit. However, additional review criteria and permits may be required when an ADU is proposed within a sensitive area, such as in a Critical Area or within the Shoreline Jurisdiction.
- **Fire Sprinkler Requirements.** New construction of an ADU is required to be reviewed for available water flow, hydrant distance, and fire department access by the Fire Marshal. All new single-detached dwelling units over 1,500 square feet or greater than one-story require sprinklers per Burien Municipal Code.
- **Separate sprinkler systems may not be required when** an existing home adds an ADU with a shared interior door between the home and ADU. However, a sprinkler system may be triggered if it is

found that there is a lack of available water flow, sufficient hydrant distance, or fire department access.

- **Fire Separation.**
  AN ADU IS considered a separated unit and needs to meet the following fire separation requirements**:**
  When a newly built ADU is attached to the primary dwelling unit, fire separation materials will be required as follows:
  - Non-sprinklered buildings: one-hour fire-resistive construction materials required.
  - Sprinklered Buildings: one-half hour fire-resistive construction for sprinklered buildings materials required.

  Detached ADUs must have a separation of 10 feet from the primary structure, measured from wall-to-wall.
- **Sewer Connection.** A detached ADU will require a separate connection to the sewer main. A sewer availability certificate will need to be completed and submitted with the permit application. Where a septic system exists, verification of approval by the King County Health Department will need to be provided with the permit application.
- **Water Connection.** Separate water meters may be required for each newly construction ADU. When an existing space is being converted into an ADU (e.g., garage or basement), a separate water meter may not be required. This will be determined when the Hydrant availability form is approved by the Fire department.
  - A Water Availability Certificate will need to be completed and submitted with the permit application**.**
- **Flow Hydrant Access Review.** A flow hydrant access review is required to be completed by the Fire Marshal, and then submitted by the applicant with the permit application materials where new living space is created within the primary dwelling or existing accessory structure. It is also required where new living space is added on to the primary dwelling or constructed as a detached ADU.
- **Other Utilities.** The City does not require separate meters for electrical or natural gas, but you may want to check with your utility providers for any requirements they may have.
- **Access to Shut-offs and Circuit Breakers.** Occupants of each dwelling unit must have access to all circuit breakers, gas shut-offs for water heater and furnace, and water shut-off valves for water heater and furnace that provide electricity, water, or gas for their unit. This can be a challenge when remodeling to create an ADU within the existing residence.
- **Heating and Ventilation.** A separate heating and ventilation system is required for each dwelling unit and is not allowed to be shared.
- **Hot Water.** A single water heater may be shared where the ADU is located within the primary dwelling unit provided it can be shown that it is sized to provide hot water to both units. If not, a separate hot water heater will need to be provided.
- **Attics and Basements.** Attics and basements can be converted to living space if there is adequate ceiling height. Attics with a sloped ceiling require a minimum ceiling height of 5 feet with not less than 50 percent at a height of at least 7 feet. Basements require a ceiling height of at least 7 feet.
- **Airport Noise Reduction Requirements.** Additional construction requirements to mitigate aircraft noise if your property is east of 1st Ave South. Please ask for the Airport Noise Reduction requirements if this is applicable.
- **How do I Submit a Permit Application?** Apply for a building permit on MyBuildingPermit.com. After selecting Burien as your jurisdiction, select the options below to begin your building permit application.

For the new construction a detached ADU:

Building →Single Family Construction → New Construction→ Residence

For new construction of an attached ADU:

Building →Single Family Construction → Structure Addition → Residence

Building permit fees are value based. Please see the current Community Development Fee schedule to calculate your fees.