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City of Asheville Staff Report

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Date: August 5, 2026

Staff Resources: Chris Collins, AICP, Interim Planning and Urban Design Director

Action Requested: Consideration of a zoning text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Chapter 7 of the Asheville Code of Ordinances, to amend UDO sections 7-2-5 and 7-14-1.

Project Contacts:

- Applicant: City of Asheville

Summary of Petition & Background:

- The zoning text amendment proposes to change the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations as follows:
    - Increase the maximum allowable size of an ADU from 70% of the primary structure's gross floor area or 800 square feet (whichever is less) to 90% of the primary structure's gross floor area or 1,200 square feet (whichever is less);
    - Eliminate the requirement for a parking space to be provided on-site for an ADU;
    - Remove allowances for accessory structures to be built as high as 40' in some instances;
    - Continue to allow ADUs in all residential zoning districts and neighborhood commercial districts; and,
    - Create an allowance for one ADU to be built on a lot containing a duplex rather than just on a lot containing a detached single-family residence.
    - Restrict the maximum allowed building height for a detached ADU to 25 feet. Today the maximum height can increase by one foot for every additional foot of setback provided from the minimum. For reference, the maximum allowable height in the City's residential districts is 40 feet. (Note: height is prescribed to be measured by the UDO to the top of the highest ceiling, so external height could be 15 feet higher than the maximum listed in the ordinance for both primary and accessory residential structures.)
- This proposed amendment aims to increase the flexibility permitted in construction and the livability of an ADU, thereby promoting additional housing options within the City.
- In May of 2024, the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval of a similar amendment concerning "Backyard Housing" that included an allowance to increase the allowed size of an ADU to 1,200 square feet.
- From April 2025 to April 2026, the City received 29 applications to build detached ADUs.

- This proposed amendment is supported by and promotes City-initiated but non-adopted plans and studies as follows:
    - Affordable Housing Plan (2024):
        - Goal 3.2 - Reduce regulatory barriers [to housing] citywide
    - Missing Middle Housing Study (2023):
        - Policy Recommendation 2 - Preserve Existing Neighborhood Character
        - Zoning Recommendation 17 - Allow ADUs More Broadly
            - Allow ADUs with all MMH types, instead of just single-family
            - Limit unit size to 1000 square feet.
            - Reduce minimum parking requirements for ADUs to 0 spaces/unit
- City staff held a stakeholder engagement event on May 20, 2026. This event included representation from neighborhood organizations (including Legacy Neighborhoods), home builders, realtors, and other stakeholder organizations. A summary from this event is attached to this staff report as Exhibit B.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of this zoning text amendment request based on the reasons provided within this report.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan (2018)

- The proposed rezoning supports a number of goals in the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan, including:
    - **Increase and Diversify the Housing Supply** - by promoting zoning policies to encourage more housing (p. 179).
    - **Encourage Responsible Growth -** by promoting small-scale residential units on residential lots with limits aimed at encouraging compatibility and creating flexibility within the planning, permitting, and construction process.

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

This proposal supports the following:

- **Quality Affordable Housing** - By enabling a range of innovative housing options throughout the City.
- **Well-planned and Livable Community -** By enabling a range of housing choices at a small scale that does not harm neighborhood safety while promoting socioeconomic diversity.

Committee(s):

- N/A

Pro(s):

- May promote the development of additional housing options by providing more regulatory flexibility and removing barriers to the construction of ADUs.

Con(s):

- The elimination of the minimum parking requirement for ADUs may increase demand for on-street parking in neighborhoods.

Summary of Amendment

Current UDO Requirement	**Proposed UDO Requirement**	**Summary of Change**
ADU Maximum Size: 70% of the primary residential structure's gross floor area or 800 square feet, whichever is less.	ADU Maximum Size: 90% of the primary residential structure's gross floor area or 1,200 square feet, whichever is less.	Increase in the maximum size allowance by 20% of the primary residence size up to 1,200 square feet.
ADU must provide one on-site parking space	No on-site parking space required for an ADU	Removal of the minimum parking requirement for ADU.
ADU's allowed only on lots containing one single-family residence.	ADU's allowed on lots containing up to two dwelling units.	Allowance for one ADU on a lot containing a duplex.

Suggested Motion to Approve:

- I move to recommend approval of the proposed wording amendments to Chapter 7 of the Asheville Code of Ordinances and find that the proposed amendments are reasonable, are in the public interest, are consistent with the City's comprehensive plan and meet the development needs of the community in that the amendments will: 1) Promote zoning policies to encourage more housing; and, 2) Promote small-scale residential units on residential lots with limits aimed at encouraging compatibility and creating flexibility within the planning, permitting, and construction process.

Attachment(s):

- This document contains the proposed, marked-up zoning text amendments - Marked-Up Proposed Revisions
- This document contains the summary of the engagement event held on May 20, 2026 - Public Engagement Summary Report