



# TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

## Planning and Zoning Department

### Accessory Dwelling Units – FAQs

#### **What are the basics?**

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are considered Accessory Uses and are permitted in all single-family residential zones in Ridgefield.
- There can only be one (1) ADU per residential lot AND at least one property owner must reside in either the principal dwelling unit or the ADU.)
- For ADUs within or attached to the principal dwelling, maintenance of the exterior appearance of the principal dwelling shall be required.
- The Town encourages property owners to create affordable ADUs by deed-restricting the ADU to be rented at an affordable rate as defined in the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30g, for a period of at least 10 years. Please see Zoning Regulation Section 3.3.B.3 for more information.

#### **Where are ADUs allowed?**

- On single-family residentially zoned properties;
- On lots where there is currently only one (1) principal single-family dwelling;
- On lots that are conforming to the minimum lot size of the residential zone that it is in, or if the lot is considered legally non-conforming;
- On lots of less than ½ acre in size (20,000 feet) the ADU must be attached to the principal dwelling unit, unless it served by municipal sewer.

#### **What are the specific size and other requirements of the ADU\*?**

- Size of the ADU:
  - If main dwelling is 2,999 square feet or under: **900 square feet maximum**
  - If main dwelling is 3,000 square feet or more: **1,200 square feet maximum**
- There can be a maximum of two (2) bedrooms in the ADU;
- At least three (3) off-street parking spaces must be provided on the lot, to serve the principal dwelling unit and the ADU. Garage spaces can be counted;
- No additional road (driveway) cuts are allowed;
- At least one side of the ADU must be at or above grade.

\*In some cases, variances may be requested through the Zoning Board of Appeals, when requirements cannot be met. Please see Kelly Ryan, Zoning Board of Appeals, for more information.

#### **What else do I need to do prior to applying?**

- Contact the Inland Wetlands Agent (see below) to check to see if there are wetlands on the property that may affect the feasibility or location of the ADU (especially if detached).
- Contact the Health Department (see below) if the property is served by a septic system to make sure that the septic system is adequate to serve the ADU. A detached ADU may need a separate septic system. It's a good idea to consult

with Health Department early in the process before submitting the Accessory Dwelling Unit (Development application) application, since it is one of the most important requirements.

- Contact the Building Department (see below) to discuss any issues and other required permits for proposed renovations or conversions of the existing space, and to check on other building and safety code requirements, e.g., for ADU egress especially on upper floors.
- Contact the Water Pollution Control Authority (see below) if the property is served by municipal sewer (not served by a septic system).

## Ok, I've done all that, now how do I apply?

**1) ADU use Designation** - Submit a complete online Zoning Permit application through ViewPermit. You will need to upload the following:

1. A-2 survey, showing all structures on the property.
2. Complete sets of floor plans. Note that these plans need not be drawn by an architect, but you will need more detailed plans to satisfy the Building Department for any proposed/needed renovations when you submit the online Developmental Permit Application.
3. Parking plan (including off street parking)
4. Required Application fee.

**2) ADU Addition/alteration/construction** – Submit a Development Application through ViewPermit to request authorization to perform the necessary construction for the ADU. Attach a copy of the issued Zoning Permit to the Development Application.

## Who Do I talk to if I have questions?

**Planning and Zoning Department** – For questions about the permit process and procedures, timeframes for review, application assistance & information, and property information (zones, lot sizes, site plans and surveys, etc.).

<b>Director of Planning &amp; Zoning, Alice Dew</b>	431-2767
<b>Inland Wetlands Agent, Caleb Johnson</b>	431-2383
<b>Zoning Enforcement Officer, Aarti Paranjape</b>	431-2768
<b>Office Administrator</b>	431-2766

**Health Department** – For questions about septic system records, and information about what would be required. If the septic system was built several years ago and there have been no improvements or changes, the Health Department may require testing and engineering information. This can be a limiting factor when considering an ADU. It is recommended that you check on your septic system requirement before proceeding too far in the process.

<b>Director of Health, Edward Briggs</b>	431-2746
<b>Sanitarian, Jennifer Zbell</b>	431-2747
<b>Office Administrator</b>	431-2745

**Building Department** - For questions about what will be required for a building permit. A building permit (Development Permit Application) is a separate online application, obtained after a Zoning Permit is granted for the ADU by the Planning and Zoning Staff.

<b>Building Inspector, Jason Celestino</b>	431-2743
<b>Office Administrator</b>	431-2743

**Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA)** - For questions about sewer availability for properties served by municipal sewers, permit procedures, and connections, etc.

<b>Administrator, Diana Van Ness</b>	431-2734
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