

For those of you I have not met my name is John Hester, I am a resident of the Newlands Heights National Historic District/City of Reno Master Plan Conservation District in the old southwest, and a retiree from the City of Reno, having served as Community Development Director, Redevelopment Administrator, and Assistant City Manager during my 13 years with the City. I am currently the Chief Operating Officer at the bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and have my monthly TRPA Governing Board meeting next Wednesday and annual retreat on Thursday at the Lake. Otherwise I would be in Reno and presenting these comments in person.

I think accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are one of the necessary tools in the toolbox to help address the housing issue. In fact we are working in the Tahoe Basin to help get ADUs built consistent with our Regional Plan and differing Nevada and California state laws. And, I know that here in the Newlands Heights there are existing ADUs. I recognize that this is one of the highest priority implementation actions called for in the City Master Plan Implementation Chapter.

At the same time I also think there should be some guidelines that apply as they are built in the City of Reno. The provisions I request that you consider for inclusion in the ADU code and the italicized comments, including the Master Plan goals and policies that support the proposed guidelines, are:

1. No ADU shall be used as a short term rental. Short term rentals (STRs) do not provide affordable housing (the rationale for their addition to the City Annexation and Land Development Code), negatively impact lodging properties in the City, and often cause noise and other impacts resulting in code compliance issues. This also implements Implementation Plan Chapter policy IMP-4.1c which calls for an ADU ordinance and design standards, taking into account unit size, parking requirements, design and character, tenure limitations, and other compatibility considerations. This proposed guideline does not address using primary residences as STRs but I suggest that issue be addressed at some point in the future. At a minimum, it seems like a revenue source the City should consider to cover City costs for compliance and other services.
2. The square footage of the ADU shall not exceed 25% of the square footage of the primary residence. This implements Master Plan policy N-G.6 which states that accessory dwelling units should be located in the rear of a regular lot or side of a corner lot and be subordinate to the primary structure in terms of scale. This also implements Implementation Plan Chapter policy IMP-4.1c which calls for an ADU ordinance and design standards, taking into account unit size, parking requirements, design and character, tenure limitations, and other compatibility considerations.
3. The height of the ADU shall not exceed the height of the primary residence. This also implements Master Plan policy N-G.6 which states that accessory dwelling units should be located in the rear of a regular lot or side of a corner lot and be subordinate to the primary structure in terms of scale. This also implements Implementation Plan Chapter policy IMP-4.1c which calls for an ADU ordinance and design standards, taking into account unit size, parking requirements, design and character, tenure limitations, and other compatibility considerations.