

STAFF REPORT

Date: April 23, 2025

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Case No. TXT24-00002 (Accessory Dwelling Units) Presentation, discussion, and feedback on potential changes to Reno Municipal Code Title 18 Annexation and Land Development Chapter 18.03, 18.04, 18.09 related to accessory dwelling units.

From: Grace Mackedon, Senior Management Analyst

Department: Development Services - Planning

Summary:

In November of 2023 the Reno City Council initiated a text amendment to Title 18 of Reno Municipal Code (RMC) to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in the City of Reno. An ADU is a smaller independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone single-family home. ADUs are currently not permitted in most areas of the City of Reno. The ordinance was drafted based on City Council direction, reviewed by Neighborhood Advisory Boards (NABs), Planning Commission, and reviewed by other stakeholders at a series of three virtual public outreach meetings. A draft ordinance with redline amendments can be found as **Exhibit A – ADU Draft Ordinance**. The purpose of this agenda item is to update the City Council on the input received on ADUs and for Council to provide feedback on the draft ordinance language.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

Economic Opportunity, Homelessness, and Affordable Housing

Previous Council Action:

November 1, 2023 - During an affordable housing workshop, City Council initiated a text amendment to create regulations, standards and criteria for allowing ADUs.

March 27, 2024- City Council reviewed the ADU survey results and provided specific direction on potential regulations for ADUs.

July 31, 2024 - Council provided specific feedback to staff regarding ordinance language that included prohibition on 0' setbacks, additional setbacks for taller buildings, removing the design requirements, and locational concerns.

Background:

Public input on the proposed ADU draft ordinance was gathered during the extensive outreach process, including the following efforts:

- Media Coverage
- Press releases
- E-mails to people who have expressed interest
- Social media posts
- Presentations to the NABs
 - Ward 1 NAB – February 10, 2025
 - Ward 2 NAB – February 18, 2025
 - Ward 3 NAB – February 4, 2025
 - Ward 4 NAB – February 20, 2025
 - Ward 5 NAB – anticipated Spring 2025
 - Ward 6 NAB – anticipated Spring 2025
- Virtual stakeholder meetings
 - February 19, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
 - February 24, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
 - February 24, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
- Presentation to the Reno Planning Commission – March 19, 2025

Discussion:

During the extensive public outreach, staff requested feedback on specific elements of the draft ordinance. The public comments have been summarized in the attached spreadsheet (**Exhibit B**). All of the individual public comments can be seen in **Exhibit C**. The common concerns are further analyzed below.

Minimum Lot Size: Based on City Council direction, and previous draft ADU ordinances, staff proposed a 9,000 square foot lot size minimum. The lot size minimum would also help address the concern City Council has regarding neighborhood restrictions and effectively prohibit them in certain neighborhoods that have shown concern. However, during community outreach, a handful of people brought up issues regarding the lot size minimum being too large and how it would prohibit ADUs in many neighborhoods that could benefit from ADUs. **Exhibit D** is a map that demonstrates lots above and below 9,000 square feet so the Council can better understand the impact of this requirement and if it may be necessary to reduce or modify the requirement. Staff also received feedback that the proposed lot size minimum is too small, but overwhelmingly the feedback was to either remove the minimum lot size or reduce it.

Short Term Rental Restrictions: Based on the survey conducted in January of 2024, staff anticipated concerns regarding ADUs being used as short term rentals. The direction from City Council at the time was to continue with the ADU ordinance and to potentially address short term

rentals in the future separate from ADUs. If staff were to regulate short term rentals with this ordinance, it would only apply to ADUs and would not address short term rentals on the broader city-wide regulation.

Infrastructure Concerns: During the public outreach process, concerns were raised regarding existing infrastructure, specifically sewer, and if there is capacity to add ADUs. Should the proposed ADU ordinance pass, each ADU and lot would be looked at separately and on a case-by-case basis during the building permit process. Additionally, because an ADU would require a Certificate of Occupancy, they will be paying separate impact fees to help mitigate any potential impacts. ADUs are not anticipated to overburden existing infrastructure.

CC&Rs: Questions came up regarding CC&Rs and who has authority to enforce them. The City does not regulate CC&Rs and like all development, it is up to the property owner to be aware of any specific restrictions or covenants on their property. If restrictions are placed on a private property that restricts ADUs, the zoning code would not supersede that restriction.

The Planning Commission had a robust discussion regarding the potential restrictions for ADUs. Ultimately, Planning Commission recommended the following changes to the ordinance:

- Remove minimum lot size requirements and allow ADUs on all lot sizes, subject to meeting all the requirements for lot coverage
- Remove any architectural requirements
- Remove minimum parking requirements

There was some disagreement on the recommendations for architectural requirements, and parking requirements with several Commissioners wanting to find a middle ground for regulating design and parking to ensure they fit into existing neighborhoods and are adequately parked. Generally, the Planning Commissioners were favorable to allowing ADUs to help support housing.

Financial Implications:

None at this time

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council review the proposed changes and provide feedback.

Proposed Motion:

I move to direct staff to incorporate feedback and return to City Council for an Ordinance Introduction.

Attachments:

Exhibit A – ADU Draft Ordinance

Exhibit B – Summarized Public Comment

Exhibit C – Individual Public Comments

Exhibit D – Square Feet Map