

SIMPLICITY IN DESIGN

Convenience when it comes to ideas.



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU-Casitas).

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), often referred to as secondary suites, granny flats, or backyard cottages,

represent a critical component in the evolving landscape of urban housing. An ADU is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a primary single-family residence. The significance of ADUs extends beyond providing additional living space; they serve as an innovative and practical tool for cities confronting housing shortages, affordability challenges, and the demand for more diverse housing options. In rapidly growing metropolitan areas such as Phoenix, Arizona, ADUs offers a means to increase residential density without compromising neighborhood character or requiring large-scale redevelopment.

The historical development of ADUs within urban planning demonstrates their enduring relevance and adaptability to changing housing needs. Initially, ADUs were not formally defined or regulated within planning policies but emerged organically as families sought to accommodate extended relatives or generate supplemental income. This informal evolution paved the way for their gradual integration into formal housing strategies.

In the early twentieth century, as industrialization accelerated urban growth, ADUs functioned as an unofficial response to housing shortages, particularly during periods of economic hardship such as the Great Depression. Following World War II, however, urban planning trends shifted toward suburban expansion and single-family zoning, resulting in regulations that limited ADU development. In recent years, the City of Phoenix has recognized the renewed potential of ADUs as a strategic solution to address housing demand and enhance residential diversity.

Designing small living spaces such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) presents unique challenges that require innovative solutions to maximize functionality without compromising comfort or aesthetic quality. This section examines design strategies and emerging technologies that address the constraints of compact living environments. By integrating thoughtful spatial planning with modern technology, designers can create practical yet visually refined spaces within limited square footage. Key considerations include the use of multi-functional furniture and integrated fixtures that enhance flexibility and efficiency. Equally important is the strategic application of natural light, color, and material selection to create a sense of openness and visual depth. Additionally, incorporating outdoor spaces—such as patios, balconies, or small gardens—extends the living environment beyond its physical footprint, encouraging outdoor activity and social interaction while effectively increasing the usable area of an ADU.

In response to the growing demand for affordable and flexible housing options, the City of Phoenix has adopted specific regulations governing the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). These regulations address key factors such as zoning requirements, size limitations, owner-occupancy conditions, and parking standards. Parking facilities play a significant role in Phoenix's ADU framework and are intended to reduce the impact on street parking while maintaining accessibility and functionality within residential neighborhoods. Collectively, these measures reflect a balanced regulatory approach designed to encourage housing diversity while preserving neighborhood character, integrity, and livability. By establishing clear and consistent guidelines, ADUs have become a strategic tool in Phoenix's efforts to promote sustainable urban growth and long-term housing affordability.



City of Phoenix

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Text Amendment

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