

Plan Commission Meeting Agenda
January 27, 2026
6:30 pm – Village Hall Court Room
3930 N. Murray Ave., Shorewood, WI 53211



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92644106305?pwd=LmSaICgbbAsuaQnECUds1vDavvbxYC.1>

Or call in (audio only)

+1 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 926 4410 6305

Passcode: 084436

Community members that desire to provide public comment should plan to attend the meeting or submit their comments to bgriepentrog@shorewoodwi.gov through 3:00 pm the day prior to the meeting. Comments received prior to the deadline will be shared with the Plan Commission. Comments after that deadline will need to be shared verbally within the meeting during available public comment periods.

1. Call to order.
2. Approval of October 28, 2025 Plan Commission meeting minutes.
3. Update and further discussion of the Plan Commission's proposed initiative to increase housing opportunities in the village.
4. Further discussion and possible recommendation of a Zoning Code amendment to clarify the location restrictions of office uses within the MX Districts.
5. Discussion and consideration of 2025 Plan Commission Annual Report and Future Initiatives.
6. Future agenda items.
7. Adjournment.

Dated at Shorewood, Wisconsin, this 20th day of January, 2026

Village of Shorewood
Toya Harrell, Village Clerk

Should you have any questions or comments regarding any item on this agenda, please contact Bart Griepentrog, Planning Director, Planning & Development Department, at (414) 847-2640. Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of all people.

It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.



Plan Commission Meeting Minutes October 28, 2025

3930 N. Murray Avenue, Village of Shorewood, WI 53211
DRAFT

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Ann McKaig, Trustee Matt McGovern, Commissioners Kate Flynn Post, Michael Kloehn, Daniel Wycklendt

Absent: Commissioner Therese Klein, Josh Pollack

Others present: Planning Director Bart Griepentrog, Planning Administrative Clerk Crystal Kopydlowski, Village Attorney Nathan Bayer

2. Approval of September 23, 2025 Plan Commission meeting minutes.

Mr. Wycklendt moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Ms. Flynn Post.

Mr. Kloehn proposed two amendments to the minutes. On page two, paragraph 4, he proposed “Mr. Kloehn stated that he was not present when the Village approved the property’s current zoning, but he believes that the property owner had the right to ask for the rezoning. He added that given the request complies with the Comprehensive Plan and is consistent with the surrounding zoning, what is the rational nexus for the village to deny the request. Mr. Kloehn offered that he is not a land use attorney and recommended that the Village Attorney be consulted.” On page 6, under adjournment, he proposed “Prior to adjournment, Mr. Kloehn asked what information that the Village Board will receive regarding the Planning Board’s action, citing that it was a 3-3 vote. He added that the Board members may wish to know the arguments for both sides. Director Griepentrog stated that he had no objection to providing the Village Board with the draft minutes. President McKaig agreed with the importance of the Village Board understanding the rationale for both sides of the vote. She also stated that she welcomed the Plan Commissioners to attend the meeting of the Village Board.”

Vote to approve the minutes with the proposed amendments, 6-0.

3. Introduction of a possible amendment to the Zoning Code with respect to appeals to administrative or Village decisions.

Item was moved up to Item 3 from 4 at request of Village Attorney Nathan Bayer. President McKaig stated that this item was before them from the Village Manager’s office and that there has been a change in the state statutes regarding who is eligible to request an appeal of a decision by the village. The recommendation is to update Village Code so that it is consistent and in line with state statutes. Village Attorney Bayer provided a copy of Chapter 781 of the Wisconsin State Statutes with highlighted sections that pertain to village ordinance and possible changes.

Attorney Bayer explained that the handout was the entirety of Chapter 781 of the State Statutes. He explained that if, by State Statute, your municipality has a zoning code then it must have Board of Appeals to allow for due process. The Board of Appeals also has

jurisdiction to hear municipal decisions such as a denial of a building permit or occupancy. The purpose is to provide due process to the individual who made the original request that was denied. But in recent years, a trend has emerged by which outside individuals who have nothing to do with the application in front of the municipal body have used the Board of Appeals as an affirmative weapon to block things from happening in a municipality that they do not agree with or do not like. When challenges are brought by those other than the applicant often there are extensive delays, and it is argued that projects must cease until the appeals process is complete. This is the same problem at the state level. There is another layer of appeals if one does not agree with a Board of Appeal decision and that is to take the matter to circuit court which is called certiorari review. The circuit court at the state level has been so overwhelmed that changes have been made regarding who has standing to bring a lawsuit challenging an appeal decision. Changes made to State Statute 781.10 2(c) *Certiorari review of certain local decisions* identify the following as who may file a review; the person who submitted the application for an appeal, a person that has an ownership interest in the property that is the subject of the application for an approval, a person that, as a result of the final decision of the application for an approval, sustains actual damages or will imminently sustain actual damages that are personal to the person and distinct from damages that impact the public generally, and a person, other than an individual, that was not organized or incorporated in response to an application (example a neighborhood association). These changes were added to a bill regarding residential developments but could be added to commercial developments at some point. Attorney Bayer's opinion is that because the municipal code references the state statute it should mirror the standing requirement of the state statute. After a conversation with the individual who drafted the changes at the state level, Attorney Bayer explained that the reason for the change was the increase in lawsuits statewide similar to lawsuits and the patterns that have occurred in Shorewood recently. With the change proposed, you need to be the interested party, the owner of the interested party's property or a municipal body to appeal a decision. Attorney Bayer said this is the right path moving forward and will save time and effort dealing with what are often frivolous lawsuits.

President McKaig explained this is before the Plan Commission because actions of the Plan Commission could be subject to appeals. As one of the bodies that participate in the quasi-judicial processes they are being asked for their recommendation to the Village Board. Also, one of the actions the Board of Appeals can take is to remand items back to the Plan Commission or other committees for reconsideration.

Mr. Kloehn asked if this was cleaning up the definition of affected parties to eliminate unnecessary appeals from people that have no reason or standing to do so. Attorney Bayer stated this was correct. President McKaig added that often local ordinances are updated when the state updates statutes because they should not be more or less restrictive at the local level.

Mr. Wycklendt agreed that it was great to clean this up but wondered if leaving out number three from the state statute regarding damages was best. He asked if a neighbor felt they were damaged in some way by a decision, under the state statute, if they could be party to a lawsuit. Attorney Bayer said he did not know the answer to the question, but it is a fair question, and he sees the point. He stated the problem he sees is how do you define what the actual damages are that "are personal to the person and distinct from the damages that impact the public generally". He said this has not been litigated yet. He said that if it was not included in our ordinance that a person who wanted to could bring their case to circuit court for certiorari review. Attorney Bayer also added that the state statute requires a person to have raised an objection at the original board that considered the item before they could

bring a case to circuit court. Mr. Wycklendt liked that that was not included but he just wanted to point out that associations/neighborhood associations cannot be formed to appeal a decision, and this eliminates that. He did say that neighbors could be potentially damaged by something their neighbor does that gets approved by the Village and this eliminates their ability to fight that. President McKaig said they would still have an option of a civil suit against the neighbor. Mr. Wycklendt added that the village would've still approved of it though. He stated that this is eliminating an individual's ability with the way the ordinance is drafted. President McKaig asked if there was a suggestion. Mr. Wycklendt said that they were having a discussion and that he understands the purpose of the state statute and how it relates to issues we have dealt with in the village and how it would be nice to not deal with those issues. Attorney Bayer said that this is uncharted territory because the statute is so new. He has reached out to other municipal attorneys to see if any have done what we were contemplating and has not had any response. He believes this can be done because the enabling statute that states if you have a zoning code you are required to have a board of appeals was also amended to reference 781.10. He does think there is grey area regarding sub three and what it means in relation to sustaining actual "damages". Mr. Wycklendt said leaving this section out limits standing to only the person who was denied something and takes standing away from a neighbor to appeal.

Ms. Flynn Post thanked Attorney Bayer for explaining Shorewood would be on the leading edge of this type of ordinance and her question had been what other municipalities are pursuing this type of strategy. She also asked if this is something that is an attempt to address current pending lawsuits. She is trying to understand the timing. Attorney Bayer said that there is not anything imminent that this would apply to and lawsuits already filed would be grandfathered in. He said at the state level, the drafting was an attempt to shut the valve off on the type of lawsuits being seen statewide with third party attempting to tamp down or delay approved development with the trend being lawsuits filed by "neighborhood associations or groups" created explicitly for purposes of initiating a lawsuit. The original intent of the Board of Appeals was for any individual who was denied a permit, occupancy etc. and was directly affected by the Village/municipality saying no. It was not intended for any third party to try and challenge to stop development or properly issued permits from going forward. This would save time, effort, and money moving forward. President McKaig said the updating of an ordinance to reflect the state statute is not a strategy because it would not affect current filings. This keeps in line with the statute and makes it much clearer who has standing. This update is not aimed at any issue before the village at this time. Ms. Flynn Post said with the commentary on what constitutes a "neighborhood association" makes her questions what is underlying the topic being discussed. She questioned how we define what a legitimate neighborhood association looks like. President McKaig said policy had been contemplated in the past to define what a neighborhood association or group was for transparency purposes when a group wanted to make a statement or wanted the village to take specific action. She added that in terms of the Plan Commission, that is not something within the ordinance requiring definition it is more about defining who has standing or not. Attorney Bayer said the state statute states that the person or entity was not organized or incorporated in response to the application. This is how the state statute defines it and the ordinance language is the same.

Director Griepentrog said the Board of Appeals is not only for zoning and development things. The reason it is before the Plan Commission is because the board of appeals language is in the zoning chapter and any time a change is proposed to the zoning chapter it comes before the Plan Commission first for recommendation. He reminded the Commission that this evening was for introduction purposes and there is no urgency.

President McKaig asked Mr. Wycklendt, if the concept of damages could be defined and quantified, if he would want it added. Mr. Wycklendt said that eliminating number three eliminated anyone other than the applicant from making a lawsuit and he thinks eliminating number three is likely not fair.

Mr. Kloehn asked Director Griepentrog, even though there other administrative decision that would be appealable and giving his involvement with zoning and building, if he would be in favor of tightening up the groups of people who could appeal his department's administrative decisions. Director Griepentrog said a majority of challenges are related to building permits and not necessarily zoning. He is always in favor of making things as clear as they can be. He explained that when an application comes in it is processed and taken to Board of Appeals and they decide whether there is standing. Standing is not administratively ruled on.

Mr. Wycklendt asked if the definition of person is consistent. Attorney Bayer said he changed the language in the proposed ordinance to expand on the language in the state statute. Attorney Bayer said he would revise the language for sub three to bring that back before the commission.

Ms. Flynn Post asked if there is any kind of cost analysis relating to what these types of cases cost the village. Attorney Bayer said the change at the state level stemmed from lawsuits across the state being brought by entities or individuals that didn't fit into the categories. He said these cases have been dealt with and farmed out to outside counsel which ties up time and money. These changes will have a positive impact moving forward.

Barbara Kiely Miller, 4051 N. Downer Avenue, said that some municipal decisions could be made in which neighbors of adjacent properties feel it negatively affects them and their quality of life. She wonders if this change will be boxing themselves in or putting up barriers to allow residents to address decisions by the government they do not feel are right. She said the implications of this should be looked at beyond one or two cases. Attorney Bayer said there is a difference between a municipal decision and a legislative decision. He explained when a legislative body votes in a particular way the review is generally limited to properly noticed meeting, a quorum established and did the right amount of people vote. The court does not have the power to evaluate the rationale of the legislative decision. In this case, what is being addressed is trying to adhere to the intent of the original appellate process or due process that is being provided to someone who was denied a permit (occupancy, license, etc). The Board of Appeals does not deal with anything on the legislative side.

4. Further discussion of the Plan Commission's proposed initiative to increase housing opportunities in the Village.

President McKaig explained that new information within the report provided was in red. Director Griepentrog provided an overview of the item per a slideshow and the memo. After the last meeting, it was discussed that the recommendations be firmed up and to identify anything further needing clarification and public engagement.

Household definition was proposed to be changed from 3 to 4 unrelated adults in a household and cleaning up terms. Mr. Wycklendt stated he was still against 4 and that it should remain 3. Director Griepentrog stated that under the current code two domestic partnerships could not reside in one household together. The code would need to be changed to 4 adults to allow two couples of any kind to cohabitate. Mr. Wycklendt asked for

that to be reconfirmed. Mr. Wycklendt said the reason this existed was to prevent student housing and rooming houses from popping up and keeping this at 3 would tamp that down. With changing this it opens it up to people abusing it.

Bedroom in basement had no opposition. The building code would protect the life and safety of dwelling units in the basement. This exists in the property standards section of the code. Without eliminating this it would limit ADU's in a basement also. Ms. Flynn Post felt this was ready for public engagement and felt most people would be surprised by the prohibition.

Accessory dwelling units had the biggest conversation of all the initiatives. Director Griepentrog said a call was received today asking if ADU's were allowed and from time to time throughout the year the question is asked. He said one thing requiring discussion is whether to allow ADU's only in single unit buildings or to allow in duplexes also. Various regulations have been drafted, and some require further discussion.

Director Griepentrog asked if the question regarding zoning districts (whether ADU's should be allowed in both one- and two-unit households) should be included in public engagement efforts. Trustee McGovern said it should be included in public engagement. Ms. Flynn Post agreed.

Director Griepentrog stated allowing no more than one per lot and the type of ADU (internal, attached or detached) were straightforward.

Director Griepentrog stated that the previous draft allowed 1,000 square feet and was based on Milwaukee's regulation. He stated that Wauwatosa allows up to 900 square feet. He questioned what the maximum size of an ADU could look like. He said there is a bill floating around at the state level that would allow ADU's by right in certain cases and language he has seen would allow them up to the size of the principal dwelling.

Director Griepentrog said that the existing lot coverage ratio is 30% for the principal structure and 10% for a detached accessory structure and greenspace has to be maintained at 30%. He said the question was whether to keep the existing requirements or could those percentages be something different. Ms. Flynn Post asked if lot coverage can be conceptualized for purposes of public engagement such as scenarios, photos, or examples. Director Griepentrog said yes and that can be a way to show this better. Mr. Wycklendt understands lot coverage but felt that 40% with structure could be difficult and complicated. He questioned why we would stop someone from building a bigger garage but not a bigger place with more people. He said the greenspace requirement should remain.

Director Griepentrog recommended no changes to setback requirements. He said he received a comment from the public regarding height and the notion that you could not build a small unit with small ceilings. He had proposed that an ADU could not exceed 20 feet if detached from the residential unit. If the ADU was included with your principal structure, it could be higher. He believed the state legislature's draft would allow the same height as the principal structure.

Director Griepentrog said the most discussion had been regarding parking. He stated that on the conservative side of things current requirements for principal and accessory units could be maintained. This would be limiting. Secondly, unenclosed parking spaces could be allowed to meet the parking requirements and not be enclosed in the garage. Thirdly, would be to remove the requirement for the ADU. And lastly, would be to eliminate requirements

for principal and accessory units. Trustee McGovern preferred to be as flexible as possible with parking. They are going through this whole process to increase housing and he does not want to bog this down with parking mandates and wants to allow people to build them if they would like to. Mr. Wycklendt agrees with flexibility. He wants to maintain parking for the principal structure and not require new parking because you created an ADU. Ms. Flynn Post said on her block a lot of residents park in the alleyways on slabs and she imagines more cars being tucked in every last piece of land in an alley. President McKaig asked if the language under parking could be shortened. Mr. Wycklendt stated he liked the original language and that the proposed questions muddy things. Trustee McGovern stated he would include eliminating the parking requirements in public engagement. Mr. Wycklendt said that parking is always a discussion in the village and eliminating parking at residences could be a problem and changing the rules to allow that could be bad. President McKaig said that for public engagement alternatives need to be more specific. Ms. Flynn Post asked how other municipalities handle parking and ADU's and include that for the public engagement. Trustee McGovern explained that if he wanted to turn his detached garage into an ADU he would not be allowed to because of the existing parking requirements. He said if they want to allow new housing opportunities, they should at least discuss this in the community. Mr. Wycklendt asked what the current requirement was. Director Griepentrog stated it is one parking space per residential unit and it must be enclosed. Director Griepentrog said one option to consider would be to eliminate the enclosed requirement. Mr. Wycklendt asked if someone could then build a new house with no garage. Director Griepentrog said yes, if they had a driveway or parking slab. Mr. Wycklendt suggested no additional parking be required beyond the existing requirement because then there would be no requirement for a garage.

Mr. Kloehn asked what type of public engagement would occur. Director Griepentrog proposed an online webinar type version that would exist online, and people could watch at their leisure or historically we have had in-person engagements that, in his opinion, have not been well attended and do not provide new commentary. He said he has had success with online surveys. Mr. Kloehn said this is the commission's fourth time discussing the topic and he suggested creating the ordinance and bringing it back for consideration. Mr. Wycklendt agrees with moving an ordinance forward. Ms. Flynn Post favored a survey to the public for engagement. Mr. Kloehn asked whether the public hearing at the Village Board was public engagement. President McKaig said the current Board really values public engagement and that at least a survey component before the public hearing would be appreciated. Director Griepentrog said he could bring a draft of a survey back to the Plan Commission if they wished. Ms. Flynn Post said she could assist with the survey and believed that residents liked engagement. She said a survey could be a way to educate on the topics as well. President McKaig asked if the survey should focus on ADU's and the other three topics be sent to the Village Board as updates based on Plan Commission consensus. Ms. Flynn Post agreed. Mr. Wycklendt was more with Mr. Kloehn's suggestion of drafting the ordinance and sending it to the Village Board. President McKaig suggested drafting the changes for household, basement bedrooms, and duplexes and doing a survey for the ADU's and then bringing those changes. Mr. Wycklendt questioned including household definition in the survey.

Director Griepentrog said the last initiative was to reallow duplexes in the duplex district. In 1983, that option was removed. At the last meeting, he heard moving forward with asking for additional public engagement on that but noting that in the past all residential districts had allowed duplexes. He did not hear desire to go that far (allowing in all residential districts). Mr. Wycklendt said that if his neighbor was converting to multi-family he'd be irritated and that is probably why this exists. Director Griepentrog said the only confusing

part is that we have properties zoned R-6 One and Two-Household Districts but then property owners cannot develop a duplex. He said at the very least the district name should be modified. Mr. Wycklendt questioned why opening this up because it would be expensive anyway. Trustee McGovern preferred to allow duplexes in residential districts pre-1956 or at least getting comments on it. The purpose of this is to generate more housing and allow flexibility. Ms. Flynn Post tends to favor duplexes in all residential districts, but this would require community engagement.

President McKaig said ADU's is the policy that brings the most questions and this should be prioritized and that duplexes should be held until next year. She suggested drafting the changes and creating a survey with the first three initiatives and withholding duplexes until a later time. Trustee McGovern agreed. Mr. Kloehn agreed with prioritizing ADU's. Director Griepentrog asked if he should bring the survey back for review. The consensus was no.

5. Introduction of a possible amendment to the Zoning Code with respect to clarifying the location restrictions of office uses within the MX Districts.

Director Griepentrog provided a brief overview of the item per the staff report and slideshow. This is an introduction to a possible amendment to the zoning code. In 2024, the Village Board allowed for a location specific opportunity for office uses in the MX District. Typically, office uses are not allowed because they are seen as dead storefront without a lot of activity. With the draft of the commercial zoning update, they were only allowed in the rear or upper story of a building. An application was received from the owner of a very large storefront asking for a change stating this was never going to be feasible. The Board adopted the change with a limitation on the total frontage or percentage that could be occupied by an office. In drafting the ordinance, an error was made using the wrong symbol that inadvertently removed office uses from the upper stories or the rear of the ground floor. Director Griepentrog said he would like to revert to the proper symbol in Table 535-25B and reword the exception language for large buildings. The proposed language change is as follows: *"As an exception, uses also identified with an "*" may also be located within the primary frontage of buildings with at least 120 linear feet of primary frontage, so long as those total uses, not including a lobby, occupy no more than 90 linear feet or 50% of the frontage along the primary façade, whichever is less, but in no case shall they be located along the primary façade within 60 feet from a street corner as measured from the corner of the building"*. This makes this an exception and not a restriction. A recommendation could be at the next meeting and then the changes would go to the Village Board for consideration.

Mr. Kloehn asked if this was a housekeeping item. Director Griepentrog said yes to correct his incorrect draft. Mr. Kloehn asked if the zoning code that was produced did not properly reflect the action of the Village Board. Director Griepentrog said no it was that his draft went further than it was supposed to and that it was not caught. Mr. Kloehn was in favor of moving forward with the ordinance. Ms. Flynn Post asked if all the steps were required to make this correction. Director Griepentrog said yes.

6. Future agenda items.

No applications have been received for the next meeting.

7. Adjournment.

Mr. Wycklendt moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Seconded by Trustee McGovern.
Vote to adjourn 5-0.

Recorded by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Crystal Kopydlowski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Crystal Kopydlowski
Planning & Development Administrative Clerk



Report to Plan Commission January 27, 2026

Prepared by: Bart Griepentrog, AICP, Planning & Development Director

3. Update and further discussion of the Plan Commission's proposed initiative to increase housing opportunities in the village

Overview

Throughout 2025, the Plan Commission undertook discussions to increase housing opportunities within the Village of Shorewood's Municipal Code. These opportunities were held in relation to modernizing the code and working towards greater affordability. (See meeting packets and minutes from April 22, 2025, May 27, 2025, July 22, 2025, August 26, 2025, September 23, 2025 and October 28, 2025 within the [Agenda Center](#) or this packet for more information.)

The suggested increase in housing opportunities have been related to four topics:

- An update to the Village's definition of household
- The allowance of bedrooms in basements
- The allowance of accessory dwelling units
- The reintroduction of permitted duplexes within the Village's existing one- and two-unit household residence district

Within discussions, it was noted that these updates would likely not have dramatic impacts to the Village's current housing supply, but they are within the current scope of the project. If other ideas, such as increased density within residential zoning districts or increased height within commercial districts were desired, additional discussion and engagement, likely within a Comprehensive Plan update, would be necessary.

In October, the Plan Commission requested that public engagement on three of these topics be undertaken in the form of an online survey. This survey was released on January 8th within the Village Manager's memo, and was subsequently republished and posted to the Village's social media outlets. The survey closed on January 22nd and the results can be found within this packet. A total of 280 responses were received. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of respondents lived in Shorewood, and 90% owned their housing unit. Eight percent (8%) rented within a single- or duplex-unit, and less than 1% rented within a building with three or more units. Forty percent (40%) of respondents reported living in Shorewood for more than 20 years, 24% reported living in Shorewood between 10 and 20 years, 20% of respondents reported living in Shorewood between 5 and 10 years, and 16% of respondents reported living in Shorewood for less than 5 years. Forty percent (40%) of respondents were from the "northwest quadrant" of the village, 28% of respondents came from the "northeast," an equal amount (28%) came from the "southeast," and only 4% came from the southwest.

Discussion Topics and Next Steps

1. Household definition

The clarity of the Village's current definition of household has been problematic, and the allowed relationships have been seen as limiting for non-traditional households, such as unrelated adults. Upon discussion, the following updates **shown in red** have been suggested, which would add semicolons to organize and clarify household types, add civil unions and domestic partnerships, and increase the number of non-related adults that could live together from three to four.

HOUSEHOLD

Persons living together in a dwelling unit in any of the following scenarios: An individual; any number of **adults** related by blood, adoption, marriage, **civil union or domestic partnership**; or a group of not more than **four** adults of any relationship. **Any children related by blood, adoption or under legal guardianship to an adult living within the dwelling unit shall be included within the household.**

Except as provided under § 62.23(7)(i), Wis. Stats., the foregoing definition of "household" may not be used or applied to prohibit or restrict the following:

- (1) A community living arrangement with a capacity of eight or fewer persons as described and meeting the criteria under § 62.23(7)(i), Wis. Stats., that is licensed, operated or permitted under the provisions set forth in § 62.23(7)(i), Wis. Stats.
- (2) A foster home under the provisions of Ch. 48, Wis. Stats., whereby a foster home license is issued, provided that the number of foster children shall not exceed four, unless all are in the relationship to each other of brother or sister.
- (3) An adult family home licensed under § 50.033(1m)(b), Wis. Stats., and described in and subject to the provisions of §§ 50.01(1)(b) and 62.23(7)(i), Wis. Stats, which provide that the number of additional adults residing at such adult family home shall not exceed four, unless all of the additional adults are siblings each of whom has a developmental disability.

The public engagement survey included a question related to this topic. The majority of respondents (48%) said that they felt the Village should keep its current definition. Thirty eight percent (38%) felt that the Village should allow up to four or more unrelated adults to live together, and 15% were unsure or did not know.

Next steps: Provide direction on the proposed change or any modifications so that an ordinance amendment, inclusive of references throughout the municipal code, can be prepared for recommendation.

2. Bedrooms in basements

Since the Village's 1956 Code Update, a prohibition within Chapter 326 Housing and Property Standards has existed that disallows space within a basement from being used for sleeping purposes or as a dwelling unit. [\[326-7D\]](#)

Staff has been unable to find documentation as to why this prohibition was added, but believes it was due to a concern of overcrowding or as a desire to support living standards. Staff confirmed that Whitefish Bay, Wauwatosa and Milwaukee do not have such prohibitions and notes that building code requirements should alleviate any concerns related to life safety issues.

In order to allow basements to be used for sleeping purposes or as a dwelling unit (should accessory dwelling units become permitted) removal of this code section has been suggested.

A large majority (69%) of survey respondents supported the removal of this prohibition from the code. Less people (21%) favored keeping it, and 10% stated that they were unsure.

Next steps: Provide direction on the proposed change or any modifications so that an ordinance amendment can be prepared for recommendation.

3. Accessory dwelling units

Many communities, including Wauwatosa and Milwaukee, allow accessory dwelling units to be constructed within their low-density residential districts. The State of Wisconsin is also currently contemplating legislation that would require municipalities to allow such types of units within certain circumstances. (See the [League of Wisconsin Municipalities Summary of Housing Bill Package](#), updated on October 13, 2025)

An accessory dwelling unit is generally defined as a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e. detached) residence. Accessory dwelling units can be created through modifications to an existing dwelling unit (internal) or accessory structure (detached), or through an addition to an existing dwelling unit (attached) or accessory structure (detached).

The Plan Commission has expressed favorability to allowing accessory dwelling units and has discussed various regulations that could be adopted to define their allowance within the context of Shorewood's neighborhoods. While many of the general topics or specific regulations have been agreed upon, several of them, which could be seen as limiting their feasibility, have been identified for further refinement. Those topics have been **identified in red text with options for discussion** in the following set of draft regulations. Questions within the public engagement survey may also be used to guide discussion.

A majority of survey respondents (68%) believed that ADUs should be allowed in Shorewood, subject to defined regulations. Twenty-three percent (23%) were not in favor, and 10% were unsure.

Draft regulations for ADUs for discussion

- Zoning Districts: R-1 – **R-6** (The Village's one- and **two-unit** residential districts)

Options for discussion: Should accessory dwelling units be allowed for both one- and two-unit residences or should they be limited to only one-unit residences? Of the 280 respondents, 200 respondents (71%) supported ADUs for single-unit residences and 117 respondents (42%) supported them at duplexes.

- Number: No more than one per lot
- Type: Internal (i.e. attic/basement), attached (rear or side yard only), or detached (garage)

A majority of survey respondents (64%) stated that ADUs of all types should be allowed. An additional 4% said that ADUs should be allowed, but only if attached to the primary structure.

- Size: **Not to exceed gross floor area of principal dwelling or 1,000 sq. ft., whichever is less**

Options for discussion: The proposed State legislation would limit accessory dwelling units only to being smaller than the principal use (one-unit dwelling). The current draft reviewed by the Plan Commission would limit them to no more than 1,000 sq. ft. Is 1,000 square feet the appropriate maximum? Wauwatosa limits accessory dwelling units to no more than 900 sq. ft. Milwaukee allows accessory dwelling units to be up to 1,000 or 1,300 sq. ft., depending on circumstances. Other limiting factors include lot coverage

noted below. Survey respondents indicated that not exceeding existing lot coverage maximums was the most important regulation, and ranked size of the unit 5th behind height, architecture and placement.

- Lot coverage: Existing lot coverage ratios (30% maximum for principal structure and 10% maximum for detached accessory structures) and green space requirements (30% minimum) to be maintained

Options for discussion: Should these lot coverages be maintained as is or should lot coverage be allowed up to 40% for a combination of principal and accessory structures if an accessory dwelling unit is developed. Are there other scenarios to consider? Survey respondents indicated that not exceeding existing lot coverage maximums was the most important regulation. However, the survey did not get into the nuance of lot coverage between principal and accessory buildings.

- Setbacks: Existing setbacks (side/rear 3 – 10 ft.) to be maintained (building code also requires that a detached accessory structure be separated by 10 feet from the principal building or 5 feet if fire rated)
- Height: Same as principal building or not to exceed 20 ft. if detached (measured from grade to the peak of the roof)

Options for discussion: Should detached accessory structures be allowed at the same height as principal structures (30 ft.)? Height limits were ranked as the second most important regulation to maintain.

- Design: Approval from Design Review Board required, if exterior modifications are undertaken (DRB to identify possible guidelines)

Architecture/design was ranked as the third most important regulation to identify.

- Parking: No additional parking shall be required; existing parking must be maintained.

Options for discussion: Should current parking requirements be kept? Should parking be exempted from accessory dwelling units or on lots with accessory dwelling units? Should unenclosed parking spaces, including driveways, be allowed to meet required parking? Parking type and requirements were the least important regulations to maintain or identify in the survey.

- Short-term rental prohibition: Notation that rentals of less than 7 days are prohibited (same as regulations throughout residential districts, but included for reinforcement)

Thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents favored allowing ADUs only if short-term rentals were prohibited and enforced. Twenty five percent (25%) acknowledged the difficulty of enforcing short-term rentals, but said the benefits of ADUs outweighed their concerns, where as 24% said they did not believe the benefits outweighed their concerns. Only 10% noted that they favored both ADUs and short-term rentals.

- Owner occupancy at the time of construction.

A large majority of respondents (74%) stated that owner-occupancy should be required at the time of ADU creation.

Next steps: Provide direction on the allowance of ADUs in Shorewood, including confirmation of the components that should be included within regulations, so that an ordinance amendment can be prepared for recommendation.

4. Duplexes in two-unit zoning district (R-6)

Despite the allowance of duplexes within the R-6 district, the Zoning Code [\[535-19F\(6\)\]](#) also states that “It shall be unlawful to construct a two-unit residential building on any vacant lot upon which no prior dwelling has been constructed or on a lot previously occupied by a single-unit residential building in this district.” In other words, this paragraph downzones property within the district by prohibiting the construction of a new duplex on a vacant lot and the conversion of a single-unit house within the district into a duplex.

In prior discussions, the Plan Commission agreed to continue discussion on re-allowing duplexes but agreed to not pursue a discussion on prohibiting the conversion of duplexes into single-unit households.

Next steps: Direction was provided to staff at the October 28, 2025 meeting to prioritize the first three opportunities for recommendation before reconsidering revised duplex regulations.

Materials Enclosed

- Survey results
- Letter from the Conservation Committee
- Letter from AARP Wisconsin
- The ABCs of ADUs from AARP

Responses Overview Closed

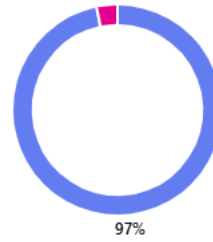
Responses

280



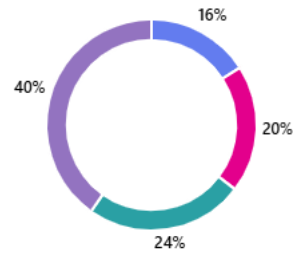
1. Are you a current resident of Shorewood?

- Yes, I currently live in Shorewood. 271
- No, I do not currently live in Shorewood. 9



2. How long have you lived in Shorewood?

- Less than 5 years 43
- Between 5 and 10 years 53
- Between 10 and 20 years 66
- Greater than 20 years 109



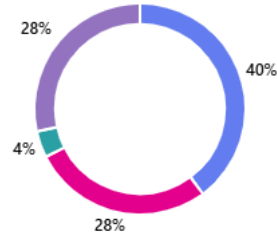
3. Do you own or rent your housing unit?

- I own the housing unit where I live (house or condo). 245
- I rent within a one- or two-unit building. 21
- I rent within a building with three or more units. 5



4. Based on the intersection of E. Capitol Dr. and N. Oakland Ave., which "quadrant" of the village do you live in?

● Northwest	108
● Northeast	75
● Southwest	11
● Southeast	77



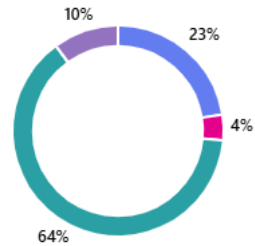
5. If you would like to be kept informed of future discussions related to this topic, please provide your name and email address, but understand that your answers will be kept anonymous.

114

Responses

6. Subject to defined regulations, would you like the Village to allow ADUs?

● No.	63
● Yes, but only if integrated or attached to the primary structure.	11
● Yes, all types, including integrated or attached to the primary structure, and detached accessory structures.	178
● Unsure / I don't know.	28

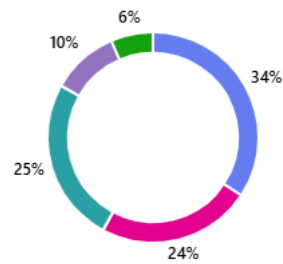


7. If the Village were to allow ADUs, subject to defined regulations, do you think they should be allowed at which of the following property types (select all that apply):

● Single-unit residences	200	71%
● Duplex residences	117	42%
● Unsure / I don't know	23	8%
● Don't allow ADUs	60	21%

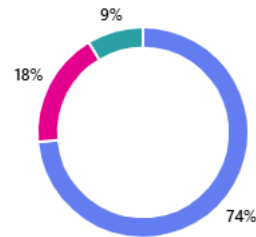
8. Based in part on State Statutes, local staff capacity and the ease offered by online platforms, the enforcement of the Village's prohibition on short-term rentals (i.e. Airbnb) is difficult in Shorewood. Understanding this difficulty and the possibility that ADUs could be rented out for short-term rentals, do you still favor allowing ADUs in Shorewood?

- Yes, I acknowledge the difficulty, but don't believe it outweighs the benefits provided by ADUs. 96
- No, I acknowledge the difficulty and believe the negatives of short-term rentals outweigh the benefi... 66
- Yes, I favor allowing ADUs, but only if short-term rentals are prohibited and enforced. 71
- Yes, I favor allowing ADUs and believe short-term rentals should be allowed in Shorewood, including... 29
- Unsure / I don't know 18



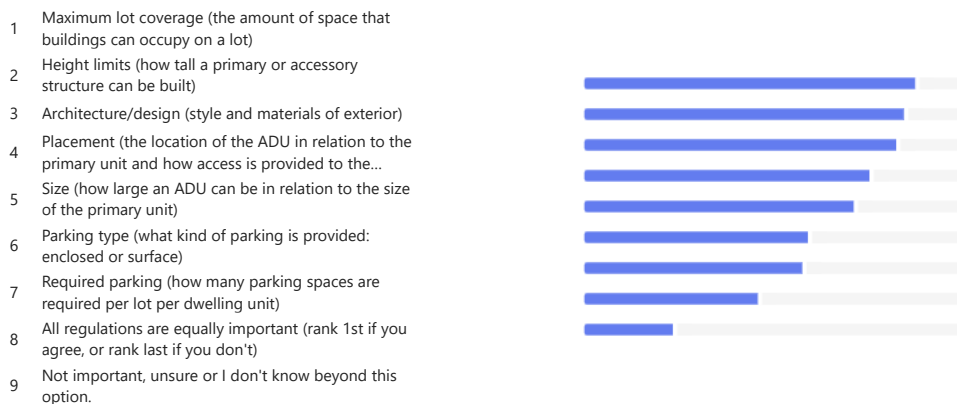
9. The Village does not require or verify owner occupancy of residential units. However, many communities require that primary structures be owner-occupied at the time of creation of an accessory dwelling unit. This limits the creation of ADUs but lessens concerns of absentee landlords. Should the Village include this type of requirement?

- Yes, require owner occupancy of the primary residence at the time of ADU creation. 206
- No, allow all types of residential occupancy to create an ADU. 50
- Unsure / I don't know 24



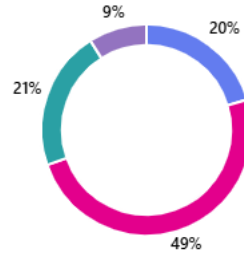
10. If the Village were to allow the development of ADUs, but greater flexibility is needed within the Village's Zoning Code to make their development feasible, which of the following regulations do you think are the most important to maintain or identify?

Drag each option up or down to identify your priorities with the most important being placed on the top. (If you don't believe the Village should allow ADUs and don't want to weigh in on the priority of regulations, you may skip this question.)



11. Would you be interested in building/creating an ADU at your personal property in Shorewood?

● Yes	57
● No	138
● Unsure / I don't know	60
● N/A - I don't own property in Shorewood.	25



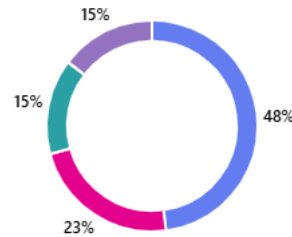
12. Do you have any general comments or thoughts on ADUs that you would like to share?

155
Responses

See attached.

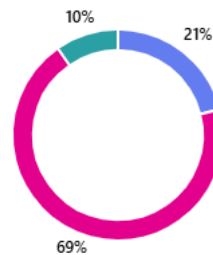
13. The Village's current definition of household provides that no more than three unrelated adults, plus any minor children, may live together in a dwelling unit. Should this definition be maintained?

● Yes, keep the current definition.	134
● No, modify the current definition to allow for up to four unrelated adults, plus any minor children, to...	64
● No, modify the current definition to allow <u>more</u> than four unrelated adults, plus any minor children, to...	41
● Unsure / I don't know.	41



14. The Village's Housing and Property Standards currently prohibit the use of basements for sleeping purposes or as an individual dwelling unit. Should this prohibition be maintained?

● Yes, keep the current prohibition.	59
● No, remove the prohibition and regulate the development of bedrooms in basements through t...	194
● Unsure / I don't know.	27



15. Do you have any general comments or thoughts on housing issues that you would like to share?

78
Responses

See attached.

Do you have any general comments or thoughts on ADUs that you would like to share?

I do believe there is a significant interest in providing this kind of housing for special needs adult children and aging parents (although duplexes provide that as well). I think this fits best with existing single family home residents most.

OK to allow ADUs but restrict them to being added only to single-family parcels. Shorewood is already very dense, which is neat, but to allow ADUs to be added to duplex etc. lots would be too dense and promote more non-owner occupancy. I live in a single family home. If my detached two car garage burned down, I might consider rebuilding a two level, two car garage with ADU upstairs for a home office or living space for an aging parent or visiting family member. I would also like the ability to rent it out as an Airbnb on occasion. Increasing the lot coverage ratio would be needed, I think, even for a new two car garage to allow for interior stairs to the upper level ADU.

I lived in Shorewood for almost 40 years and have moved to Shorewood to be near our son and grandchildren. In our new neighborhood we have two neighbors who have built ADUs, and it is working out very well. One had a grandparent living there which is very helpful to the young family and the other is being rented out with the owners living in the AUD. It seems like a win win for all.

I think these are a way to make homeownership more affordable for people and a way to keep families together in an affordable manner. While I answered that the owner should occupy the residence, I think the owner could easily occupy the ADU as opposed to the primary residence. Which space they live in should be determined by them, not the village. Our lots in general are relatively small, so it is difficult to think of room unless something is a 2nd story or a garage with unit above.

Particularly useful for granny add-ons or to allow people to stay in a neighborhood. My property would work well but at my age? I would be more likely to move into an add on than building one.

How will ADUs be taxed to cover the increased services, including attendance in Shorewood Public Schools? Increased service costs should NOT be spread across the general tax base.

Housing is so unaffordable in Shorewood that any improvement is worth serious consideration. ADUs that can be rented out might allow some older folks to stay in their home due to additional income and could give younger folks an option beyond apartments (assuming the rent is affordable).

We need more housing.

My most significant concern is the burden it places on existing infrastructure - schools, sewers, roads, traffic, police, fire, etc.

Dislike the more I learn

I think ADU's are a great opportunity for the Village!

Please do not add ADU's. The last thing we need to do is add more people or make the village more dense. The reason we moved here was for a nice quiet village with great amenities. Making everything more crowded would hurt the appeal of the village. We have a young family and the only reason we might leave Shorewood is for more space. I have talked with other young families, and they have the same issue of space and reducing the available space and adding more neighbors is something none of the families I talk to want. It seems to be people without kids and renters who are more in favor of ADU's. In my mind we need to focus on families (obviously selfishly on my behalf). ADU's is just going to turn Shorewood into even more of a rental community and eventually drive out more families.

Terrible idea. People are avoiding Shorewood because of declining schools and high taxes. The village has become unattractive, and this will continue its decline.

This is worth evaluating and having robust public discussion.
ADU's support an age-friendly community that expands living options for older adults who want to remain in the community.

I feel like this is a very helpful option to allow in Shorewood. As someone who is a part of the "sandwich" generation in which we have the responsibility of caring for parents and kids it would be helpful. Also having a special needs child who wants to try living on their own this would be something nice to be able to do.

Income from ADUs could help families stay in their homes, and available extra space would help families stay put as they change composition - for example as kids leave but aging parents move in.

Yes, let's please contribute to providing alternative housing solutions for aging individuals (and others) who would love to stay in Shorewood.

I support the allowance of ADUs. I'm not sure that any additional parking for an ADU need be required, given the relatively good public transit options available.

I am very concerned that Private Equity Firms (investor purchased or owned) should be prohibited. They will destroy our housing market and defeat any benefit gained by ADUs. They are parasites.

It's interesting that this concept is bought now. I believe the village had a program that paid homeowners to convert duplexes into single family homes.

Lot sizes in Shorewood are small, adding additional buildings would overcrowd lots and create a negative aesthetic. Shorewood has a huge rental property market, not interested in increasing rentals while crowding existing single family homes. It would increase short-term rentals which you've pointed out are difficult to enforce regulations on.

Owner should definitely be living on the property. I don't want landlords to be able to ignore another property.

I have questions about the sewer system being able to handle potentially double the occupants in our small village. Electricity and gas seem more straight forward, but water and sewer are big concerns given the capacity of the sanitary sewer.

Most lots in Shorewood are tiny. This seems like a moot point and our village resources can be better spent elsewhere.

Do not allow ADU's in Shorewood

Great idea to maximize land use.

Shorewood prides itself on being a multi-generational walkable community. ADUs are consistent with this goal. I am a long-time Shorewood resident who is choosing to age in place. Who knows, I may need physical assistance to do this. I would like as many options as possible to be available. I think Shorewood could accommodate ADUs given specific regulations re size, placement, design. Housing affordability is a huge issue in Shorewood. I honestly don't know how young families can afford to live here and pay property taxes. I don't want Shorewood to move in an elitest direction, like our neighboring village to the north. Also, why is it that Shorewood does not allow basement apartments? Minneapolis does. Is it a safety issue? Then require egress windows and conduct inspections during construction. It would be great to be able to provide living space for teenagers, guests, and refugees, for example, in the relatively small bungalows in Shorewood.

Allowing ADUs is a terrible idea. Shorewood is already the most densely populated area of the state.

Our lots are too small. It would really change the feel of the village. I'd feel claustrophobic if my neighbors decided to put one up.

1. Would be concerned with how the village assessment of an ADU on our property would increase our tax bill. 2. Concerned that all regulations are clear so the Village retains its value in resale.

I think historically, they were well thought out. I believe that if they are well thought in the integration to the property (architect and contractors combined) they can be very successful.

Impact on schools? additional tax revenue?

I like the idea of ADUs in principle but have lived in areas where they have been abused for rental situations. Additionally, I would want to be sure that these don't take up additional green space in the village.

The village needs to stop acting like an HOA, and more like a municipality. This is my property to do with as I please. The village needs to stop meddling in homeowner's affairs. Overall, I'm in favor of ADUs and more development creating a more dense population to help schools, lower taxes and provide more housing in general in the village.

The placement of primary dwellings on most lots in Shorewood precludes logical placement of an ADU. If more single family homes were situated closer to the street lot line, it would be more logical. I do NOT support placement of ADUs between the existing structure and the lot line at the street edge. Runoff is a problem where we live and adding more hard surfaces at a higher elevation only increases risk of property damage to houses at lower elevation. I would support ADUs attached to an existing house or garage, subject to a limit of two structures on a single-family property.

I love the idea of ADUs in Shorewood! I think they could really help families live in Shorewood long term. I know if ADUs are allowed in Shorewood, it would really encourage my partner and I to buy property due to the hope of my mom moving to live with us in the future as she gets older.

There is too little space and not also it has been stated that short-term rentals can and will most likely happen, parking will be an issue, and loss of green space and buffers between residents are real concerns. This will not fix affordable housing. Housing has been built and it has not fixed the housing issues. It is a bigger issue for this country. Make it affordable for current homeowners and people living in Shorewood. We have one of the highest population densities in the state. I do not believe affordable housing will benefit from these options.

Parking should not be a factor for increasing housing density. The fact that the village regulates night parking seems wildly outdated and completely too expensive if increased density is the goal.

We are already the most dense community in the state. Given ADUs offer opportunities for abuse by profiteers which we can't control, I am against them.

I like the idea of ADUs but am concerned about losing green space in the Village, which we need for pollinators to thrive.

I don't think ADUs should be restricted to just single family and duplexes. I also think we should consider legalizing ACU (accessory commercial units) see Charles e Fromage 5811 W Vliet St

A lot of Shorewood residents are older and the opportunity to have some rental income is something that should be seriously considered. Also, it might be beneficial to older residents who might appreciate having a younger person nearby.

Shorewood already is the most populated municipality of its size in the State. At some point we have to recognize that there are limits on how much population, traffic, and parking such a small village can handle. The Manager's Message of January 9, 2026, introducing the ADU survey speaks of ADUs as a possible solution to housing issues in "low density residential areas." Shorewood is anything but a "low density residential area." When we purchased Shorewood homes on the typical small Village lots, we did not anticipate the construction of additional structures on contiguous properties that would limit the already limited open air space in our neighborhoods.

I strongly disagree with changing policies that Shorewood community has approved and accepted for numerous years. There are plenty of vacant apartments and duplex rentals, so I do not think a need exists for ADUs. Also, with another affordable housing project replacing public parking, the village should be focused on fixing the lack of parking and not creating more surface street parking problems. Furthermore, if the DPW is replaced, more affordable housing will be built. I see no good reason why the village should change the policy on ADUs.

Housing has become so unaffordable in the last few years we must take action. One of the most appealing qualities of Shorewood is the (relative to other north shore areas) economic diversity. More housing is the only answer, and density is the key to success for our local businesses and shops.

I answered no to #11 because there is no space to do so at our condo site.

Housing in Milwaukee County is exceedingly scarce and with Shorewood being one of the most dense municipalities in the state it's still walkable, quiet and enjoyable. There is no reason to believe that adding ADU's would disturb this environment. Additionally important factors to consider are if separate water or electric metering would be required for ADU's (my vote is no). Every street with a detached garage lined alley is perfect for an upstairs ADU. As the population ages these additional/smaller units can help accommodate that population while freeing up larger single family homes for younger families. Finally, the population of the village can afford to build them, and the property tax levy could use the increased assessment.

ADUs should not be allowed in Shorewood!! There is no question that ADUs will have many negative effects on the community. These negative effects clearly outweigh the claimed

benefits. First, ADUs would increase neighborhood density, which is already a major problem in the Village of Shorewood. Parking is horrible and it will only get worse with ADUs. Why can't the Village admit there is a parking deficit of 320 spaces and do something to alleviate the problem, not worsen it by permitting ADUs to be developed. In addition, the character/charm of the Village of Shorewood will be detrimentally affected by ADUs. Who wants to be a resident/owner of a home next to a neighbor with an ADU? Why are renters of the ADU deemed more important than residents who have been paying property taxes for years and have the Village drastically alter the neighborhoods of longtime taxpayers? Property values of the owners of homes in a neighborhood where ADUs are allowed will decrease! When you buy a house in Shorewood, you did not expect/anticipate the Village of Shorewood would permit ADUs being built next door or across the street. ADUs change the very fabric of a community by creating more rentals in our Village and there are already more than 50% of the people in Shorewood living in rental properties. ADUs are a bad idea for Shorewood and always will be. There is a limit on how dense a population can reasonably exist with infrastructure in a Village established in 1900. Some may say that times change, but the ADUs are not the answer.

For decades, general communications about the extremely high property density and extremely high population density of Shorewood have been consistent, repeated, and meticulously documented with certainty. Statistical data has been professionally disseminated many times. Now we have a question about adding to the deep density of Shorewood population and real estate building deep density with ADUs. If you want to lower the value of Shorewood homes, while destroying the beauty of this historic Lake Michigan Village, just start building little garage size "residences" on existing lovely residential Shorewood property/homes. Is there a commercial aspect of profit attached to/underpinning, this tacky presentation? If we are inundated with statistical data from the past 3 decades about the extreme density of Shorewood property and extreme density of Shorewood population, why would we now be provided information to stick little garage homes on the existing residential real estate properties. Of course, it will damage our beautiful village's identity and personality. We are not the CITY of Milwaukee. There seems to be a motivation sense of individual "Profit" motive over the Village's best interests. If you want to look like Milwaukee's streets and real estate, just drive across Shorewood's south border to Milwaukee and check out the ugly (UGLY) Parking Lot Streets, the architecture of gross ugly buildings of miscellaneous low quality which are the antithesis of Shorewood's private residential beauty. (I like Milwaukee, but some areas are a mess) I can't but think/know this is an attempt at rental income by those who have no long-term care or concern about Shorewood or the value of Shorewood real estate in existing residential homes. These people should be turned away to find land outside of the North Shore to build ugly little garages to pull in rent. It only takes a sunny afternoon drive through Shorewood, White Fish Bay, Fox Point to appreciate and acknowledge the extraordinary character of our historic villages. Who, motivation, is leading the demand on this adu concept? Real estate developers who want to abuse the North Shore's outstanding beautiful reputation for PROFIT?? Open the door to this type of low-end building will END the North Shore outstanding equity value. You will have an immediate

exodus of residents selling out their homes. Immediate change in school quality. Shorewood will end up looking like what Milwaukee looks like just over the south border into Milwaukee. Maintain the strict present building rules. You cannot change the damage as certain people look to rental profit over the character and beauty of this extraordinary Lake Michigan Village. In discussion with neighbors and friends, they all would relocate. I would. Only takes 48 months to forever damage Shorewood forever. Please have the Shorewood leaders protect and maintain Shorewood's history and beauty. Being a small Village of beauty and excellence must be protected, for decades to come. I just reviewed again the changes suggested. Don't do it. When you have close to perfection with-----stunning architectural homes, old and new, lovely landscapes, schools of outstanding excellence, trees, trees, trees, sun rising over the third largest repository of water on Earth--Great Lakes Maintain this beautiful Village. Protect this Village. Thanks. Shorewood should not allow ADUs!

I am 100% against allowing ADUs they would be a nightmare to the community, adding congestion to a very populated village already!

Need to increase tax base; encourage families so schools are supported; enforce rules re no absentee ownership, short term rentals.

I support allowing ADUs as long as there is a mechanism for reporting problems. I'm aware that there are many short-term rentals in Shorewood that are not permitted. It only takes a moment to look at the rental platforms to find them.

Do you have any general comments or thoughts on housing issues that you would like to share?

Bedrooms should be allowed in basements so long as there is a code-compliant emergency escape / window well. Shorewood lots are very narrow, so adding one of these could be hard, therefore setback variances should be allowed to support adding these window wells. There should probably also be a minimum ceiling height requirement if a bedroom is to be added to a basement (Shorewood basements are often very low). Shorewood's Edgewood Place Condominium complex has great, deep basements which would be ideal for bedrooms, but they lack egress.

no

I'm not sure why we are defining who makes up a household. If people choose to live together, that is their business, and they are a household.

I lean towards modifying the regulations to better reflect present day realities. However, not sure the best way to do that.

The acceptance of ADUs will alter the sense of community in a very negative way. Please don't do it or I will leave Shorewood after more than 40 years as a resident.

None other than my previous comment.

Again, the focus needs to be creating more family-friendly village. Too much of the focus seems to be on the renters and people without kids.

Need condos not apartments.

Thank you for requesting direct input from the public.

The prices of homes in Shorewood have become insane. I am 62, grew up in Shorewood, lived in Bay for 25 years and back in Shorewood for the last 7 or so. The young professionals I work with (in the architecture/engineering/construction - AEC industry) don't even CONSIDER Shorewood when seeking their first and second homes. It is completely off the table. These are families with two working professional parents. Now, only trust-fund kids could consider a first-time home in Shorewood and it disgusts me. Yes, let's please provide working alternatives to apartments.

Again, prohibit Private Equity. Not talking about flippers.

I see many issues with parking. The extra taxes collected is not worth the effort.

I had no idea there were so many restrictions in Shorewood on ADU. Where we lived before allowed ADU which was really important during the pandemic. Shorewood seems a bit behind the times by not allowing it. As high as housing costs and associated taxes homeowners/property owners should be allowed ADU here of some sort. Thank you.

As a property owner, I'm opposed to Accessory Dwellings in Shorewood. I think they would change the village in a negative way.

Property assessment processes reward those that show up and fight or those that have been in their houses a long time. The village needs to redo assessments using a data driven approach.

Increase flexibility to encourage renovations and vertical expansion of houses and garages. See prior comment. I would like to see better enforcement of codes relating to external building upkeep--there are some houses in Shorewood that are not well-maintained, and it is evident when walking or driving by. An example is the duplex behind Metro Market where a woman was murdered last year. There was often accumulated trash by the trash bins; uncut grass. It seemed clear to me that this building was a rental unit, not occupied by the owner. I would also like to see more timely pick up of large trash items from the curb, and citations issued for items left on the curbside for more than 10 days. Who needs the eye sore? A neighbor of mine had large oak desk with drawers on the curb for almost a month, not too long ago. I understand some leniency is good, because others may make use of the items, or snow gets in the way, but to let items. staying for weeks doesn't contribute to a positive Shorewood image.

There are enough rentals in Shorewood and they are affordable. Oakland Avenue is of prime importance! Like Whitefish Bay, which has over the years enhanced Silver Spring with shops and restaurants and soon a great new Sendik's. Instead, Shorewood has a huge furniture store near Colectivo which used to be an excellent restaurant. There are many possibilities. There are so many banks, an open lot that used to be a cleaners (which obviously have not sold over the many years))

Not at the moment.

The cost of living is out of control. The existing regulations are making living in Shorewood too expensive.

More options = better housing. Allow more of everything within reason. We need to make Shorewood more development friendly and now bow to those who have an outdated 'save Shorewood's essence' view trying to keep Shorewood from changing and growing.

Allowing basement bedrooms with proper egress is an acceptable solution and should have been adopted decades ago.

I think bedrooms in basements would be a great adjustment. I think the key with this change would involve fire safety, such as a window in order to have a safe escape route.

Limiting short term rental seems contradictory to increasing housing and density options. Either champion all forms of increasing density or don't.

The way to increase affordability is to restrict profiteering. Don't let outside interests buy up our housing. Don't let landlords charge abusive prices.

For the basement unit question, I think something that was like meets one of the following 1) second means of egress or 2) a fire suppression system i.e. sprinkler system. As for the unrelated adults living together regulation, I think it should be tied to bedrooms, if you have a 6-bedroom house I see no reason that 6 unrelated people shouldn't be allowed to occupy it, even 12 would seem exceedingly reasonable

Shorewood has 52% rentals with vacancies available. Why pack in like sardines more people in a high density populated 1 and 1/2 square miles? We don't have enough parking to live. Please fix the parking problem FIRST as a priority. We are about 350 parking spots short of village guidelines, why not talk about and fix this problem?

Thank you for taking on this important issue... and it is refreshing that you are asking for input.

Huge opportunity to be a leader where the City has failed. Opportunity for continued growth in a fully developed muni for taxpayers' sake and for school district sake as well. ADUs and additional affordable rentals are not good for Shorewood. The Village is not acting in the best interests of the community if it permits the proliferation of these proposed housing/rental alternatives. Keep the Village's character intact and property taxes in line. Otherwise, residents and business owners will move out of the community.

Big city dwelling has a totally different character, definition, look, than small village individual homes. Please maintain Shorewood's historical character and definition. Thank you.

Shorewood does not need more rental properties but needs to encourage more owner-occupied homes. None of these proposed changes move in that direction. Shorewood should again encourage conversions of duplexes into single family homes. Too many rental properties in Shorewood.

FACEBOOK COMMENTS FROM ORIGINAL ADU SURVEY ARTICLE

See insights and ads Boost post

54 47 comments 6 shares

Like Comment Share

All comments ▾

Chris Erickson
This is excellent. Imagine growing older in your home until it becomes too much to maintain, but then being able to move into a smaller place near your home or above the garage. Can tend the same garden, take the same morning walk, and see familiar faces.

2w Like Reply 20

The comment Chris Erickson is replying to has been deleted.

Chris Erickson
Paul Shevelev some people get older and don't have the physical ability to maintain, or even the need for say, three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a basement. You could let a young family take that space while you continue doing the other little things you enjoy like tending the garden or other little projects. No one is forcing you to do anything, but for some, the freedom to choose a better sized living space is very appealing.

1w Like Reply 2

Reply to Chris Erickson

Matt Kettner
South Milwaukee just updated their code to allow for ADUs. This is a great idea allowing for younger people/couples get a start at life or allow for families to have

for younger people/couples get a start at life or allow for families to have multigenerational living. All around makes for stronger, healthier communities.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/19aHap2utK/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

2w Like Reply 13

Chris Erickson
Matt Kettner they really did an excellent job and over the next decade or so I'm sure we'll have good data if the market wanted it!

1w Like Reply

Reply to Matt Kettner



Debbie Dettling

We lived in NJ our neighborhood was very similar to Shorewood and they had ADU's most people used them for offices during the pandemic. It was fine. No issues at all even though we didn't have one but most of our neighbors did..I would like to see Shorewood have ADU's. I'm honestly shocked we don't allow some of these scenarios already.

2w Like Reply

7



Michael Mlynarski

Will there be changes to the percentage of a property that can be covered by structures or pavement?

2w Like Reply

3



Tom Mascari

Have y'all also considered fitting some rental units on branches of larger trees or in storm drains? What about even larger multi-unit apartment buildings on top of the ones you just allowed to be built? When we think of the housing fabric of Shorewood, we must think expansively.

1w Like Reply



Lauren DeLeón

Just wondering if anyone knows how the cost estimate of \$180k to add an ADU (referenced in the survey) was calculated? If that's the cost, then I'm not sure how affordable they'd be, but I suppose it depends on the size.

1w Like Reply



Chris Erickson

Lauren DeLeón It's a pretty good approximation based on what a remodel of a similar size in a home might cost. Definitely curious where the number came from but I'd guess market data is readily available to the committee and planners. When planners say "affordability", there's ratios used that calibrate it to local housing costs and wages, etc. So really the best way to take that sort of statement is that it

will be something that some folks would not have otherwise been able to afford *in that area* - so, perhaps a senior on a fixed budget that wouldn't be able to afford a typical Shorewood home valued at \$500k without going way over some percentage of their income.

1w Like Reply



Lauren DeLeón

Chris Erickson so I own a duplex on a very small lot in Shorewood, but it does have a 2 car garage. The garage alone (no plumbing or windows or anything fancy) cost \$40k, so I'm thinking hypothetically if I built a second story ADU (which would be super small, no more than 400 SF), how much would that cost? My concern is that with the building cost and increased taxes, the tiny unit still wouldnt be "affordable."

1w Like Reply

1w Like Reply



Brennan Dineen Balestrieri

Lauren DeLeón I think it would be beyond impossible to find a contractor under 250-300k

The thought of a build a to z in 2026 for 180k is nuts — DIY with teams of contractors that you orchestrate with expertise, maybe under 250...

1w Like Reply



Chris Erickson

Lauren DeLeón yeah, makes sense. Affordable has many meanings though. If someone wants to house an elder parent there? Much more affordable than an apartment an hour away in a facility that treats them poorly. Or able to babysit kids periodically. Or perhaps a college kid who now can go to UWM and work in the North Shore without owning a car. A quick search says in the US "affordable" ranges up to 80% area median income, I think for those folks, not spending over 30% of their gross income. For Shorewood the census says \$90k is the AMI, so a really vague approximation is that you have \$24k/year to spend on housing to be "affordable", or \$2000/mo. I probably have some specifics incorrect but that's the logic at least. It's certainly debatable if that's "affordable" but when Shorewood administrators say affordable, this is more likely what they mean rather than "super cheap for anyone". Could you pencil a \$250k renovation of a garage at those rates and actually find someone to pay it? You don't have to answer but that's what allowing ADU's would let homeowners think about and decide for themselves. I think the point is we wouldn't actually see all that many ADUs so the risk to allowing them is low.

1w Like Reply



Cecilia Taylor

I completely support this idea. It's just important that it be allowed in a sustainable manner.

2w Like Reply Edited

6



Bob Stewart

ADU formerly known as carriage houses

1w Like Reply

3



Suzanne Powers

I think this will make **Village of Shorewood, Wisconsin** stand out throughout the country! It will raise property values overnight. There are a multitude of reasons why this is such a great idea!

1w Like Reply Edited

3



Curb Appeal

Suzanne Powers and increase property tax for everyone and everyone who can't afford it

1w Like Reply



Reply to Suzanne Powers





Elisabeth Witt

My only concerns are about their use as Airbnbs. It's fine to have your neighbor's grandma nextdoor looking down over where your kids are playing in the yard. Less fun is having a constantly rotating assortment of strangers.

We had an Airbnb house next door to us. The parties, drinking, smoking, and strangers peeking into our windows (as well as noisy late night arrivals each weekend and drunk people trying to figure out which yard was "theirs") was horrifying. It was so much more disruptive and loud than we ever would have imagined.

Our kids' behavior changed. They didn't like being stared at, so they didn't want to play in our backyard. They didn't like smelling cigarettes and pot. Even smaller parties, because they were on vacation, often stayed up late and loud just outside our windows. We had to sleep with the windows shut (with no AC) on summer nights because our kids were being kept awake with "vacation conversations" about sex, drugs, and other adult activities.

People behave differently on vacation than they do when they're your neighbors.

With an owner on the premises, or for long-term rentals, perhaps this wouldn't be as much of an issue. But be cautious about all of this. I wouldn't wish an Airbnb situation like ours on my worst enemy. It was terrible.

2w Like Reply Edited

18



Elisabeth Witt

I should add that one of that summer's guests was a group of young men (20s/30s) and actually stared at my pre-teen daughter long enough, and directly enough, that she felt self-conscious and refused to go outside until that party left. Totally unacceptable.

Also, because of state laws, there is almost nothing the Village can do to limit Airbnbs. Stays are supposed to be over a week long, to decrease the use of homes as weekend party homes, but Airbnb owners lie about their bookings and say "the booking was a week but the guest checked out after two nights" in order to get around legal consequences. We were actively working with the police and the Village to curtail the activity in our neighbor's house and there was almost nothing the Village could do.

2w Like Reply Edited



Elly M Pick

Elisabeth Witt suggest U reply to the survey as one can easily nix short-term AirBnB on the survey.

1w Like Reply



Chris Erickson

Elisabeth Witt Local nuisance ordinances and licensing programs can really help with this. Removing short term rentals often means that people can't have family visit and stay nearby because there's very few convenient and close hotels nearby. Those visiting families spend money at our restaurants, shop at our stores, and might simply be helping a young family through a rough patch. We might be losing a lot when we blanket ban how people can use their private property.

1w Like Reply





Elisabeth Witt

Chris Erickson we worked with the village and police and the local nuisance ordinances did nothing. Did you know you can be loud in your backyard until quite late? I think it was 11pm. Try living next to that every Friday and Saturday nights with young children. Especially when they're woken up by drunks ringing your doorbell at 2am, or stumbling around on your lawn under your bedroom windows, because they think your house is the Airbnb.

Also we found out the behaviors can only be ticketed and documented when they're witnessed by police. It's hard to get the police over quickly enough to witness a young man staring at your teenager, or women yelling out to each other late at night, or loud strange voices in your yard, or sex escapade conversations drifting in through your 9-year-old's window.

By the time the police arrive, it's over. And every weekend it happens. 5, 10 instances of behavior that would never pass as a neighbor, but is fine with two-day Airbnb guests living it up.

1w Like Reply



Elisabeth Witt

These are neighborhoods. Not hotels.

1w Like Reply



Chris Erickson

Elisabeth Witt That sounds like an issue with noise and other ordinances but I digress. In any case, I'm sorry you've had that experience, it must have been quite aggravating. Some areas limit them to be occupied no more than 50% of the year, and can issue very steep fines for lack of compliance. This pretty rapidly makes the financials of an Airbnb untenable (especially one that violates ordinances often) and would likely convince the operators to only rent to people they can trust. Also, an ADU would be in the homeowners back yard, so it's a bit harder for this to get out of control while they're living in a different home across the country. It sounds though like as long as your neighbors aren't disruptive and there's a way to ensure that, you'd be ok with an ADU otherwise?

1w Like Reply



Reply to Chris Erickson



Strong Towns North Shore

If anyone wants to learn more about ADU's and other areas we think are preventing our towns from reaching their full potential, join us! The ability for people to move into these smaller and easier to afford homes can really unlock a lot of community strength and vitality for local businesses, schools, etc. In most of the North Shore, there are looming budget crises and ADU's are one tool to help mitigate it. You can read a lot more about them here, for starters:

<https://archive.strongtowns.org/journal/2019/7/3/making-normal-neighborhoods-legal-again>

1w Like Reply



1w Like Reply



Molly W. McCarty
Village of Whitefish Bay- is this something that has ever been discussed here? ...

1w Like Reply



Jessie Bamber
I know someone who lives in another state, and virtually every house in their neighborhood has an ADU. These are older houses, about the age of most shorewood homes, and the ADUs are around the same age. A lot of them were bought with the intention of renting the ADU, and several did for a while, but few did for long, quickly discovering that an unpleasant neighbor is a lot more unpleasant when they're literally living in your backyard. So, mostly they are tiny vacant houses, and some are practically falling apart. The only one I know of thats used is by someone who moved their teenager out into the ADU from the main house to allow them a little bit of privacy. ...

2w Like Reply



Chris Erickson
Jessie Bamber That seems unlikely in an area like the North Shore where home prices are astronomical. It makes no sense to sink \$200k into renovating a garage and then let it go unused and fall into disrepair. We have plenty of homes being rented out in the North Shore that are probably going excellent for everyone involved. In any case, it's possible to simply have ordinances that prevent disrepair. ...

1w Like Reply



Jessie Bamber
Chris Erickson just conveying my personal knowledge. Again, this is someone I'm very close to. Their home values are even higher than ours FWIW. ...

1w Like Reply



Chris Erickson
Jessie Bamber that's fair! Curious where this is, would be good not to repeat their mistakes! It definitely seems to be an outlier based on how many success stories are out there. ...



Annysa Johnson
So who will build these? Most likely our most affluent resident who have both the space and means to do so. And what then of their less affluent neighbors whose values/taxes also rise with their neighbors' property values? Of course, rising values are a good thing. But not if the taxes push you from your home. Interested to know the experience in other communities and what Affordable Shorewood thinks? ...

2w Like Reply



Curb Appeal
Annysa Johnson it's happening in whitefish bay with additions and new construction. Taxes are through the roof. Average streets with One 1.2 million dollar house ...

2w Like Reply

2w Like Reply



Cole Demeny

Annysa Johnson My house is only 1100 square feet and my two-stall garage is ancient. I'd love to build a new one with an ADU above for in-laws to stay in when they visit/a work-from-home space. I'm pretty far from the most affluent resident.

2w Like Reply



Chris Erickson

Annysa Johnson By artificially constraining the housing that's available, more people are competing for fewer homes - so sale prices go up (this doesn't directly affect your assessed value, which is what your taxes are based on). Since we're also keeping out taxpayers, those of us already here see ever increasing tax bills. Adding more residents is about the only way we can reduce taxes here. Many cities have done this and universally seen home prices come back from astronomical highs. Many of our towns are already looking at large referendums to pay for aging schools, etc. It's pretty tough to attract young families if starter homes are well past \$500k. If our schools start to degrade, the incentive to pay those prices also goes away and they just look for other, more welcoming neighborhoods. The spiral downwards is pretty hard to stop.

1w Like Reply



Diane Vorpahl-Arnold

I am very concerned about the ADU proposal. We have two homes on our street that are used for short term rentals. No long term and affordable housing there. Parking is hard, our yards are small, we can hear it all. It is not just from those units, we are just tightly packed into a small area. The block is not a community when this happens. Who will make sure that the ADU will be used for affordable, long-term housing? No one. We have had a number of apartment buildings put up over the years and the talk was about affordable housing. I have seen some of the apts. renting out for short-term stays, weekends and etc. We are now having the same discussion a few years later. Be careful and think it through.

1w Like Reply



Chris Erickson

Diane Vorpahl-Arnold nothing about an ADU makes them more likely to be a rental than any other small house. This would add neighbors to the existing neighborhood, not remove them. Maybe an older parent, or person working at our local shops.

1w Like Reply



Elisabeth Witt

Diane Vorpahl-Arnold exactly! So sorry to hear you're dealing with this.

1w Like Reply



Daniel Joseph Welytok

Diane Vorpahl-Arnold It sounds like your issue is with short term rentals, not ADUs

1w Like Reply



Debbie Dettling

Diane Vorpahl-Arnold who says they have to be used for affordable housing? I want to use it for multigenerational living!



Beth Valusek Wolfley

Would there be lot size restrictions for those considering adding an ADU to their properties? While I like the idea of ADUs in general for a lot of reasons, honestly, most of our lots are too small to support both a main structure and an accessory unit and still have any green space left to speak of. It reminds me of the conversation about backyard chickens from a few years ago - great idea, but we just don't live in a community with yards large enough to support it. Also, Elizabeth Witt's experience is a cautionary tale as to what can go really wrong with this scenario. When considering this proposal it's important to keep in mind the well-being of all our residents - including the current ones.

1w Like Reply



Ruth Vonderberg

Yes!

2w Like Reply 2



Joshua Clements

Yes, all of them.

2w Like Reply



Brennan Dineen Balestrieri

Yes!

2w Like Reply



Brennan Dineen Balestrieri

ADUs could be created legally with no short term leases, as in — ADUs are required to have yearlong lease

1w Like Reply



Powers Realty Group

I LOVE this idea!!!

1w Like Reply 2



Deborah Parkhurst

I feel they use the term affordable housing to push through their agenda no matter what the population of Shorewood wants them to do. With River Park Apartments in Shorewood there is more than enough affordable housing. We need parking. We need green space there's too much congestion! This no longer feels like a quaint village. It feels like 10 pounds of sugar in a 5 pound bag

1w Like Reply



Curb Appeal

Deborah Parkhurst just wait until the congest Oakland ave for "pedestrian safety"

1w Like Reply



Reply to Deborah Parkhurst



FACEBOOK COMMENTS FROM FOLLOW UP 'LAST CALL' ADU ARTICLE

6 4 comments 2 shares

Like Comment Share

All comments ▾

Strong Towns North Shore
Had some great discussions with neighbors recently about this. A lot of people are excited about this happening! We also talked about how it might happen in other communities in the North Shore, and how successful it's been in some cities elsewhere. Nice job looking for all possible ways to keep our towns vibrant and financially healthy!

4d Like Reply 3

Tom Mascari
Do the ADUs have to be blue like in the picture?

3d Like Reply [Send message](#)

Jayne Strelow Timper
I am on a fixed income and barely hanging on. Between lights I will never see and taxes it is forcing me out. I have been here 50 years.

3d Like Reply [Send message](#)

Strong Towns North Shore
Jayne Strelow Timper we're hearing this a lot too, including from our own members. We're confident that a) this won't be a particularly massive change to the village b) the changes that do happen will raise Shorewood revenue - hopefully that is just one of many ways to keep those taxes stable. Being able to find solutions for people to remain in the North Shore on a fixed income is a critical thing right now!

2d Like Reply

Comment as Village of Shorewood, Wisconsin

Dear Members of the Plan Commission:

The charge of the Conservation Committee includes educating the community on the ecological implications in policy considerations. Thus, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input as the Village considers next steps related to accessory dwelling units (ADUs). At this time, the Conservation Committee neither supports nor opposes ADUs. Rather, its intent is to offer environmental considerations for the Commission's review and to remain engaged as community discussions continue.

ADUs are often presented as a tool to address housing needs, support multigenerational living, and increase neighborhood density. Population density can be good for the environment, but development must be designed and regulated carefully to prevent density from damaging the environment.

Shorewood has committed to being "an ecologically responsible community" (Village of Shorewood, 2015), an aspect of which is "eliminating our community's contribution to encroachment upon nature (e.g., land, water, forests, soil, ecosystems) (Village of Shorewood, 2020). In alignment with this goal, we offer the following considerations:

Greenspace and habitat: In communities where ADUs are constructed in rear yards or over garages, the cumulative loss of permeable surfaces, vegetation, and tree canopy has been identified as a concern (City of Seattle, 2018). Habitat loss due to development is a major reason for the alarming rate of decline in the pollinators on which our food system depends. The Conservation Committee also notes that outdoor lighting necessarily associated with ADUs would present a new risk of disturbance not only for neighbors but also for migratory birds, pollinating insects, and other wildlife (DarkSky International, 2025).

Stormwater: As stated in the Village's *Green Infrastructure Guidance Manual*, Shorewood is committed to reducing runoff through on-site water retention and the use of permeable surfaces (Village of Shorewood, 2020). ADUs could increase impervious surfaces, which are associated with greater stormwater runoff. This can stress existing infrastructure and increase the amount of stormwater pollution that Shorewood contributes to the regional freshwater system.

Resource consumption: Additional dwelling units increase water and energy demand. At the same time, research indicates that ADUs, due to their smaller size, can result in lower per-capita energy use compared to larger single-family homes when designed efficiently (Sheild & Luberoff, 2023).

The Conservation Committee recognizes that ADUs may present environmental opportunities when paired with sustainability standards such as the preservation of green space and trees, limits on impervious surfaces, bird-friendly building design, and requirements to incorporate green infrastructure and high-efficiency energy systems, as well as initiatives aimed at eliminating "all items from landfills that could be recycled, composted, or not generated altogether" (Village of Shorewood, 2015).

As Shorewood evaluates this issue, we encourage alignment with existing Village sustainability commitments related to climate resilience, water quality, and habitat protection. The Conservation Committee appreciates the opportunity to comment and looks forward to remaining involved as discussions continue.

Sincerely,
Erin Povak
Chair, Conservation Committee
Village of Shorewood

References

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January 15, 2026

Greetings Mr. Griepentrog,

As you may know, the Village of Shorewood was the first community in Wisconsin to join the AARP Age-Friendly Network of Communities and States (also known as the Livable Communities Initiative) in 2017, and since then, 14 additional communities have joined the initiative. This continued growth underscores Shorewood's role as a statewide leader in creating places where people can thrive at every stage of life.

AARP Wisconsin has partnered with communities across the state to advance housing policies that support people of all ages, including the successful adoption of ADU ordinances in both Madison and recently Milwaukee.

AARP's most recent **Home and Community Preference Survey** (Dec. 2024) shows that the vast majority of Americans age 50-plus want to remain in their current home (75 percent) and community (73 percent) for as long as possible. Nearly half (43 percent) expect they will need to modify their homes to accommodate future physical limitations—most commonly through bathroom updates such as grab bars and no-slip tile (72 percent), or by improving accessibility (71 percent) with features like ramps, chairlifts, or wider doorways. For some, the needed change may be the addition of an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). In fact, one in four homeowners age 50-plus (26 percent) either have an ADU or would consider building one, most often to provide a safe, nearby place for a loved one who needs care or housing.

By adopting an ADU policy, Shorewood has the opportunity to build on its reputation as a forward-thinking, inclusive community. This step will not only expand housing options but also ensure that residents can remain connected to family, neighbors, and the community they call home. **AARP Wisconsin is proud to support Shorewood in advancing this vision** and happy to work alongside you with any messaging and outreach to residents of Shorewood.

Enclosed you will find various AARP informational booklets on ADU's, Missing Middle Housing and the 2024 survey report that I referenced above.

Sincerely,



Amber Miller
Senior Assoc. State Director—Community Outreach
AARP Wisconsin
ammiller@aarp.org
608-949-4312





The ABCs of ADUs

A guide to
Accessory Dwelling Units
and how they expand housing options
for people of all ages



DETACHED ADU



BASEMENT ADU



GARAGE-CONVERSION ADU



ATTACHED ADU



SECOND-STORY ADU

[AARP.org/ADUs](https://www.aarp.org/ADUs)



Websites: AARP.org and AARP.org/Livable
Email: Livable@AARP.org
Facebook: /AARPLivableCommunities
Twitter: @AARPLivable
Free Newsletter: AARP.org/LivableSubscribe

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 or older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. The AARP Livable Communities initiative works nationwide to support the efforts by neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, rural areas and entire states to be livable for people of all ages.



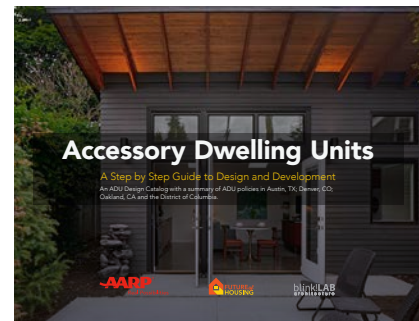
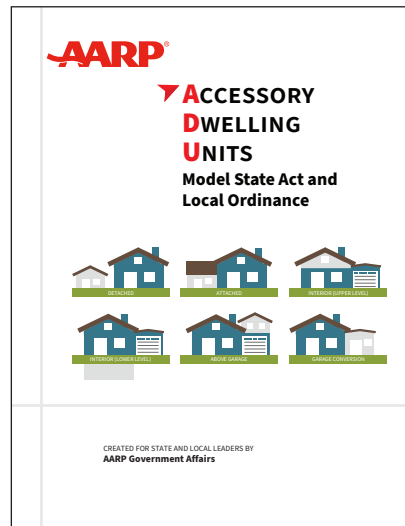
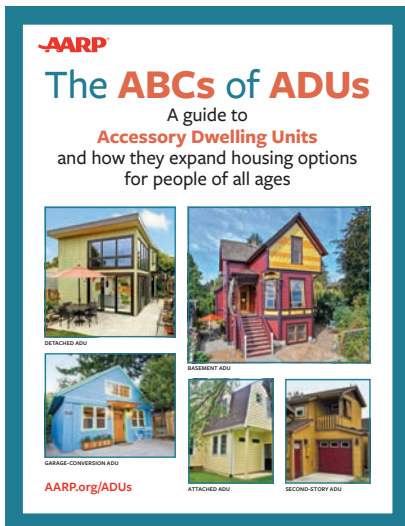
Orange Splot LLC

Website: OrangeSplot.net
Email: eli@OrangeSplot.net

Orange Splot LLC is a development, general contracting and consulting company with a mission to pioneer new models of community-oriented, affordable green housing developments. Orange Splot projects have been featured in the *New York Times*, *Sunset magazine* and on NBC’s *Today* show. (The detached ADUs on page 3 and the back cover are by Orange Splot.) Company founder Eli Spevak has managed the financing and construction of more than 300 units of affordable housing, was awarded a Loeb Fellowship by the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, cofounded the website AccessoryDwellings.org and serves as chair of Portland, Oregon’s Planning and Sustainability Commission.

AARP and Accessory Dwelling Units

Visit AARP.org/ADU to order or download our free publications and find more resources about ADUs.



AARP’s ADU Publications
 (from left): This introductory guide; guidance about creating an ADU model state act or local ordinance; a detailed guide to design and development.

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Welcome! Come On In

Accessory dwelling units are a needed housing option for people of all ages

We know from surveys by AARP and others that a majority of Americans prefer to live in walkable neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing and transportation options and are close to jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment and parks.

These preferences — coupled with the rapid aging of the United States' population overall, the decrease in households with children and the national housing shortage — will continue to boost the demand for smaller homes and affordable, quality rental housing.

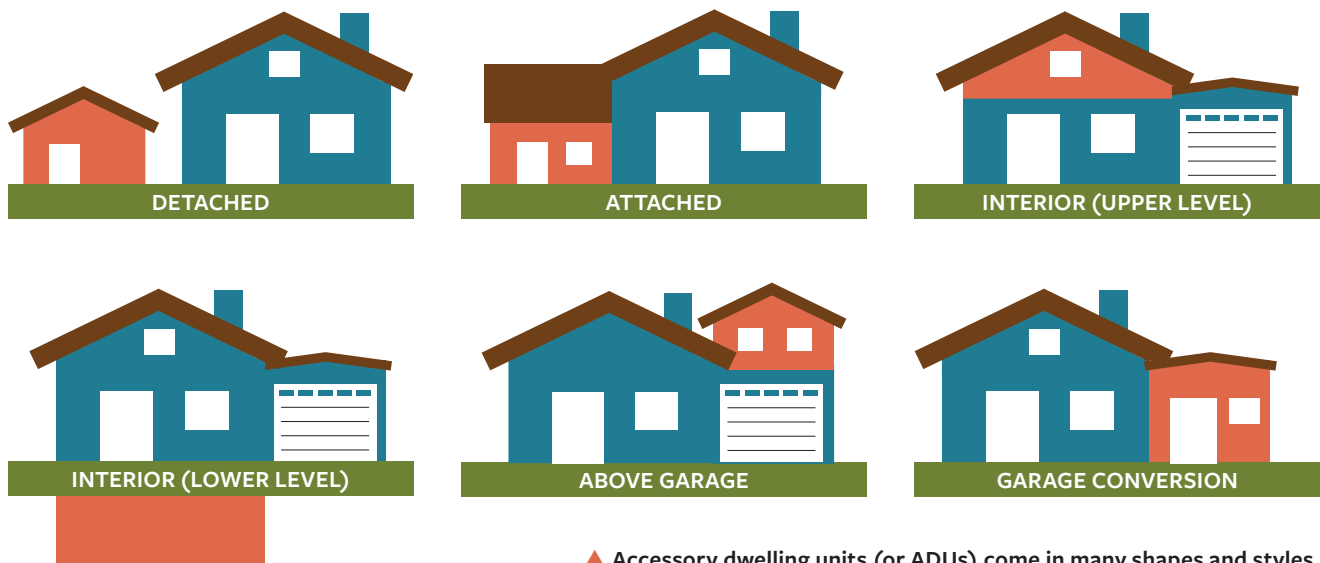
As small houses or apartments that exist on the same property lot as a single-family residence, accessory dwelling units — or ADUs — play a major role in serving a national housing need.

This traditional home type is reemerging as an affordable and flexible housing option that meets the needs of older adults and young families alike.

In fact, in the 2021 AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey, adults age 18 or older who would consider creating an ADU said they'd do so in order to:

- provide a home for a loved one in need of care (86%)
- provide housing for relatives or friends (86%)
- have a space for guests (82%)
- create a place for a caregiver to stay (74%)
- increase the value of their home (69%)
- feel safer by having someone living nearby (67%)
- earn extra income from renting to a tenant (63%)

Since ADUs make use of the existing infrastructure and housing stock, they're also environmentally friendly and respectful of a neighborhood's pace and style. An increasing number of towns, cities, counties and entire states have been adapting their zoning or housing laws to make it easier for homeowners to create ADUs. ■



▲ Accessory dwelling units (or ADUs) come in many shapes and styles.

The ABCs of ADUs is a primer for elected officials, policymakers, local leaders, homeowners, consumers and others to learn what accessory dwelling units are and how and why they are built. The guide also suggests best practices for how towns, cities, counties and states can support the creation of ADUs as a way to expand and diversify housing options.

What ADUs Are — And What They Can Do

ADUs are a family-friendly, community-creating type of housing the nation needs more of

Although many people have never heard the term, accessory dwelling units have been around for centuries (see page 6) and are identified by many different names. To be clear about what’s being discussed:

- An ADU is a small residence that shares a single-family lot with a larger, primary dwelling
- As an independent living space, an ADU is self-contained, with its own kitchen or kitchenette, bathroom and sleeping area
- An ADU can be located within, attached to or detached from the main residence
- An ADU can be converted from an existing structure (such as a garage) or built anew
- ADUs are found in cities, in suburbs and in rural areas, yet are often invisible from view because they’re positioned behind or are tucked within a larger home
- Because ADUs are built on single-family lots as a secondary dwelling, they typically cannot be partitioned off to be sold separately
- An ADU can enable family members (including family caregivers) to reside on the same property while having their own living spaces
- An ADU can provide housing for a hired caregiver
- An ADU can provide rental income to homeowners
- ADUs are a practical option for tenants seeking small, affordably priced rental housing
- For homeowners looking to downsize, an ADU can be a more appealing option than moving into an apartment or, if they’re older, an age-restricted community
- ADUs can help older residents remain independent and “age in place”
- As an adaptable form of housing, ADUs provide flexible solutions for changing needs. ■



▲ Accessory dwelling units show up in neighborhoods throughout the country — and even in pop culture. One example: In the sitcom *Happy Days*, Fonzie (right) rents an above-garage ADU from the Cunningham family in 1950s-era Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

CREATIVE COMMONS

ADUs Are Also Known As ...

Although most local governments, zoning codes and planners in the United States use the term *accessory dwelling unit* or *ADU*, these small homes and apartments are known by dozens of other names. The different terms conjure up different images. (Who wouldn’t rather live in a “carriage house” than in an accessory or “ancillary” unit?)



▲ Renting out this 350-square-foot garage-conversion ADU in Portland, Oregon, helps the property owner, who lives in the lot’s primary residence, pay her home mortgage.

Even if you’ve never heard of accessory dwelling units or ADUs, you have likely heard of — and perhaps know the locations of — some of the home types noted in the list at right. ■

- accessory apartment
- backyard bungalow
- basement apartment
- casita
- carriage house
- coach house
- English basement
- garage apartment
- granny flat
- guest cottage
- guest house
- in-law suite
- laneway house
- multi-generational house
- ohana unit
- secondary dwelling unit

PHOTO AND LIST FROM ACCESSORYDWELLINGS.ORG

ADUs Come in Many Shapes and Styles

Since ADUs are custom designed and created, they're able to fit discreetly into all sorts of locations, including suburban subdivisions, walkable towns, urban neighborhoods — and, of course, large lots and rural regions.



◀ A **DETACHED ADU** (aka DADU) is a stand-alone home on the same lot as a larger, primary dwelling. Examples include backyard bungalows and converted outbuildings.

Location: Portland, Oregon
Photo by David Todd



▲ An **ATTACHED ADU** connects to an existing house, typically through the construction of an addition along the home's side or rear. Such units can have a separate or shared entrance. In this example, the owners built a connection between the house and what was a detached garage. The addition and the space above the garage contain the ADU, which has its own entrance (pictured at right).



Location: Anne Arundel County, Maryland
Photo by Melissa Stanton, AARP



▲ A **GARAGE ADU** converts all or part of an attached or detached garage into a residence. Other options: adding an ADU above a garage or building a new unit for both people and cars.

Location: Cape May, New Jersey
Photo by Melissa Stanton, AARP

▶ Access to an **UPPER-LEVEL ADU** can be provided through a stairway inside the main home or directly from an exterior staircase. This 500-square-foot ADU is part of a 1,900-square-foot primary dwelling.



Location: Portland, Oregon
Photo by Eli Spevak,
Orange Splot LLC



▲ A **LOWER-LEVEL ADU** is typically created through the conversion of a home's existing basement (provided that height and safety conditions can be met) during construction of the house or (above and on page 7) as part of a foundation replacement and house lift.

Location: Portland, Oregon | Photo by Chris Nascimento

ADUs Are Good for People and Places

Communities that understand the benefits of ADUs allow homeowners to create them

ADUs are an economical housing option

- ADUs can generate rental income to help homeowners cover mortgage payments or simply make ends meet. The income provided by an ADU tenant can be especially important for older people on fixed incomes.
- Since the land on which an ADU is built already belongs to the homeowner, the expense to build a secondary residence is for the new structure only.
- Many ADUs are created for family members or friends to reside in for free or at a discounted rate. In fact, when a loved one is in need of care or can't live alone, an ADU can be a viable alternative to a costly assisted-living facility.
- Although market rate rents for ADUs tend to be slightly more than for similarly sized apartments, they often represent the *only* affordable rental choices in single-family neighborhoods, which typically contain few or no small or rental housing options at all.
- The state of California and some municipalities are boosting ADUs by providing grants and other incentives as part of affordable housing and anti-displacement strategies to help lower-income households build ADUs or reside in them at reliable rents.

ADUs are community-compatible

- ADUs offer a way to include smaller, relatively affordable homes in established neighborhoods with minimal visual impact and without adding to an area's sprawl.
- ADUs provide a more dispersed and incremental way of adding homes to a community than other options, such as multistory apartment buildings.
- ADUs are typically managed by homeowners who live on the premises. Such landlords are less likely to tolerate a destructive tenant.

ADUs are good for the environment

- ADUs require fewer resources to build and maintain than full-sized homes.
- ADUs use significantly less energy for heating and cooling. (Of all the ADU types, internal ones tend to have the lowest building and operating costs.)

ADUs are just the right size

- Generally measuring between 600 and 1,000 square feet, ADUs work well for the one- and two-bedroom homes needed by today's smaller, childless households, which now account for nearly two-thirds of all households in the United States.

ADUs are able to house people of all ages

- ADUs offer young people entry-level housing choices.
- ADUs enable families to expand beyond their primary home.
- ADUs provide empty nesters and others with the option of moving into a smaller space while renting out their larger house or letting an adult child and his or her family reside in it.
- An ADU's use can be adapted for different household types, income levels, employment situations and stages of life. ■

Big houses are being built, small houses are needed

Do we really need more than three times as much living space per person as we did in 1950? Can we afford to buy or rent, heat, cool and care for such large homes?

YEAR	1950	2020
Median square footage of new single-family homes	983	2,261
Number of people per household	3.8	2.5
Square feet of living space per person	292	904

FACT: ADUs house more people per square foot of living area than single-family homes do.

HOME VISIT #1

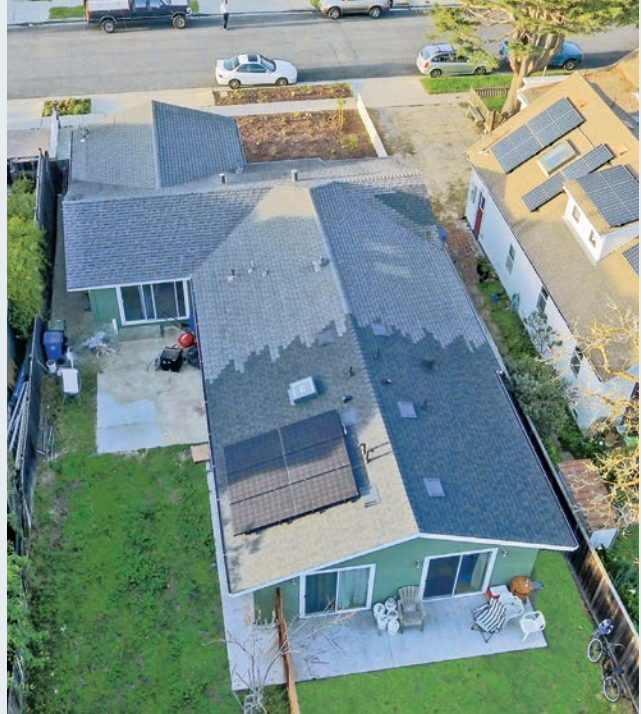
Attached ADU Addition

Santa Cruz, California

Size: 500 square feet



AARP



▲ The area with the darker roof shingles is the ADU that was added onto the home of Carrie and Sterling Whitley.

◀ ▼ The Whitleys' ADU (that's Carrie showing off the front yard's new paths and plantings) has its own entrance on the side of the home and is being rented to the couple's daughter so she can help her elderly parents when needed.

When Carrie and Sterling Whitley bought their house in 1971, they paid less than \$15,000. Nearly 50 years later, similar homes on their street have sold for more than \$1 million.

THE PROBLEM: The Whitleys, who are in their 80s, own the house outright and don't want to move. But the financial and physical demands involved in maintaining the house are a challenge.

A SOLUTION: To help low-income homeowners age 62 or older live independently and keep their homes, the Monterey Bay affiliate of Habitat for Humanity and the City of Santa Cruz launched My House My Home: A Partnership for Aging-in-Place. The pilot program builds accessory dwelling units so older homeowners can downsize into a new, aging-friendlier home and earn rental income from their original house. Or such homeowners can remain in their house and rent out the new, smaller residence. Participating homeowners are required to charge an affordable rental rate.

REALITY CHECK: When the Whitleys' project broke ground in April 2017, they were the first homeowners to receive an ADU through the program, which worked with them to design the ADU as an addition to their existing home. Since the dwelling was built with accessibility features, Carrie and Sterling know they can downsize into it if they ever need to. Until then, their daughter, Brenda, resides in the addition.

REAL LIFE: "I'm right next door to my parents in case they need me or need any help," Brenda says.

Design: Historic Sheds | Builder: Historic Sheds | Cost to build: \$158,000 in 2017 (not including volunteer labor) | Photos by Michael Daniel | Article adapted from Where We Live: Communities for All Ages (AARP 2018)



ADU ADVICE: With an attached ADU, privacy between the two residences can be achieved by locating the ADU bedroom(s) and bathroom(s) as far as possible from the main house. Providing the ADU with its own yard or outdoor space is helpful too.

ADUs Are an American Tradition

While today's interest in ADUs may be new, the housing type is centuries old

Early settlers often built a small home to live in while constructing their larger, primary house nearby.

When farming was a source of survival for most of the nation's households, families routinely constructed additional homes on their land when needed.

People with wealth and acreage regularly populated their lands with secondary mansions and ancillary buildings independent of the main estate house.

In fact, until the 20th century, people who owned land built as many homes as they wished, often for extended family or workers. There were few or no zoning rules, municipal services or infrastructure needs (utilities, roads, schools, trash collection, first-responders) to consider.

A historic precedent for the modern day accessory dwelling unit is the "carriage house," or "coach house." Originally built for horse-drawn carriages, the structures associated with grander homes were frequently large enough to double as living quarters for workers such as stable hands.

Decades later, in response to housing shortages and economic needs, many surviving carriage houses were

▼ **This carriage house containing a one-bedroom, one-bath ADU above a two-car garage sits behind a six-level, Gilded Age, Hoboken, New Jersey, townhome that was built in 1883. The dual residence property was on the market in 2018 for \$5 million.**



converted into rental homes. By becoming landlords, the owners gained income from their often unused outbuildings.

Automobile garages have a similar history. Some were originally built with a housing unit upstairs. Over time, many garages were converted (often illegally or under zoning codes no longer applicable today) into small homes when the spaces became more valuable for housing people than vehicles.

With the rise of suburban single-family home developments following World War II, ADUs practically ceased to be built legally in the United States. Then as now, residential zoning codes typically allowed only one home per lot, regardless of the acreage and with no exceptions. Attached and detached garages occupied yard space that might otherwise have been available for ADUs.

Some cities, including Chicago, grandfathered in pre-existing "coach house" ADUs — but only if they remained consistently occupied. In Houston's historic and trendy Heights neighborhood, old and new garage apartments are common and desired.

Many communities don't allow new ADUs, even if they did in the past. Even in rural areas with ample land, property owners are often prohibited from creating secondary dwellings or continuing to live in preexisting ones. Countless units in single-family homes or yards are technically illegal simply because they date from when such units were not allowed.

ADUs began making a comeback in the 1980s as cities explored ways to support smaller and more affordable housing options within single-dwelling neighborhoods. In 2000, in response to a growing demand for ADU-supportive guidelines, AARP and the American Planning Association partnered to release a model state act and local code for ADUs. An updated resource was published by AARP in 2021. (See an image of it on the inside front cover of this guide.)

Many state and local governments are legalizing and encouraging the creation of ADUs (see page 8), driven by high housing costs and, in some cases, the belief that homeowners with suitable space shouldn't be so restricted in the use of their property. ■

HOME VISIT #2

Garage Apartment ADU

Denver, Colorado

Size: 360 square feet



▲ The apartment above the garage can be reached from inside the garage or from an exterior side entrance accessed from the yard it shares with the primary residence.

“I see our ADU as something very similar to a student loan,” says Mara Owen. “It’s something you invest in the future with. It was cheaper than buying a house for Mom, and it lets her have independence. It’s great knowing we can check in on her whenever.”

AH-HA MOMENT: Owen, her partner, Andrew, and their three dogs were sharing a one-bedroom, one-bath house with her mother, Diane. When Owen learned that ADUs were allowed in the city, she decided the best way to get more space for her small home’s many residents would be to remove their “leaky and defunct” garage and build a new two-car garage with an apartment above it.

WISE ADVICE: “Get a really great builder and architect,” says Owen. “Interviewing architects was similar to a first date. It’s not just who you feel connected with. That’s important, but get to the values. It’s a niche market, so see if you can find someone who has built ADUs before, because ADUs are a little different.”

FUTURE PLANS: The stairs to Diane’s apartment are wide enough for a stair lift, if it’s ever needed. The roof was built at the correct slope for the eventual installation of solar panels.

Design: Hive Architecture | Builder: Hive Architecture | Cost to build: \$167,000 in 2016 | Photo by Mara Owen | Article adapted from “ADU Case Studies” by Lina Menard on AccessoryDwellings.org. Visit the website to read about and see photographs of more ADU projects.

HOME VISIT #3

Basement ADU

Portland, Oregon

Size: 796 square feet

The transformation of this colorful Victorian was both a preservation and expansion project.

TEACHING MOMENT: “Here’s a very welcome breath of fresh air, especially in the face of so much gentrification that is going on in Portland!” declared Mark Lakeman, principal of Communitecture, an architectural, planning and design firm, about the pictured remodel. Writing on his company’s website, he says the project provides a lesson in how to “adapt and reuse our precious historic houses so they can accommodate more people while also providing more income to support the existing home.”

HOW’D THEY DO IT? To add a basement rental unit, engineers lifted the house. The resulting ADU is roughly four feet underground and four feet above.



▲ By lifting the house and digging beneath it, designers, engineers and builders turned a two-story, single-family home into a three-story, multifamily residence. (The ADU’s entrance is pictured on page 3.)

THE ACHIEVEMENT: Adds Lakeman: “Unlike the seemingly pervasive method of simply tearing down existing buildings so that new, giant ones can be built, this approach achieves upgrades in energy efficient living places and adds density while retaining the continuity of our beloved historical urban environment.”

*Design: Communitecture | Home Lift: Emmert International
Builder: Tom Champion | Cost to build: \$125,000 in 2015 | Photos by Communitecture (before) and Chris Nascimento (after)*

The Time Is Now

Rules for ADUs continue to evolve and frequently differ from one town to the next

Some communities allow almost any home to be set up with an ADU — so long as size limits, property line setbacks and placement caveats in relation to the primary dwelling are met. Others start with those basic standards and then layer on extra requirements that can make it challenging to create an ADU. (Learn more on pages 14 and 15.)

Municipalities nationwide have been relaxing their restrictions against ADUs, and several states now require communities to allow them. Some examples:

- New Hampshire and Vermont allow ADUs nearly everywhere single-family housing is permitted. New Hampshire’s 2017 legislation stemmed in large part from the frustration of builders who couldn’t construct the backyard cottages and garage apartments their clients desired.
- In 2020, the California legislature declared that “allowing accessory dwelling units in zones that allow single-family and multifamily uses provides additional rental housing, and is an essential component in addressing California’s housing needs.” The state allows up to one ADU *and* one JADU per lot. (What’s a JADU? See page 14.)
- Oregon requires cities and counties of certain sizes to allow ADUs in all single-family areas within urban growth boundaries. In 2021, the state extended ADU rights to rural residential areas.
- Other states allowing ADUs include Connecticut, Rhode Island and Utah. Many cities now allow ADUs, including Anchorage, Alaska; Atlanta, Georgia; Annapolis, Maryland; Asheville, North Carolina; Austin, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Honolulu, Hawaii; Houston, Texas; Louisville, Kentucky; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; Seattle, Washington; and Washington, D.C. ■

▶ Located on the lowest floor of a town house, an English basement is a partially belowground apartment that has its own exterior entrance. They are typically found in older cities such as New York or (pictured) Washington, D.C. In the past, property owners used the space as servant quarters. Today, these essentially built-in ADUs are often used as rental apartments.

To Encourage ADUs

LOCAL OFFICIALS can ...

- allow all ADU types (detached, attached, interior)
- simplify the building permit process for ADUs
- waive or reduce permit and impact fees
- establish funding programs to help homeowners create ADUs
- let garages be converted into ADUs without requiring replacement off-street parking
- allow for the creation of a second ADU, subject to a combined size cap

COMMUNITY PLANNERS can ...

- adopt simple, flexible but nondiscretionary ADU rules about setbacks, square footage and design compatibility with the primary dwelling

LENDERS can ...

- work with homeowners to finance the construction of ADUs by using renovation loans

ADVOCATES can ...

- organize tours of completed ADUs in order to inform and inspire the community
- educate homeowners, real estate agents, architects and builders about local zoning regulations and the permit process

REAL ESTATE AGENTS can ...

- educate themselves and their clients about rules for the construction of ADUs

LOCAL MEDIA can ...

- report on how and why homeowners build ADUs



PHOTO: SARAH DALE FOR AARP

HOME VISIT #4

Internal ADU (Main Level)

Portland, Oregon

Size: 220 square feet

Even small homes can have enough space for an ADU. An underused main floor bedroom in this 1.5-story, 1,500-square-foot bungalow was transformed into a studio apartment.

AH-HA MOMENT: According to Joan Grimm, who owns the home with Rita Haberman: “What we were looking for in terms of a community and aging in place was right under our noses. Remove a fence and create a shared open space. Build a wall and create a second dwelling unit. It doesn’t have to be complicated.”

REAL LIFE: “Creatively carving out an ADU from the main floor of our house saved on design and construction costs,” Grimm adds. “It provides an opportunity for rental income, with no significant compromise to the livability of our home.”



▲ The steps and side entrance lead to the studio apartment ADU, which was crafted out of an existing space. The covered porch to the right leads to the primary residence. The ADU contains a kitchen, small dining and living area, sleeping area, bathroom and laundry area. (See two interior photos on pages 19 and 20.)

*Design: Rita Haberman | Builder: RS Wallace Construction
Cost to build: \$55,000 in 2015 (with some work done by the homeowners)
Photos courtesy Billy Ulmer | Article adapted from “ADU Case Studies” by Lina Menard on AccessoryDwellings.org*

HOME VISIT #5

Internal ADU (Lower Level)

Portland, Oregon

Size: 795 square feet

“We were looking for a way to live in our house for the rest of our lives and to generate at least some income in the process,” Robert Mercer and Jim Heuer wrote for the program guide of the annual Portland ADU Tour when their home was part of the lineup. “An ADU offers the possibility of caregiver lodging in the future or even a place for us to live while we rent out the main house if we get to the point where we can’t handle the stairs any longer.”

THE SOUND OF SILENCE: Internal ADUs often require that soundproofing insulation be installed between the primary dwelling and the accessory unit that’s below, above or beside it. In Portland, the building code for duplex residences requires a sound insulation rating of at least STCC45. To property owners thinking about a similar ADU setup, the duo advise: “Think about how you live in your home and how having downstairs neighbors will change what

▼ The door to the right of the garage leads to a ground-floor ADU with windows along the back and side walls. The upper-level windows are part of the main residence.



you can and can’t do with your space and what investment you are prepared to make in sound insulation.”

AN ADDED BONUS: “We are pleased that we have been able to provide more housing density on our property and still be in keeping with the historic character of our home.”

*Design: DMS Architects | Builder: Weitzer Company | Cost to build: \$261,000 in 2016 | Photo by Melissa Stanton, AARP
Article adapted from the 2017 ADU Tour project profiles on AccessoryDwellings.org*

Bringing Back ADUs

The reasons for creating or living in an ADU are as varied as the potential uses

ADUs are flexible. Over time, a single ADU might be used in many ways as an owner's needs and life circumstances change. Following are just a few reasons why ADUs are created and by whom:

EMPTY NESTERS can build an ADU and move into it, then rent out the main house for supplemental income or make it available to their adult children.

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN can use an ADU as housing for a nanny or au pair or even a grandparent or two, who can then help raise their grandkids and be assisted themselves as they age.

INDIVIDUALS IN NEED OF CARE can reside in an ADU to be near family members, or they can use the ADU to house a live-in aide. (In fact, ADUs can be an affordable and more comforting alternative to an assisted-living facility or nursing home.)

HOME BUYERS can look forward to the rental income from an ADU to help pay their mortgage or finance home improvements, especially in expensive housing markets.

HOME-BASED WORKERS can use an ADU as their office or workshop.

HOMEOWNERS can use an ADU for guests or as housing for friends or loved ones who:

- aren't yet financially independent, such as new high school or college graduates
- need temporary housing due to an emergency or while renovating their own home
- have disabilities but can live independently if family reside nearby ■



▲ The zoning code in Evanston, Illinois, permits accessory dwelling units, creating an opportunity for the owners of this 1911 home with an outbuilding in the backyard.

Planning and Paying for ADUs

Most new homes are built by developers, entire subdivisions at a time. Apartments are also built by pros.

But ADUs are different.

Although ADUs are occasionally designed into new residential developments, the vast majority are created by individual homeowners after they move in. In other words, ADUs are usually created by enthusiastic and motivated *amateurs*.

An ADU may present the ultimate chance for a do-it-yourselfer to build his or her small dream home. More often, homeowners bring in a combination of architects, designers and construction contractors to do the work, much as they would for a home addition or major kitchen remodeling. The local municipality's planning department can provide guidance on the rules for ADUs and information about what permits, utility connections and fees are involved.

ADUs aren't cheap, and they are often the most significant home improvement project a homeowner will undertake.

Although internal ADUs can sometimes be built for about \$50,000, new detached ADUs often exceed \$150,000. Most ADUs are financed through some combination of savings, second mortgages, home equity lines of credit and/or funds from family members (sometimes a relative who ends up living in it).

In some areas, the cost of building an ADU can be recouped after a few years of renting it. If that's the plan, it's worth estimating the expenses versus the potential income before undertaking an ADU project.

A few cities, nonprofits and start-ups are experimenting with creative financing options that could put ADUs within reach for more homeowners and their families, as well as prospective renters.



▲ Walt Drake’s southern-style, one-bedroom ADU has an outdoor, wraparound porch that can be accessed without using steps. The design is in keeping with other buildings in the neighborhood.

HOME VISIT #6 Detached ADU (One-Story)

Decatur, Georgia
Size: 800 square feet

When Walt Drake decided to downsize, his son Scott purchased his dad’s house for himself and his family and built a detached ADU (or DADU) for Walt.

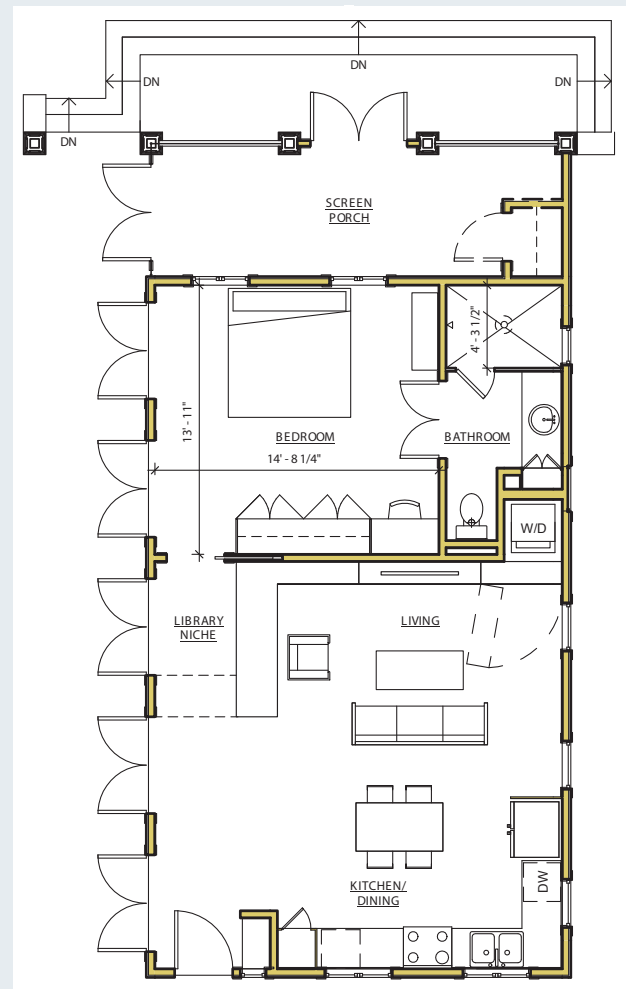
“From not finding what we wanted for Dad, we decided to create it,” says Scott. “Neighborhoods built in the 1920s have carriage houses. Building an ADU was a modern day version of something people have been doing on their property in this area for a hundred years.”

NEAR AND FAR: “We wanted the houses to be separate and to feel like we’re each on our own property, but we’re there for each other,” says Scott.

AGING-FRIENDLY: Building the ADU meant Walt didn’t have to leave his home and neighborhood. “He was able to keep his own stuff and turn over what he didn’t need to us,” says Scott. “It kept my dad in place, which I think was important.”

FUTURE PLANS: Scott says the ADU is “serving its intended purpose” but that someday down the road it could be used as a long- or short-term rental. “The ADU could turn into lots of different things over the course of its lifetime.”

Design: Adam Wall, Kronberg Wall | Builder: Rob Morrell | Cost to build: \$350,000 in 2014 | Photo by Fredrik Brauer | Floor plan by Kronberg Wall Architects | Article adapted from “ADU Case Studies” by Lina Menard on AccessoryDwellings.org



ADUs Are Age-Friendly Housing

New-construction ADUs can be created with “universal design” features

An “age-friendly” home has a zero-step entrance and includes doorways, hallways and bathrooms that are accessible for people with mobility differences. Converted garages (such as the one pictured on page 2) are among the easiest and least expensive ADU solutions for aging in place since they’re preexisting structures and generally have no-step entries. To learn more about making a home aging-friendly, download or order the *AARP HomeFit Guide* at AARP.org/HomeFit.

HOME VISIT #7

Detached ADU (Two-Story)

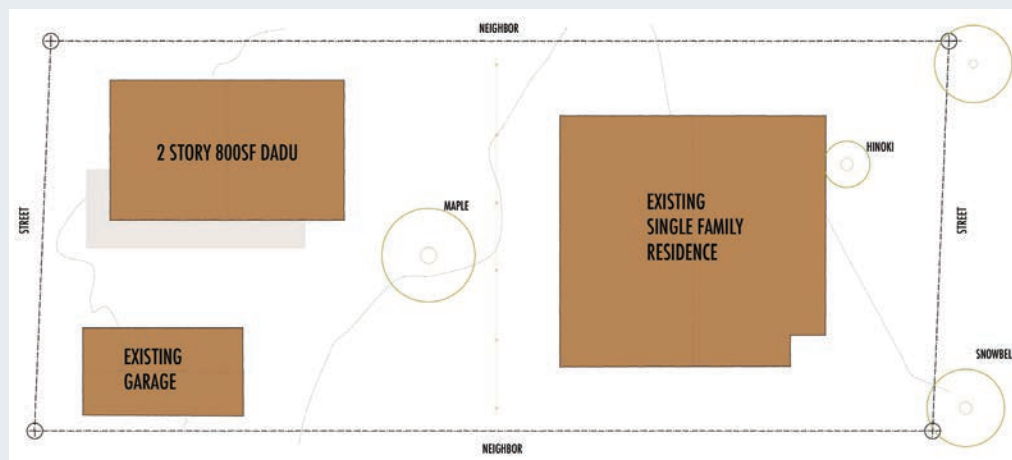
Seattle, Washington

Size: 800 square feet

Evelyn Brom’s plan was to build a backyard cottage and rent it out. She would keep living in her two-bedroom home.

AH-HA MOMENT: As the design developed, Brom realized that *she* wanted to live in the stunning wood-and-glass ADU. It was a good decision. A week before moving in, Brom was laid off from her job.

REAL LIFE: The \$3,000 a month Brom receives in rent for the main house (which is occupied by a three-generation family) provides a needed income. “Being laid off has made this arrangement a lifesaver,” Brom says. If the stairs in the cottage ever become too hard to navigate, she can move back into her original one-story house and rent out the cottage instead. “Now I have options,” she says.



▲ There’s a powder room, open kitchen and living room on the first floor, with a bedroom and bathroom upstairs.

◀ Although Brom’s property is only 0.13 acres, it’s large enough to accommodate two homes, a patio, a lawn and a garage. A slatted wood fence with a gate divides the space between the two houses and provides privacy.

Design: Chrystine Kim, NEST Architecture & Design | Builder: Ian Jones, Treebird Construction | Photo by Alex Hayden
Cost to build: \$250,000 in 2014 | Article adapted from *Where We Live: Communities for All Ages* (AARP 2018)

HOME VISIT #8

Detached Bedroom

St. Petersburg, Florida

Size: 240 square feet

Bertha and her son John talked about someday buying a house with a mother-in-law suite. “Then one day someone came along and wanted my house, so I up and sold it,” she explains. “But that left me homeless. I asked John if I could build a small house in his backyard and he agreed.”

CREATIVE THINKING: A detached bedroom is a permanent, accessory structure that, unlike ADUs, lacks a kitchen. But that’s what makes these cabin-like homes more affordable to build than many ADUs and even tiny houses.

WHAT’S INSIDE: Bertha’s home contains a sleeping and living area and a full bathroom. “I paid for the little house and it’s on my son’s property. So I figured, if I’m cooking I can do it at my son’s house,” she says. (Her laundry is also done at his house.)



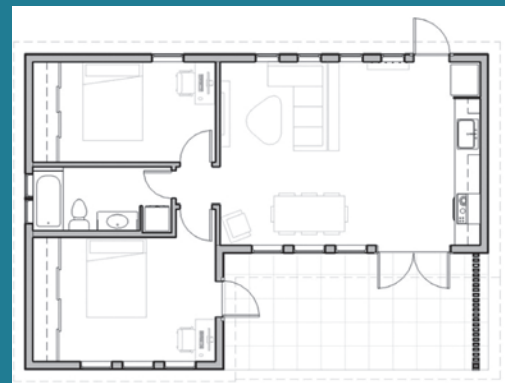
▲ A detached bedroom, which contains a bathroom but no kitchen, can provide housing for a loved one or serve as a home office or guest cottage.

REAL LIFE: “Having access to my son’s house makes it livable. Otherwise, I personally would not be happy. It’s very comforting to know that John is close by. Hopefully this will be my home forever.”

Design: Historic Sheds | Builder: Historic Sheds | Cost to Build: \$50,000 in 2017 | Photo by Historic Sheds | Article adapted from “ADU Case Studies” by Lina Menard on AccessoryDwellings.org

Trading Spaces

An ADU is always the smaller of two dwellings on a property, but it’s possible for an existing home to become the ADU when a larger house is built and becomes the primary dwelling. Or the opposite can happen! Tired of living in an older house that didn’t get a lot of natural light, the home’s owners built and moved into the bright, airy, modern and very accessible ADU they created in their yard. The original, larger home has become a rental.



▲ Although this ADU has only 721 square feet of living space, there is room enough for two bedrooms.

*Design: Propel Studio | Builder: JLTB Construction | Photo by Josh Partee | Cost to build: \$185,000 in 2017
Adapted from “ADU Case Studies” by Lina Menard on AccessoryDwellings.org*

Practical Solutions for ADUs

Local laws can both allow and appropriately control the creation of accessory dwellings

There are more than 19,000 cities, 16,000 towns and 3,000 counties in the United States. ADU regulations are typically adopted at the local level, although several state legislatures have required cities to allow them.

Where it's legal to build ADUs, homeowners still need to follow rules about where it can be done, how many square feet they can contain, how they can be used. These rules can be found in the local zoning code.

There is a balance to strike between prudent ADU laws and encouraging their construction. For instance, after Portland, Oregon, relaxed its ADU rules in 2010 and waived impact fees (a savings of up to \$12,000), the number of ADUs built rose from about 30 per year between 2000 and 2009 to nearly one a day in 2015.

Changes in California's ADU rules saw Los Angeles go from 80 applications in 2016 to nearly 2,000 in 2017. Allowing Sonoma County homeowners to add both an ADU and a JADU (see the green box below) were among the policies adopted in the wake of the area's many devastating fires.

Well-intentioned but burdensome rules can stymie the creation of ADUs. ADU-related zoning codes should be restrictive enough to prevent undesirable development but flexible enough that ADUs get built.

When a community is worried about a potentially undesirable outcome, it can — and many do — craft regulations to prevent particular building types, locations or uses. A city concerned about the environmental impact of new structures might prohibit placing detached ADUs in precarious locations, such as on steeply sloping lots. Communities wary of ADUs becoming, for instance, off-campus student housing can establish occupancy rules.

Every community has its own priorities and concerns, and there's a wide enough range of regulatory controls that communities can write appropriate ADU rules.

This inherent flexibility in the form and function of ADUs allows them to pass political muster and get adopted in a wide range of places. (See page 16 for more about uses and rules.) ■

Rules that discourage ADUs

- ADU-specific regulations that don't also apply to primary dwellings (e.g., owner-occupancy requirements)
- complex design compatibility criteria and approval steps
- off-street parking requirements beyond those required for the primary dwelling
- restrictions that limit ADUs to certain areas, particular zoning categories or to large lots
- caps on square footage relative to the primary house that make it easy to add an ADU to a large home but hard or impossible to add one to a small home

Are ADUs allowed?

Find out by calling your town, city or county office in charge of land use and permits — or stop by in person. You can also search for and read the zoning code through the local government's website.

- If ADUs are allowed, ask what conditions, permit needs and impact fees apply.
- If ADUs are not allowed and you want them to be, ask an elected official or your community's department of zoning and planning how the codes can be updated.
- Then get organized and start advocating!

JUNIOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (or JADUs) are smaller than 500 square feet and have a separate entrance but are created within the existing dwelling. A JADU can share a bathroom with the main house and contain a basic kitchen equipped with small plug-in appliances.

Creating (or Understanding) an ADU Zoning Code

The ADU section of a community’s zoning code needn’t be overly complicated. It just needs to establish clear, objective and fair rules for the following:

1. A Definition: A good zoning code clearly defines its terminology. Here, for example, is a useful outline for what, in the real world, is a very fluid term: “An ADU is a smaller, secondary home on the same lot as a primary dwelling. ADUs are independently habitable and provide the basic requirements of shelter, heat, cooking and sanitation.”

2. The Purpose: This is where the code describes key reasons a community allows ADUs. They should:

- increase the number of housing units while respecting the style and scale of the residential neighborhood
- bolster the efficient use of existing housing stock and infrastructure
- provide housing that’s affordable and responds to the needs of smaller, changing households
- serve as accessible housing for older adults and people with disabilities

3. Eligibility: Who can build an ADU and on what type of lot? A statement in this part of the code clarifies that an ADU can be placed only on a “residentially zoned lot.” (Some communities provide lot size standards.)

4. Creation: The code sets out how an ADU can be built. For instance: “An ADU may be created through new construction, the conversion of an existing structure, as an addition to an existing structure or as a conversion of a qualifying existing house during the construction of a new primary dwelling on the site.”

5. Quantity: Most municipalities that permit ADUs allow one per lot. Those allowing two typically permit one internal and one external. Some allow duplexes or townhomes to have an ADU, either in the backyard or on the ground floor.

6. Occupancy and Use: A code should state that the use-and-safety standards for ADUs match those used for the main dwelling on the property. (See page 17 for more.)

Visit [AARP.org/ADU](https://www.aarp.org/ADU) to download **Accessory Dwelling Units: Model State Act and Local Ordinance**, a free publication that can be used by state and local officials to develop ADU policies.

7. Design Standards:

- **Size and height:** A zoning code might specify exactly how large and tall an ADU is allowed to be. For instance: “An ADU may not exceed 1,000 square feet or the size of the primary dwelling, whichever is smaller.” Codes often limit detached ADUs to 1.5 or 2 stories in height. An example of that language: “The maximum height allowed for a detached ADU is the lesser of 25 feet at the peak of the roof or the height of the primary dwelling.”
- **Parking:** Most zoning codes address the amount and placement of parking. Some don’t require additional parking for ADUs, some do, and others find a middle ground — e.g., allowing tandem parking in the driveway and/or on-street parking. (See page 16 for more about parking.)
- **Appearance:** Standards can specify how an ADU’s roof shape, siding type and other features need to match the primary dwelling or neighborhood norms. Some codes exempt one-story and internal ADUs from such requirements. (See page 16 for more.)

8. Additional Design Standards for Detached ADUs:

- **Building setbacks:** Many communities require detached ADUs to either be located behind the primary dwelling or far enough from the street to be discreet. (A code might exempt preexisting detached units that don’t meet that standard.) Although such a rule can work well for neighborhoods of large properties with large rear yards, communities with smaller lot sizes may need to employ a more flexible setback-and-placement standard.
- **Building coverage:** A code will likely cap the combined lot coverage of a detached ADU and the primary dwelling to a specific percentage.
- **Yard setbacks:** Most communities have rules about minimum distances to property lines and between buildings on the same lot. ADUs are typically required to follow the same rules. ■

ADU “Hot Topics”

As communities allow ADUs or update existing zoning codes and rules to be more ADU-friendly, they inevitably wrestle with some or all of the following issues:

Adding ADUs to neighborhoods

Recognizing that ADUs may represent a new housing type for existing neighborhoods, communities often write special rules to ensure they'll fit in well. These guidelines typically address visual compatibility with the primary dwelling, appearance from the street (if the ADU can be seen) and privacy for neighbors. Rules that help achieve these goals include:

- height and size caps mandating that ADUs be shorter and smaller than the primary dwelling
- requirements that detached ADUs be behind the main house or a minimum distance from the street
- mandates that the design and location of detached ADUs be managed the same way as other detached structures (e.g., garages) on the lot
- design standards for larger or two-story ADUs so they architecturally match the primary dwelling or reflect and complement neighborhood aesthetics
- encouragement for the creation of internal ADUs, which are often unnoticeable from the street

Each community can strike its own unique balance between strict rules to ensure that ADUs have a minimal impact on neighborhoods and more flexible rules that make them easier to build.



▲ Providence, Rhode Island, has many homes that were built as or long-ago converted into multidwelling units. (Notice the two front doors.) A homeowner can live in one apartment while renting out the other.

Providing places to park

ADU regulations often include off-street-parking minimums on top of what's already required for the primary dwelling. Such rules can prevent homeowners from building ADUs if there's insufficient space for added parking. However, the extra parking often isn't needed.

Studies of Portland, Oregon, and the San Francisco Bay area found that ADU households own an average of 0.9 cars. That's half the national average of 1.8 cars per household. With just over 2 percent of Portland homes having an ADU (the highest percentage of any large city in the country), there's roughly one extra car parked on the street every six blocks. This suggests that, even in booming ADU cities, any impact on street parking from ADUs is likely to be very small and dispersed. More-realistic parking rules might:

- require the creation of new parking only if the ADU displaces the primary dwelling's existing parking
- waive off-street-parking requirements at locations within walking distance of transit
- allow parking requirements for the house and ADU to be met by using a combination of off-street parking, curb parking and tandem (one car in front of the other) parking in a driveway

Dealing with unpermitted ADUs

It's not uncommon for homeowners to convert a portion of their residence into an ADU in violation (knowingly or not) of zoning laws or without permits.

Such illegal ADUs are common in cities with tight housing markets and a history of ADU bans. One example is New York City, which gained 114,000 apartments between 1990 and 2000 that aren't reflected in certificates of occupancy or by safety inspections. Sadly, in 2021, several city residents living in unsafe basement apartments drowned in their homes due to flooding caused by Hurricane Ida.

Some cities have found that legalizing ADUs, simplifying ADU rules and/or waiving fees can be effective at getting the owners of illegal housing units to “go legit” — and address safety problems in the process. ■

Allowing and Restricting Uses

Communities get to decide whether to let ADUs be used just like any other housing type or to create special rules for them. Some municipalities prefer the simple approach: regulating ADUs like other homes. So if a home-based child-care service is allowed to operate in the primary dwelling, it is also allowed in an ADU. Conversely, communities sometimes adopt ADU-specific regulations in order to avoid undesirable impacts on neighbors. Examples of those regulations include:

Limiting short-term rentals

ADUs tend to work well as short-term rentals. They're small and the owner usually lives on-site, making it convenient to serve as host. However, if ADUs primarily serve as short-term rentals, such as for Airbnb and similar services, it undermines the objective of adding small homes to the local housing supply and creating housing that's affordable.

In popular markets, short-term rentals can be more profitable than long-term ones, allowing homeowners to recoup their ADU expenses more quickly. In addition, short-term rentals can provide owners with enough income that they can afford to occasionally use the ADU for friends and family.

A survey of ADU owners in three Pacific Northwest cities with mature ADU and short-term rental markets found that 60 percent of ADUs are used for long-term housing as compared with 12 percent for short-term rentals.

Respondents shared that they “greatly value the ability to use an

ADU flexibly.” For instance, an ADU can be rented nightly to tourists, then someday rented to a long-term tenant, then used to house an aging parent. ADUs intended primarily for visiting family are sometimes used as short-term rentals between visits.

Cities concerned about short-term rentals can regulate them across all housing types. Doing so might mean that special rules are not needed. An approach employed in Portland, Oregon, is to treat ADUs the same as other residences except that any financial incentives (such as fee waivers) to create them are available only if the property owner agrees not to use the ADU as a short-term rental for at least 10 years.

Requiring owner occupancy

Some jurisdictions require the property owner to live on-site, either in the primary house or its ADU. This is a common way of addressing concerns that absentee landlords and their tenants will allow homes and ADUs to fall into disrepair and negatively impact the neighborhood.

Owner-occupancy rules are usually implemented through a deed restriction and/or by requiring that an annual statement confirming residency be filed. Some cities go further, saying ADUs can be occupied only by family members, child- or adult-care providers, or other employees in service of the family.

Owner-occupancy requirements make the financing of ADUs more difficult, just as they would if applied to single-family homes. But as ADUs have become more common, owner-occupancy restrictions have become less so, which is good. Such requirements limit the appraised value of properties with ADUs and reduce options for lenders should they need to foreclose.

Enforcing owner-occupancy laws can be tricky, and the rules have been challenged in courts, sometimes successfully. However, according to a study by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, more than two-thirds of properties with ADUs are owner-occupied even without an owner-occupancy mandate. ■



◀ The zoning code of Brevard, North Carolina, a city of fewer than 10,000 residents, allows ADUs, which are referred to as “secondary dwelling units” and are allowed “within residentially-zoned, single-family and duplex lots.” The code states that such homes “shall be encouraged and designed to meet housing needs,” adding that “[s]econdary dwelling units shall be accessory and subordinate to the primary living quarters.” In the image at left, the one-story cottage is the primary dwelling. The apartment above the detached garage is the secondary dwelling.

Inside Spaces

ADUs vary from studio apartment-like spaces to multi-bedroom, multi-story structures. Regardless of size, the result is a needed residence



▲ A top floor ADU can be a suitable rental for a student or someone who travels a lot for work. ADU expert Kol Peterson grew up in a home with an attic ADU that was usually rented to law school students. “They had to walk up the primary house’s interior stairs in order to access the affordable attic unit,” he writes in *Backdoor Revolution: The Definitive Guide to ADU Development*. “Over the years that each of them lived there, the tenants became part of our family.”



▲ The alcoves in the ADU area above a garage provide a light-filled work space in one, and a reading nook in the other. (See the attached ADU’s exterior on page 3.)



▲ This studio apartment internal ADU uses a wardrobe cabinet to separate the bedroom from the living area and kitchen (seen on page 19).



▲ As an independent living space, an ADU has its own bathroom and kitchen. Depending on the available square footage — and sometimes on the local zoning code or the property’s plumbing and utility connections — an ADU might have a full kitchen with full-sized appliances and a dining area (top) or a smaller but functional kitchenette. This interior is from the detached ADU pictured below right and on the back cover. Fun fact: A coat closet and extra kitchen shelving are built into the base of the circular staircase. In a small home, every bit of space counts!



▲ The kitchen of this internal ADU (also seen at the top of page 9 and in the bedroom image at left) has a full-sized range but a mini-refrigerator. Some ADU owners install a one- or two-burner electric cooktop and a convection microwave in lieu of an oven.



▲ The second story of this detached ADU is accessed by the spiral staircase shown in the image at top. The space features a bedroom and a sitting area that could be used as a nursery, office or den. A full-sized, stacked washer-dryer is hidden behind a closet door.

Just One More

While not technically ADUs, tiny houses can serve a similar purpose

Because tiny houses are typically built on a trailer with wheels rather than a fixed foundation, they are usually treated by zoning as recreational vehicles (RVs) or manufactured (aka mobile) homes. In Portland, Oregon, and a growing number of smaller cities, tiny houses can be legally occupied on any residentially-zoned lot. Since they're small — typically under 400 square feet — tiny houses can fit in a space too small for an ADU. Many include a kitchen and bathroom. Some function more like a detached bedroom. A unique plus: Unlike ADUs, tiny houses can move to a new location as needed.



◀ ▲ “The Lucky Penny” tiny house measures 8 feet wide by 14 feet, 6 inches long and provides 100 square feet of living space. The home, which is located in the backyard of a single-family residence, features a pullout bed, a kitchenette, a shower, built-in storage, and three large windows plus a skylight to provide lots of nature light.



◀ ▼ ADUs are sometimes used as short-term rental units for travelers. The “Kangablue,” is one of several units at Caravan, the “world’s first tiny house hotel.” At 170 square feet, the home is the largest tiny house on the lot, located in the Cully neighborhood of Portland, Oregon. The tiny space includes a kitchen, living area, bathroom (with a shower and toilet) and a sleep loft.



Top: Design and Builder: Lina Menard, Niche Consulting | Photos by Guillaume Dutilh, PhotoXplorer
Bottom: Design and Builder: Benn Kovco | Photos by Jeff Freeman Photography

The ABCs of ADUs

A guide to Accessory Dwelling Units and how they expand housing options for people of all ages

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Back: Kol Peterson, *BuildingAnADU.com* | Eli Spevak, Orange Splot LLC | Schuyler Smith, Polyphon Architecture & Design, LLC

A NOTE TO READERS: Many of the photographs and project examples in this publication are from Portland, Oregon, which was one of the first municipalities in the nation to allow and encourage the creation of accessory dwelling units.

To learn more about ADUs — and to order or download this guide — visit [AARP.org/Livable](https://www.aarp.org/livable).

Other useful resources include:

- *AccessoryDwellings.org*
- *BuildingAnADU.com*
- *Planning.org* (the website of the American Planning Association)
- And the websites of the states, cities and towns mentioned in this guide as allowing and encouraging the creation of accessory dwelling units.



ABOVE-GARAGE ADU



DETACHED-BEDROOM ADU



DETACHED ADU

- An accessory dwelling unit is a small residence that shares a single-family lot with a larger primary dwelling.
- As an independent living space, an ADU is self-contained, with its own kitchen or kitchenette, bathroom and living/sleeping area. (Garage apartments and backyard cottages are each a type of ADU.)
- ADUs can enable homeowners to provide needed housing for their parents, adult children, grandchildren or other loved ones.
- An ADU can provide older adults a way to downsize on their own property while a tenant or family member resides in the larger house.
- Since homeowners can legally rent out an ADU house or apartment, ADUs are an often-essential income source.
- ADUs help to improve housing affordability and diversify a community's housing stock without changing the physical character of a neighborhood.
- ADUs are a beneficial — and needed — housing option for people of all ages.

Learn more about ADUs and
order or download

The ABCs of ADUs

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D20473



Report to Plan Commission January 27, 2026

Prepared by: Bart Griepentrog, AICP, Planning & Development Director

5. Further discussion and possible recommendation of a Zoning Code amendment to clarify the location restrictions of office uses within the MX Districts.

Item Overview

On June 3, 2024, the Village Board adopted an amendment to the Zoning Code to allow office uses within the primary frontage of buildings within the Mixed Use Storefront (MX) Districts, subject to additional restrictions. The adopted amendment was crafted to be less impactful to the district than the applicant's requested amendment, which would have allowed office uses within all MX properties unless they were 30 feet from a street corner. The additionally adopted restrictions detailed that such uses had to be located within a building with at least 120 lineal feet of primary frontage, but also could not be located within 60 feet from a street corner and could not occupy more than 90 lineal feet of primary frontage or 50% of the building, whichever was less. The prelude to the ordinance amendment acknowledged the extra difficulty in finding tenants to fill large spaces. Discussion of the amendment also recognized that some large spaces were not designed for realistic conversion to retail. Before adoption, this amendment was discussed and recommended by the Plan Commission at their April 23, 2024 and May 28, 2024 meetings, respectively.

In the process of drafting and adopting the change, the Planning Director erroneously suggested that the Principal Use Table be updated to change the symbol for office uses within the MX districts from "☉ Permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions" to "● Permitted as-of-right," with the addition of "* Additional restrictions" to signify the newly adopted location restrictions. In doing so, he inadvertently removed the ability of office uses to occupy the upper stories of the building or the rear of the ground story, a minimum of 20 feet from the primary façade or be located within buildings with less than 120 linear feet of primary frontage, since those options were not included within the language associated with the newly created "* Additional restrictions". That was not intended and is beyond what could be considered a scrivener's error.

In order to rectify the adopted amendment, the Planning Director would like the Plan Commission to consider recommending a corrective amendment that would reclassify office uses back to "☉ Permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions", as follows:

Uses identified with a "☉" are permitted as-of-right in the subject zone but only when located above the ground floor in upper stories of the building or in the rear of the ground story, a minimum of 20 feet from the primary facade. The first 20 feet behind the primary facade must contain occupied building space of an allowed use. See § 535-6A for definition of "occupied building space."

and update and rename the language associated with "* Additional restrictions" to a "* Location exception" as follows with emphasis added:

As an exception, uses also identified with an "" may also be located within the primary frontage of buildings with at least 120 linear feet of primary frontage, so long as those total*

uses, not including a lobby, occupy no more than 90 linear feet or 50% of the frontage along the primary façade, whichever is less, but in no case shall they be located along the primary façade within 60 feet from a street corner as measured from the corner of the building.

The reworded language would clarify this to be an exceptional allowance in addition to the upper and rear story locations rather than an additional restriction further limiting their use. It would also reorder the wording for greater comprehension without changing the content. For reference, here is the currently adopted language *with emphasis added*:

Uses identified with a “*” shall not be located along the primary façade within 60 feet from a street corner (measured from the corner of the building), and *may only be located* within buildings with at least 120 linear feet of primary frontage, so long as those total uses, not including a lobby, occupy no more than 90 linear feet or 50% of the frontage along the primary façade, whichever is less.

Review Process, Recommendation and Approval

The process for Changes and Amendments to the Zoning Chapter are outlined in [Article XI](#). Of note, this article details that “Whenever the public necessity, convenience, general welfare or good zoning practice requires, the Village Board of Trustees may, by ordinance, change the district boundaries or amend, change or supplement the regulations established by this chapter or amendments thereto”. Such changes may be initiated by the Village Board or Plan Commission, or by property owners through a petition.

The article also states that petitions shall be referred to the Plan Commission for review and recommendation, prior to consideration after a public hearing by the Village Board. The Plan Commission’s recommendation “shall be made at a meeting subsequent to the meeting at which the petition is first submitted.” As a result, this item was introduced for discussion only at the October 28, 2025 Plan Commission meeting. No objections or concerns were raised. A recommendation is being sought at the January 27, 2026 meeting upon which adoption could be considered after holding a public hearing in front of the Village Board on March 2, 2026.

Suggested Motions:

I move to recommend that the Village Board consider a Zoning Code amendment to clarify the location restrictions of office uses within the MX Districts, as presented.

Materials Enclosed

- Ordinance 3064: An Ordinance to Amend the Regulations Pertaining to Principal Uses Permitted in the MX Districts, as Detailed in 535-25 of the Zoning Code - Adopted June 3, 2024
- Current Principal Use Table
- Proposed Ordinance to Amend the Regulations Pertaining to Principal Uses Permitted in the MX Districts, as Detailed in 535-25 of the Zoning Code.

ORDINANCE NO. 3064

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO
PRINCIPAL USES PERMITTED IN THE MX DISTRICTS,
AS DETAILED IN 535-25 OF THE ZONING CODE.

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2023, the Village of Shorewood adopted Ordinance 3053 implementing a Commercial Zoning Update that was developed with over a year of public input and consideration, and included new zoning classifications and a new principal use table that defined permitted, conditional and prohibited uses;

WHEREAS, the new zoning classifications included MX “Mixed-Use Storefront” districts that were intended for mixed-use corridors where walkable Storefront Buildings generally include shopping, eating and drinking, and services behind the storefront windows and a mix of uses throughout the building, including residential;

WHEREAS, office uses were permitted as-of-right in the MX districts, but only when located above the ground floor in upper stories of the building or in the rear of the ground story, a minimum of 20 feet from the primary facade. The first 20 feet behind the primary facade must contain occupied building space of an allowed use.;

WHEREAS, on April 5, 2024, Phyliss Brostoff, on behalf of Vallis LLC, property owner of 4485 N. Oakland Ave. submitted a Zoning Petition requesting that the Village amend the zoning code “to permit office uses in the MX districts, as long as they are not located within 30 feet from a street corner,” indicating that they have been unable to find viable retail tenants in the current commercial real estate market;

WHEREAS, the requested Zoning Petition was introduced to the Plan Commission on April 23, 2024 for discussion, and was subsequently recommended with additional conditions by the Plan Commission on May 28, 2024 that limited the potential location of office uses to large buildings (over 120 feet in length) due to the extra difficulty of finding tenants to fill large spaces, but also limited the lineal distance and percentage of storefront space that office uses could occupy such buildings;

WHEREAS, a class two public hearing notice was published in the official newspaper on May 15, 2024 and May 22, 2024, and a notice was mailed on May 23, 2024 to all property owners on within the MX zoning district, as well as property owners within 250 feet of property zoned in the MX district, to notify all interested parties of a public hearing at the June 3, 2024 Village Board meeting to discuss the matter.

NOW THEREFORE, at a regular meeting of the Village Board of the Village of Shorewood, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, held on the 3rd day of June 2024, by a favorable vote of the members being present and therefore, said Board does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1

That the Key of Table 535-25-1 "Principal Use Table" within Section 535-25 "Principal Uses" within Chapter 535 "Zoning" shall be amended to rename the "⊙" symbol from "Permitted as-of-right in upper stories only" to "Permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions" and that a "*" symbol be created and named "Additional restrictions" be inserted below the "—" "Prohibited" symbol.

SECTION 2

That Table 535-25-1 "Principal Use Table" within Section 535-25 "Principal Uses" within Chapter 535 "Zoning" shall be amended to indicate that "Office" uses shall be permitted in the MX1 and MX 2 districts by replacing the current "⊙" symbol with "●" and "*" symbols.

SECTION 3

That Subdivision (c) "Permitted in upper stories and rear of ground story only." of Paragraph (2) "Interpreting the Use Table." of Subsection A. "General regulations." of Section 535-25 "Principal Uses." of Chapter 535 "Zoning" be amended to read as follows:

Permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions. Uses identified with a "⊙" are permitted as-of-right in the subject zone but only when located above the ground floor in upper stories of the building or in the rear of the ground story, a minimum of 20 feet from the primary facade. The first 20 feet behind the primary facade must contain occupied building space of an allowed use. See § 535-6A for definition of "occupied building space."

Uses identified with a "*" shall not be located along the primary façade within 60 feet from a street corner (measured from the corner of the building), and may only be located within buildings with at least 120 linear feet of primary frontage, so long as those total uses, not including a lobby, occupy no more than 90 linear feet or 50% of the frontage along the primary façade, whichever is less.

SECTION 4


That all Ordinances or parts of Ordinances conflicting with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby to such extent repealed.

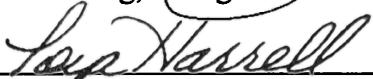
SECTION 5

That this Ordinance shall take effect and be in force after its passage and posting.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Village Board of the Village of Shorewood, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, this 3rd day of June 2024.

Countersigned:



Ann McKaig, Village President


Toya Harrell, Village Clerk

535-25 Principal Uses
535-25B Use Classifications

Table 535-25-1. Principal Use Table

USE GROUP Use Category	DISTRICTS												Conditions/ Supplemental Regulations
	Commercial & Mixed-Use				Residential						Public		
	MX1 MX2	CX	GX1 GX2 GX3	RX	R-1 R-2 R-3 R-4	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9 R-10	P-1	P-3	
RESIDENTIAL (535-25C)													
Household Living, 1 unit	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	
Household Living, 2 units	●	●	●	●	-	-	●	-	●	●	-	-	
Household Living, 3+ units	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	
Group Living													
Community Living Arrangement, Small	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	-	535-25C(2)(b)
Community Living Arrangement, Large	○	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	○	○	-	-	535-25C(2)(b)
Residential Care Facility	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	●	●	-	-	
COMMERCIAL (535-25D)													
Consumer Service	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Child Care Center, 8 or fewer individuals	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	-	
Child Care Center, 9 or more individuals	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
Eating & Drinking Place	●	●	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Entertainment, Indoor	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	
Event Venue	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	
Funeral & Mortuary Service	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Lodging	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Manufacturing & Production, Artisan	●	●	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	535-25D(8)
Medical-Dental Clinic-Office	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Office	●*	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Personal Credit Establishment	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	535-25D(11)
Retail Sales, General	●	●	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Retail Sales, Donated Goods	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	535-25D(13)(b)
Vehicle Service	-	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	535-25D(14)(b)
CIVIC & INSTITUTIONAL (535-25E)													
College	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
Community Assembly	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
Cultural Facility	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
Hospital	-	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
Parks & Open Space	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	
Safety Service	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
School	●	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	-	
Utilities & Services, Minor	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Utilities & Services, Major	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	●	●	
OTHER USES (535-25F)													
Parking Lot	-	○	○	○	-	-	-	-	-	-	○	○	535-25F(1)(b)

KEY: ● = Permitted as-of-right ○ = Permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions

○ = Permitted as-of-right (floor area not to exceed 25% of building footprint or in the rear of the ground story per [535-25A\(2\)](#) ○ = Conditional use permit approval required

*primary facade restrictions - = Prohibited

ORDINANCE NO. **TBD**

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO
LOCATION RESTRICTIONS OF OFFICE USES WITHIN THE MX DISTRICTS,
AS DETAILED IN 535-25 OF THE ZONING CODE.

WHEREAS, on June 3, 2024, the Village Board adopted an amendment to the Zoning Code to allow office uses within the primary frontage of buildings within Mixed Use Storefront (MX) Districts, subject to additional restrictions;

WHEREAS, upon administration, the Planning Director has identified that adopted amendment erred in inadvertently prohibiting office uses in upper stories or the rear of the ground story, a minimum of 20 feet from the primary façade, and identified the amendment as a restriction as opposed to an exception, and has drafted an amendment to correct the error;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment was introduced to the Plan Commission on October 28, 2025 for discussion, and was subsequently recommended by the Plan Commission on January 27, 2026 for approval;

WHEREAS, a class two public hearing notice was published in the official newspaper on February 4, 2026 and February 11, 2026 to notify all interested parties of a public hearing at the March 2, 2026 Village Board meeting to discuss the matter.

NOW THEREFORE, at a regular meeting of the Village Board of the Village of Shorewood, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, held on the 2nd day of March 2026, by a favorable vote of the members being present and therefore, said Board does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1

That the Key of Table 535-25-1 “Principal Use Table” within Section 535-25 “Principal Uses” within Chapter 535 “Zoning” shall be amended to rename the “*” symbol from “Additional restrictions” to “Location exception”.

SECTION 2

That Table 535-25-1 “Principal Use Table” within Section 535-25 “Principal Uses” within Chapter 535 “Zoning” shall be amended to indicate that “Office” uses shall be permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions in the MX1 and MX 2 districts by replacing the current “●” symbol with “◉”, while also keeping the “*” symbol.

SECTION 3

That Subdivision (c) “Permitted in upper stories and rear of ground story only.” of Paragraph (2) “Interpreting the Use Table.” of Subsection A. “General regulations.” of Section 535-25 “Principal Uses.” of Chapter 535 “Zoning” be amended to read as follows:

Permitted as-of-right, subject to location restrictions. Uses identified with a "⊙" are permitted as-of-right in the subject zone but only when located above the ground floor in upper stories of the building or in the rear of the ground story, a minimum of 20 feet from the primary facade. The first 20 feet behind the primary facade must contain occupied building space of an allowed use. See § [535-6A](#) for definition of "occupied building space."

As an exception, uses also identified with an "*" may also be located within the primary frontage of buildings with at least 120 linear feet of primary frontage, so long as those total uses, not including a lobby, occupy no more than 90 linear feet or 50% of the frontage along the primary façade, whichever is less, but in no case shall they be located along the primary façade within 60 feet from a street corner as measured from the corner of the building.

SECTION 4

That all Ordinances or parts of Ordinances conflicting with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby to such extent repealed.

SECTION 5

That this Ordinance shall take effect and be in force after its passage and posting.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Village Board of the Village of Shorewood, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, this 2nd day of March 2026.

Countersigned:

Ann McKaig, Village President

Toya Harrell, MMC, WCPC, Village Clerk



Report to Plan Commission January 27, 2026

Prepared by: Bart Griepentrog, AICP, Planning & Development Director

5. Discussion and consideration of 2025 Plan Commission Annual Report and Future Initiatives.

Overview

All Village Boards, Committees and Commissions are asked to provide annual reports summarizing their previous year's activities and accomplishments. The combined annual report is typically provided to the Village Board in late Spring.

All Village Boards, Committees and Commissions are also asked to provide a list of future initiatives that they'd like the Village to pursue. The combined listing of proposed initiatives is provided to the Village Manager on March 1st of each year. The Village Manager distributes proposed initiatives to Lead Departments for review and refinement prior to resubmission to the Village Board by the end of April for consideration in June. At that time, the Village Board is asked to select proposed initiatives in order to allocate staff and budgetary resources to projects in the next year, as available.

In 2025, the Plan Commission identified three future initiatives for consideration:

1. Increase Housing Opportunities in the Zoning Code (e.g. Accessory Dwelling Units)
2. Review/Update Home Occupation Regulations
3. Review/Update Notice Requirements (include tenants?)

The Plan Commission's housing initiative was selected for completion in 2025. Work on this initiative has been extended into 2026. Recommendations to the Village Board are expected in early 2026.

Regarding future initiatives, should the Plan Commission wish to add, remove, reprioritize or amend anything on the list, discussion and consideration will take place at the January 27th meeting prior to submitting to the Village Manager and Village Board. A review of the Village's [2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) could be useful in understanding or identifying future initiatives related to the Plan Commission's scope of work. The implementation table begins on page 189 and includes reference to responsible parties, including the Plan Commission (PC).

Suggested Motion:

I move to approve the Plan Commission's 2025 Annual Report and Future Initiatives, (as drafted, discussed or amended).

Materials Enclosed

- DRAFT 2025 Annual Report and Future Initiatives – Plan Commission

Village of Shorewood 2025 Annual Report

VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD DEPARTMENT / COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Instructions: To help inform the Village Board on the annual operations, services and activities being performed by all areas of the Village, the Village Manager is asking each department and citizen committee to complete the following report. Please contact the Village Manager's Office if you have any questions about the report.

Name of Department / Committee: Plan Commission

Name of Department Head / Committee Chair: Bart Griepentrog (staff liaison) / President Ann McKaig

Other Department Managers / Committee Members:

Tr. Matt McGovern, Kate Flynn Post, Therese Klein, Michael Kloehn, Josh Pollack, Dan Wycklendt

Identify your most significant department / committee services and activities performed in the past year.

1. Convened 7 meetings.
2. Reviewed/discussed options to increase housing opportunities in the village, namely by updating the definition of household, allowing bedrooms in basements, permitting accessory dwelling units, and reintroducing duplexes as permitted uses within the Village's R-6 One- and Two-Household Residence District. (6 meetings)
3. Provided a recommendation to the Village Board to amend the permitted uses within the P-1 district align with the GX district. (The Village Board modified the recommendation to only expand permission to commercial kitchens.)
4. Reviewed introduction to petition for zoning request from MX1 to GX1 at 4449-53 N. Oakland Ave. (The application was rescinded by applicant.)
5. Reviewed introduction to possible amendment to the zoning code to clarify location restriction of office uses within the MX districts.
6. Reviewed introduction to possible amendment to update appeals standards to administrative or Village decisions.

Village of Shorewood Future Initiatives

Identify your department / committee proposed initiatives that you hope to perform or implement in future years. Initiatives are significant subjects such as service delivery changes, capital items, programs, or studies that require Village resources and time to execute. Each initiative listed should link to one of the six vision statements in [Vision 2025](#) on pages 6-8. Include the vision number(s) in the “Relationship to Vision 2025” column corresponding with the vision statement(s) that best relates to the initiative along with a brief explanation. For each initiative, please complete the “Request Execution of New Village Initiative” form to complete this section. For citizen committees, please utilize your staff liaison to complete this form.

Department / Committee Initiative(s)	Relationship to Vision 2025
1. Increase Housing Opportunities in the Zoning Code (e.g. Accessory Dwelling Units) IN PROGRESS	Vibrant urban community with attractive and thriving businesses, and safe, friendly neighborhoods
2. Review/Update Home Occupation Regulations	Vibrant urban community with desirable housing options that attract diverse people of all ages and stages of life
3. Review/Update Notice Requirements (include tenants?)	Well-governed community with leaders and citizens who value broad civic participation
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	