

WHAT IS A SECOND DWELLING UNIT?

A second dwelling unit (SDU) is an attached or a detached residential dwelling unit in the R-1 zone which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons separate from the main house. An SDU includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation and may be rented. A property with an SDU may not be subdivided and the SDU may not be sold as separate property (BMC 10-1-625.2).

WHY ARE SDU'S ALLOWED?

The State Legislature enacted laws allowing second dwelling units to address the critical shortage of affordable housing in California. The City's SDU regulations are designed to allow for additional dwelling units without disrupting the character of traditional single-family neighborhoods.



AM I ELIGIBLE TO BUILD AN SDU ON MY PROPERTY?

If your property meets all of the conditions below, you may be able to apply for an SDU.

- The property is in the R-1 Zone. Please note, SDU's are not allowed in the R-1-H zone.
- The property is at least 6,000 square feet.
- The property is more than 300 feet from the nearest permitted SDU.
- The maximum building area and lot coverage has not been exceeded.
- One dedicated parking space can be provided on the property for the SDU in addition to the required parking for the main dwelling (see reverse for more details).

WHAT ARE THE PROPERTY OWNERS RESPONSIBILITIES?

Property owners that apply for an SDU will be required to follow certain guidelines if their application is approved and an SDU is constructed. **There are no exceptions to these requirements.**

- Owners are allowed to rent out either the primary or secondary unit, but the property owner must live on the same property as the SDU. Owners are not permitted to rent out both units at the same time.
- Property owners must provide an annual certification verifying that they occupy one of the units.
- SDU's may not be sold separately at any time and are restricted to their approved size.
- If your application is approved, the City Attorney's office prepares a covenant that memorializes the limitations and requirements of a second dwelling unit. You must sign the covenant and it is forwarded to the Los Angeles County Recorder's office to be recorded against your property. You will be required to pay a small recording fee.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR SDU'S

SDU's are subject to the same building setbacks as a typical single family home, with a few extra requirements:

- SDU's are limited to one story, with a maximum height of 13 feet to the top plate and 17 feet to top of the roof.
- SDU's are limited to a maximum size of 500 square feet.
- SDU's may be attached or detached from the primary dwelling, but they may not be located above garages or other accessory structures.
- If the SDU is attached to the main dwelling, it must be designed so that it can be easily incorporated into the main dwelling. If a separate entrance is provided, it must be located on the side or rear of the structure.
- All SDU's must be designed to be architecturally similar to or compatible with the main dwelling.
- SDU's are not allowed to have separate utility connections. The primary and secondary units must be connected to a common gravity-fed sewage disposal and all utility connections and water hook-ups must be metered through the primary residence.
- One extra parking space must be provided for the second dwelling unit in addition to the spaces required for the main dwelling. The space may be uncovered but it may not be located in a driveway or front yard and may not be a tandem space.

HOW CAN I SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO BUILD AN SDU?

If you think you may be eligible to submit an application to build an SDU, please speak to a Planner prior to completing an application form. Planners are available by phone at (818) 238-5250, or in person at the Planning and Transportation Division counter located at 150 North Third Street from 8 AM to 12 noon and 1 to 4 PM Monday thru Friday.

Once an application, all required materials, and fees are submitted, the application will be reviewed for completeness.

When the application is complete and the plans comply with the Zoning Code, a public notice will be sent out to all property owners and occupants within a 300 foot radius of the property 10 days prior to the Director's decision.

Once the decision is made, any person (including the applicant) may appeal the Community Development Director's decision to the Planning Board within 15 days of the decision date. If no appeal is filed, the Director's decision is final. If an appeal is filed, the matter is scheduled for a public hearing in front of the Planning Board.