



TOWN OF
VIENNA
since 1890

Accessory Dwelling/Living Units

Town Council Work Session
September 9, 2024

Department of Planning and Zoning

2024 Town Council Work Sessions on Housing Diversity

- 1/29/2024 – Town Council chooses Housing Diversity as one of its 4 priorities for 2024
- 5/6/2024 – Town Council first work session
- 5/13/2024 – Town Council second work session



Accessory Living (or Dwelling) Units

Work Session Goals

- Discuss *Accessory Living* Units (also known as *Accessory Dwelling* Units) to explore Town Council interest in potentially allowing ALUs in Vienna.
- Provide guidance to staff on next steps.

American Planning Association ADU Definition

“Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are small, self-contained living units that typically have their own kitchen, bedroom(s), and bathroom space.”

“ADUs are apartments that can be located within the walls of an existing or newly constructed single-family home or can be additions to existing homes.”

“They can also be freestanding cottages on the same lot as principal dwelling units or conversions of a garages or barns.”

Benefits of Allowing ADUs/ALUs

- More-affordable option for people to live in expensive areas
- Opportunity for family member to live nearby but have privacy and independence
- Rental income stream can help a homeowner afford the high cost of the principal residence
- Alternate type of housing to serve specific types of households who may not otherwise be able to live in Vienna.

Concerns Expressed of Allowing ADUs/ALUs

- Increased density in single-family neighborhoods
- Change in “character” of community
- Parking
- School enrollment
- The unit or the entire property will become a short-term rental (e.g., AirBnB)
- Rental income may inadvertently cause property values to increase, even while providing a more-affordable housing option



How ADU/ALU Codes Address Concerns

- Many communities have adopted provisions in the code that allow ADUs/ALUs in ways that address the concerns.
- Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Limits on the size of the unit
 - Minimum term for a lease (e.g., no shorter than 30 days)
 - Additional parking required to accommodate unit
 - Property owner must live in principal residence while ADU/ALU is rented

Examples of N. Virginia Localities' ADUs/ALUs

- Fairfax County – allows ALUs with clear rules and restrictions
 - Administrative approval if small and attached/interior
 - BZA if larger ALU and/or detached
- Falls Church – allows ADUs only if attached to or within the principal residence.
- City of Fairfax – allows internal ADUs only and restricts occupancy to seniors and those with disabilities

2021 Vienna “Code Create” Public Survey

56% expressed somewhat or strong support for allowing ALUs in Vienna, while 30% were somewhat or strongly opposed.

- 73% supported ALUs in basement
- 69% supported ALUs above garage
- 60% supported ALUs in structure attached to main house
- 56% supported ALUs in converted garage
- 46% supported ALUs in detached building
- 15% opposed all options



952 total responses, 856 verified being from within Town limits and unique responses, 696 unique Town addresses

2024 Proposed State Legislation

- 2024 Legislative Session – Sen. Salim introduced legislation that would have required all jurisdictions to allow ADUs in all single-family zoning districts *as a permitted use*.
- Jurisdictions would have been permitted to apply certain zoning standards.
- The Town Council may wish to discuss the Town’s position on legislation of this sort, in case it returns in 2025.

Town Council Discussion

1. Does Town Council wish to consider allowing ALUs/ADUs in Vienna?
2. If so, what parameters, limits or rules would the Town Council like to set?
3. What are next steps?