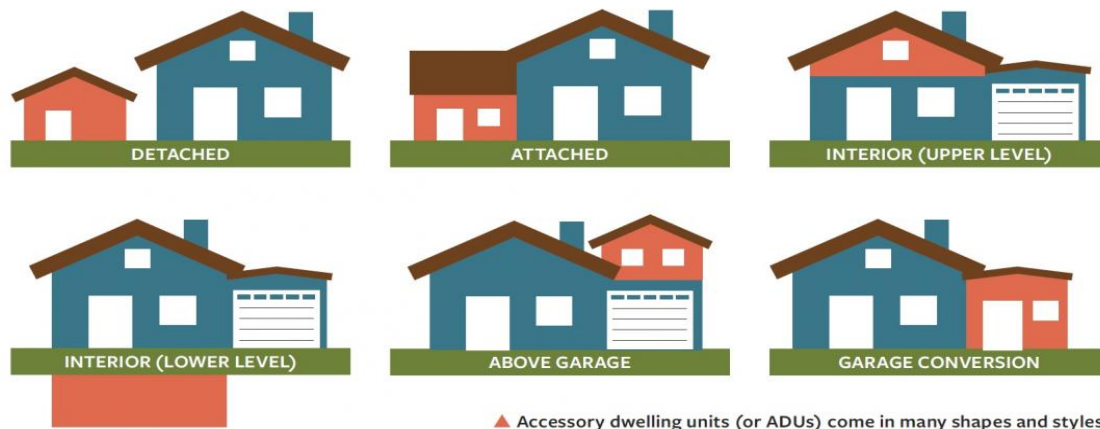




# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADU)



## Background

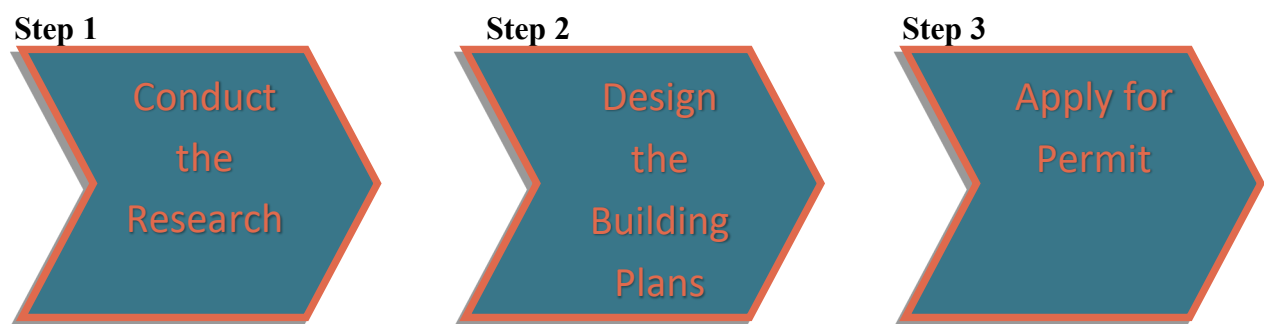
On December 15, 2020 the Board of County Commissioners adopted Ordinance 15952 to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in rural, unincorporated areas of Thurston County when all regulations and standards pertaining to ADUs, can be met. ADUs are also allowed in the Urban Growth Areas of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Grand Mound.

## What is an ADU?

An ADU is a small, separate, home built on the same lot as a single-family home. ADUs can be an addition to a single-family home, a conversion of a basement, an attached or detached garage or outbuilding, or a new detached structure. An ADU includes a kitchen, bedroom(s), and bathroom. ADUs are smaller in size than the main home on the lot.

ADUs come in many different shapes and sizes. With those variations comes different requirements to protect water quality and the neighborhood.

## What is the Process?



## Step 1 –Research

Conduct the research to save time and money. ADU proposals must meet all regulations and standards pertaining to, but not limited to, the following:

1. Density requirements for the zoning district your property is located in
2. Density requirements for a septic system
3. Approved drinking water supply
4. Residential Building Code
5. Stormwater drainage and driveway access

Before turning in an application to the Building Development Center (BDC) to develop an ADU, please check with each of the following Departments to help your proposal be successful. Visit, email, or call each of these Departments.

- 1. Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)** -Ask planning staff about the development standards for an ADU. You can email your questions to [planning@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:planning@co.thurston.wa.us) or call (360) 754-3355 extension 6299. START WITH: [Accessory Dwelling Unit \(ADU\)](#), [Thurston County Permitting](#) for a list of frequently asked questions.
- 2. Public Health & Social Services Department, Environmental Health Division** – ADUs must be served by an approved drinking water supply and an approved septic system. Please visit [Thurston County Environmental Health](#) for information. You can also email [EH\\_Tech@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:EH_Tech@co.thurston.wa.us) or call (360) 867-2673.
- 3. Public Works Department, Development Review Division** –Ask staff about driveway and drainage requirements for an ADU. You can also email [DevRev\\_Tech@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:DevRev_Tech@co.thurston.wa.us) or call (360) 867-205..

## Step 2 – Design

Construction drawings can be prepared by the homeowner, professional contractor, or licensed architect. Before preparing your construction drawings, review:

1. All unheated or heated accessory spaces converting to an ADU must comply with the Washington State Energy Code. Visit [www.energy.wsu.edu](http://www.energy.wsu.edu) for forms and information.
2. When an ADU is attached to a home or is an attached garage, the structure becomes a duplex. Existing structures will need to be retrofitted to provide a one-hour fire resistant wall to separate the two living areas. Conversions of an above garage, upper level floor, or lower level floor will also require floors, ceilings, and walls be one-hour fire resistive rated. Any doors between the homes will need to be one-hour fire resistant-rated.

ADU firewall information and illustration handout is available online at [Accessory Dwelling Unit \(ADU\)](#), [Thurston County Permitting](#). Building code information is available online at [Summary and Illustrations of Thurston County Building Codes](#). Contact Building Services at [building@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:building@co.thurston.wa.us) or call (360) 754-3355 ext. 7289.

## Step 3 – Permitting

After you complete Step 1 and 2, turn in a completed Residential Building Permit application to the Building Development Center. If you need a new onsite septic system, an Onsite Sewage System application will also need to be submitted. Application requirements are outlined in the application.

- Master Application [master-application-ma001.pdf \(thurston.wa.us\)](#)
- Residential Building Permit Application [residential-building-permit.pdf \(thurston.wa.us\)](#)
- Onsite Sewage System [HD-Onsite-Sewage-System.1-27-2021.pdf \(thurston.wa.us\)](#)
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For permitting questions, please visit the Building Department Center, email [permit@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:permit@co.thurston.wa.us), or call (360) 754-3355 ext. 7288.

## More Information:

- Thurston County Geodata Mapping:
- Thurston County Codes: [www.thurstoncountybdc.com](http://www.thurstoncountybdc.com). Link to codes at the top of the page.
- Visit [www.thurstoncountybdc.com](http://www.thurstoncountybdc.com) for permitting information and BDC hours of operation.

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