



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 25-908, Version: 1

Item #: PH-2.

PC - PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of City-Initiated Zoning Code Amendment (P2025-0012-ZCA) amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Title 17 Zoning Code, Section 17.400.095 Residential Uses - Accessory Dwelling Units to clarify and update existing Code sections to conform to State Accessory Dwelling Unit Law.

Meeting Date: March 26, 2025

Contact Person/Dept: William Kavadas, Assistant Planner
Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager

Phone Number: (310) 253-5706 / (310) 253-5727

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☒

City Council Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐ **Date:** [TBD]

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (03/20/25); (Posted) City Website (02/06/25); Gov Delivery (02/06/25); (Published in) Culver City News (02/06/25).

Department Approval: Mark E. Muenzer, Planning and Development Director (03/13/25)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending to the City Council approval of the City Initiated Zoning Code Amendment, P2025-0012-ZCA, modifying the Zoning Code pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units to align with State law.

PROCEDURES

1. Chair calls on staff for a staff report and the Planning Commission poses questions to staff.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the public the opportunity to speak.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

The City's Zoning Code has been regularly updated to comply with evolving State ADU law, with the most recent modifications in 2023. Culver City has seen an increase of ADUs in recent years. Since 2021, 333 ADUs have been permitted, the 6th highest ADU production rate in Los Angeles County.

In Fall 2024, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) staff reviewed Culver City's ADU Ordinance and identified topics that needed to be updated to comply with State law. Based on the comments issued to Culver City by HCD, staff initiated an amendment to the City's ADU ordinance and minor revisions were included to incorporate the specific State legislative language.

This item was originally scheduled for the February 26, 2025 Planning Commission Hearing, but was continued to March 26, 2025, to give staff time to address issues brought up by the California Housing Defense Fund (CalHDF) during the public comment period. CalHDF concerns included limitations on converted unit sizes, general allowances for ministerially approved units, and subjective standards. The items referenced in the CalHDF's letter were not identified as issues by HCD, but staff did modify aspects of the Ordinance to improve clarity and useability. Staff has sent the updated Ordinance to CalHDF prior to agenda posting.

ANALYSIS

Size Limitation for Conversions

The conversion of an existing accessory structure or portions of an existing primary residence is not subject to unit size requirements. The Code has been updated to reflect this.

State Mandated Units

California Government Code Section 66323 requires certain ADUs to be permitted ministerially and not subject to other State or local Code requirements. All ADUs in Culver City are approved ministerially but the proposed amendment includes a new section that specifically identifies this category of ADUs and references Section 66323 within the text of the document to reflect these exceptions.

Objective Design Standards

Objective design standards are not permitted for State Mandated Units. Staff recommends exempting all ADUs and JADUs from compliance with the Culver City Objective Design Standards in order to streamline ADU review and approval.

Roof Height Allowance

State ADU law requires that municipalities permit certain ADUs with no exceptions. HCD informed the City that these basic allowances also include a provision for an additional 2' in permitted ADU building height to accommodate a roof pitch of an existing structure when the subject property is within a half mile walking distance of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor. Section 17.400.095(B) has been updated to reflect this requirement.

Removal of Option for Attached New Construction ADU

State ADU law requires that municipalities allow the following ADUs on single-family lots: one converted ADU, one new construction/detached ADU, and one converted JADU. The City updated ADU codes in 2023 to allow the new construction ADU to be attached or detached. HCD informed staff that by allowing property owners to choose, the City inadvertently prohibited detached new-construction ADUs. Staff updated 17.400.095 (F)(1)(b) to permit only detached new construction ADUs.

Multi-Family ADU Allowances

SB 1211 was approved by the State Legislature in 2024 to allow for up to eight detached ADUs to be created on a lot with existing multi-family units, provided that the number of ADUs does not exceed the number of existing units on the lot. Section 17.400.095(F)(2) has been updated to reflect this change.

In addition to the above-mentioned items, smaller edits have been made within Section 17.400.095 to facilitate implementation of ADU Code. All changes can be seen in Exhibit A to Attachment 1.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The proposed Zoning Code Amendment, P2025-0012-ZCA, is considered exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.17, which exempts the adoption of an ordinance approving Zoning Code amendments related to accessory dwelling units that implement the provisions of Government Code Section(s) 66314 and 66333.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CCMC Section 17.630.010 requires public notification via a publication in the Culver City News, a minimum of 14 days prior to the formal public hearing. Accordingly, a public notice was published in the Culver City News and posted on the City website and distributed electronically via GovDelivery on 2/6/25. As of the writing of this report, no new comments have been received since the letter from CalHDF was received on the day of the original hearing.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

CONCLUSION

ADU are an essential part of the City's effort to increase housing production with 333 ADUs permitted since 2021. Recent determinations by HCD have resulted in the need to modify the Zoning Code to comply with State law. The Code Amendment will ensure that ADU regulations are in compliance, while addressing the housing crisis. Staff proposes the required findings can be made and recommends the Planning Commission recommend adoption of the amendments to the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2025-P004, including Exhibit A: Proposed Zoning Code Text Changes in "strikethrough/underline" format

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt Resolution No. 2025-P004 recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Amendment P2025-0012-ZCA, amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Title 17 Zoning Code, Section 17.400.095 Residential Uses - Accessory Dwelling Units.