



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gloria Administration Proposes Reforms to ADU Density Bonus Program, Invites Public Feedback

REFORMS AIM TO CONTINUE PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOMES WHILE ENSURING NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

SAN DIEGO – Mayor Todd Gloria is bringing forward reforms to the City of San Diego’s Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Density Bonus Program that will continue its success in expanding affordable home options while ensuring projects are consistent with the scale and character of San Diego’s neighborhoods.

The reforms address community concerns related to unintended impacts of the ADU program. The City regularly monitors its housing programs to ensure they are achieving the desired results and often makes adjustments based on feedback from the community and home builders.

[ADU homes are secondary housing units](#) built alongside a primary single-family residence and can play a key role in addressing San Diego’s critical housing shortage by producing home options for people of all incomes.

Established in 2020, the ADU Density Bonus Program allows additional ADU homes to be built on a property when a portion of the homes will be provided to people with moderate or low incomes. In 2024, the program was [recognized as a top housing innovation in the country](#).

The City Planning Department regularly monitors development regulations and recommends updates to the City Council as needed – either to remove unnecessary or burdensome regulations or to ensure that new development will be compatible with San Diego’s neighborhoods. Feedback from members of the public is a key part of this process.

To address concerns raised regarding neighborhood scale, infrastructure and fire safety, City staff began preparing changes to the ADU Density Bonus Program in the fall and is incorporating feedback from the City Council earlier this month in its proposed revisions. City staff will present a comprehensive package of ADU reforms to the City Council this summer.

“Our City’s housing programs are most successful when they provide housing options for people of all incomes and when new homes are consistent with the scale of existing neighborhoods,” said City Planning Director Heidi Vonblum. “Ensuring that the ADU Density Bonus Program continues to provide more housing options for people with moderate and lower incomes is critical. However, this must be achieved in a manner that fits with our existing communities. We look forward to working with the public to achieve this.”

Proposed changes to the ADU Density Bonus Program currently include:

- **Address Infrastructure Needs:** Ability to collect an opt-in fee from ADU Density Bonus Program home builders to fund community improvements, in accordance with state law.
- **Development Scale:** Amend the applicability of the ADU Density Bonus Program by applying base zone height and overall allowable building area of a property in a manner that ensures ADU Density Bonus homes are similar in scale with the surrounding neighborhood.
- **Parking:** Apply parking requirements to ADU Density Bonus Program development outside of the Transit Priority Area. State law prevents the City from requiring parking inside the Transit Priority Area.
- **Compliance:** Increase fines for violations of the deed restriction for affordable rents on units created through the ADU Density Bonus Program.
- **Adequate Evacuation Routes:** Eliminate the ADU Density Bonus Program’s applicability in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones unless adequate emergency and evacuation routes exist.
- **Fire Code:** Apply fire code requirements for multifamily buildings to ADU Density Bonus Program developments, including fire sprinkler requirements.
- **Setbacks:** Align all ADU home setbacks to be consistent with fire code regulations related to brush management.

The public is invited to provide feedback on these proposed reforms and learn more at the [Land Development Code Update webpage](#).



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