



COMPASS
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho



Allowing the Use of Accessory Dwelling Units

There is a close relationship between transportation and housing. The further a person lives from jobs, school, medical care, shopping, etc., the more difficult and more expensive it is for that person to access those resources. This is especially problematic for those who do not drive or have access to an automobile.

Most of the topics covered in this toolkit focus on ways to encourage and promote alternative forms of transportation to assist people in your community in meeting their transportation needs. This topic, however, focuses on one aspect of the housing/land use portion of the transportation issue that can help alleviate some of transportation needs in the first place and create neighborhoods that can support more transportation options.

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a self-contained housing unit (apartment) that shares a lot, and sometimes a building, with a single-family home. An ADU has its own kitchen, bathroom, and entrance/exit. Essentially, an ADU is what is sometimes referred to as a guest house or "mother-in-law suite." An ADU is not a duplex, and generally maintains the look of a single-family home.

ADUs are sometimes not allowed in local zoning codes. However, they can provide many benefits, including:

- Providing housing in close proximity to existing infrastructure and services, including public transportation, schools, parks, and employment centers.
- Adding moderately priced rental units to the housing stock to meet the needs of smaller households, moderate income households, elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- Providing older homeowners with a means of obtaining rental income, companionship, and security thereby enabling them to stay more comfortably in homes and neighborhoods they might otherwise be forced to leave.
- Protecting stability, property values, and the residential character of a neighborhood.

The first benefit listed (housing in close proximity to infrastructure) is particularly beneficial to people with limited transportation options, allowing those individuals to walk or bike to meet many of their daily needs, thus reducing their dependence on others.

Changing local code to allow ADUs is something your jurisdiction may want to consider. [A template \(model ordinance\) to allow ADUs within local code is included in this toolkit.](#)



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