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December 5, 2025

Jessica Serrano
Director of Community Development
City of Commerce
2535 Commerce Way
Commerce, CA 90040

Dear Jessica Serrano:

RE: City of Commerce – Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance Updates – Letter of Technical Assistance

The most recent ADU ordinance on file for the City of Commerce with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is from 2020. Given the numerous changes to State ADU Law since the adoption of the ordinance, the ordinance may be outdated and out of compliance with State ADU Law. If HCD's records are incorrect, and a new ordinance has been adopted, please submit it to the ADU Portal for HCD's review.

Below are the changes to State ADU Law that have occurred in recent years and may warrant an update to the City of Commerce's ADU ordinance:

Updates to the ADU Handbook (2025)

- Clarifies that ADU Law prohibits deed restrictions on ADUs. A deed restriction would be an "additional standard" and thus cannot be imposed on ADUs (Gov. Code, § 66315).
- Clarifies that homeowners' associations (HOAs), as a third party, cannot influence the approval of an application to create an ADU. Third party reviews by an HOA or their representatives or agents would violate State ADU Law. (Gov. Code, § 66315.) No other local ordinances, policies, or regulations may be applied in the approval or denial of an ADU or junior ADU (JADU) permit application (Gov. Code, § 66317, subd. (c)).
- Clarifies that a local agency may not require parking as a condition to permitting a JADU, even when the JADU is converted from an attached garage (Gov. Code, § 66334, subd. (a)).

Changes to ADU Law in 2025:

- Specifies that if a JADU has shared sanitation facilities with the primary structure, owner-occupancy will be required. If the JADU does *not* have shared sanitation facilities, owner-occupancy will *not* be required (Gov. Code, § 66333, subd. (b)).
- Require rental terms for JADUs for terms longer than 30 days (Gov. Code, § 66333, subd. (g)).
- Specifies that if a local agency fails to submit an adopted ADU ordinance to HCD within the 60-day timeline or fails to respond to HCD's findings regarding their ordinance within the 30-day timeline, that ordinance is null and void and the local agency must only apply State ADU Law when permitting ADUs (Gov. Code, § 66326, subd. (d)).
- Revises the definition of a "junior accessory dwelling unit" to require the size of a JADU to be no more than 500 square feet of interior livable space (Gov. Code, § 66313, subd. (d)).
- Revises the limitations on impact fees to, instead, prohibit impact fees upon the development of an ADU that has 750 square feet of interior livable space or less or a JADU that has 500 square feet of interior livable space or less, and to require that any impact fee on an ADU that has more than 750 square feet of interior livable space be charged proportionately in relation to the square footage of the primary dwelling unit (Gov. Code, § 66311.5, subds. (a) – (d)).
- Requires a permitting agency to determine whether an application for an ADU or JADU is complete and provide written notice of the determination not later than 15 business days after the permitting agency received the application (Gov. Code, § 66317, subd. (a)(2)(A)).
- Requires the permitting agency to provide the applicant with a list of incomplete items and a description of how the application can be made complete in the written notice and authorizes the applicant to cure and address the application, as specified, if it is determined that an application is incomplete (Gov. Code, § 66317, subd. (a)(2)(B)).
- Requires the permitting agency to provide a process for the applicant to appeal a denied application, as provided, and requires the permitting agency to provide a final written determination by not later than 60 business days after receipt of the written appeal if a permit application is determined to be incomplete or is denied (Gov. Code, § 66317, subd. (d)(1)).
- Specifies that an ADU or JADU that contains less than 500 square feet of interior livable space does not increase assessable space.
- Revises size limitations to be based on the square footage of interior living space of the ADU (Gov. Code, § 66321, subds. (b)(2)(A), (b)(2)(B), and (b)(3)).
- Specifies the number of allowable ADUs per lot with a proposed or existing single-family dwelling (Gov. Code, § 66323, subd. (a).

- Clarifies that fire sprinklers are not required for a JADU if the primary residence does not have fire sprinklers and that the addition of a JADU cannot trigger the requirement for fire sprinklers (Gov. Code, § 66323, subd. (d)).
- Adds section 66333.5, which specifies that if a local agency fails to submit an adopted JADU ordinance to HCD within the 60-day timeline or fails to respond to HCD's findings regarding their ordinance within the 30-day timeline, that ordinance is null and void and the local agency must only apply State ADU Law when processing applications for ADUs.
- Requires a local agency to issue a certificate of occupancy for an ADU constructed in a county that is subject to a proclamation of a state of emergency made by the Governor on or after February 1, 2025, even if the primary dwelling has not yet been issued a certificate of occupancy, if certain requirements are met, including that the primary dwelling was substantially damaged or destroyed by an event referenced in the state of emergency proclamation (Gov. Code, § 66328).
- Creates an exception to areas that fall under the California Coastal Act by requiring a local government or the Coastal Commission, as specified, to either approve or deny a coastal development permit application for an ADU within 60 days of receiving a completed application (Gov. Code, § 66329, subd. (a).)
- Specifies that no reimbursement is required for school service charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to pay for the program or level of service within the meaning of Government Code section 17556 (Gov. Code, § 66329).
- Specifies that reasonable restrictions in covenants, restrictions, and conditions, as described in the Civil Code, shall not include any fees or other financial requirements (Civil Code, § 714.3, subd. (b)).

Changes to ADU Law in 2024:

- SB 477 (Chapter 7, Statutes of 2024) made changes to the numbering of the sections of the Government Code for State ADU and JADU Laws.
- Prohibits a local agency from denying a permit for an unpermitted ADU or JADU that was constructed before January 1, 2020, for building code violations, unless the local agency makes a finding that correcting the violation is necessary to comply with conditions that would otherwise deem a building substandard (Gov. Code, § 66332, subds. (a)-(c)).
- Defines "livable space" as a space in a dwelling intended for human habitation, as the term appears in Government Code sections 66313, subdivision (e), and 66323, subdivision (a)(3)(A).
- Provides that uncovered, off-street parking spaces demolished in conjunction with the construction of an ADU do not need to be replaced (Gov. Code, § 66314, subd. (d)(11)).

- Changes the allowable number of detached ADUs on a lot with an existing multifamily dwelling to eight detached ADUs, provided that the number of ADUs does not exceed the number of existing units on the lot (Gov. Code, § 66323, subd. (a)(4)(A)(ii)).
- Prohibits a local agency from imposing any objective development standards on 66323 Units that are not authorized by the provisions of Government Code section 66323, subdivision (a) (Gov. Code, § 66323, subd. (b)).

Changes to ADU Law in 2023:

- Sunsets a former prohibition on a local agency imposing an owner occupancy requirement on any ADU and instead prohibits a local agency from requiring owner occupancy for an ADU (Gov. Code, § 66315).
- Allows a local agency to adopt a local ordinance to allow the separate conveyance of the primary dwelling unit and ADU(s) as condominiums, subject to certain conditions (Gov. Code, §§ 66340-66342).

Changes to ADU Law in 2021:

- Allows a local agency to permit the separate conveyance of ADUs from the primary dwelling under Government Code section 66341 in certain circumstances.

Changes to ADU Law in 2020:

- Requires that an application for the creation of an ADU or JADU is deemed approved (not just subject to ministerial approval) if the local agency has not approved or denied the completed application within 60 days (Gov. Code, § 66317, subd. (a)).
- Requires ministerial approval of an application for a building permit within a residential or mixed-use zone to create one ADU and one JADU per lot (not one or the other), within the proposed or existing single-family dwelling, if certain conditions are met (Gov. Code, § 66323, subd. (a)(1)(A)).
- Allows for rental or leasing of a separate interest ADU or JADU in a common interest development, notwithstanding governing documents that otherwise appear to prohibit renting or leasing of a unit, and without regard to the date of the governing documents (Civ. Code, §§ 4740, subd. (a); 4741, subd. (a)).
- Allows a homeowner to create “any of the following”: one converted or attached ADU; one detached, new construction ADU; and one JADU (Gov. Code, § 66323, subds. (a)(1)-(2)). More information can be found in HCD’s 2025 ADU Handbook.

Changes to ADU Law in 2019:

- Prohibits a local agency from including requirements on minimum lot size in development standards for ADUs (Gov. Code, § 66314, subd. (b)(1)).
- Allows a local agency to designate areas where ADUs may be located based on the adequacy of water and sewer services, as well as on impacts on traffic flow and public safety (Gov. Code, § 66314, subd. (a)).
- Eliminates all owner occupancy requirements by a local agency for ADUs approved between January 1, 2020, and January 1, 2025 (Gov. Code, § 66315).
- Prohibits a local agency from establishing a maximum size of an ADU of less than 850 square feet, or 1,000 square feet if the ADU contains more than one bedroom and requires approval of a permit to build an ADU of up to 800 square feet (Gov. Code, § 66321, subds. (b)(2), (b)(3)).
- Prohibits a local agency from requiring replacement of off-street parking spaces for ADUs created through the conversion of a garage, carport, or covered parking structure (Gov. Code, § 66314, subd. (d)(11)).
- Reduces the maximum ADU and JADU application review time from 120 days to 60 days (Gov. Code, §§ 66317, subd. (a); 66335, subd. (2)).
- Clarifies that “public transit” includes various means of transportation that charge set fees, run on fixed routes, and are available to the public (Gov. Code, § 66313, subd. (m)).
- Adds impact fee exemptions and limitations based on the size of the ADU. ADUs up to 750 square feet are exempt from impact fees, and ADUs that are 750 square feet or larger may be charged impact fees, but those fees must be proportional in size (by square foot) to fees charged for the primary dwelling unit (Gov. Code, § 66324, subd. (c)(1)).
- Defines of an “accessory structure” to mean a structure that is accessory and incidental to a dwelling on the same lot (Gov. Code, § 66313, subd. (b)).
- Permits JADUs even where a local agency has not adopted an ordinance expressly authorizing them (Gov. Code, § 66320).
- Allows for a permitted JADU to be constructed within the walls of the proposed or existing single-family residence and eliminates the required inclusion of an existing bedroom and an interior entry into the single-family residence (Gov. Code, § 66333, subd. (d)).
- Requires, upon application and approval, a local agency to delay enforcement against a qualifying substandard ADU for five years to allow the owner to correct the violation, so long as the violation is not a health and safety issue, as determined by the enforcement agency (Gov. Code, § 66331; HSC, § 17980.12).

- Makes covenants, conditions, and restrictions that either effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the construction or use of an ADU or JADU on a lot zoned for single-family residential use void and unenforceable (Civ. Code, § 4751)).

If an existing ADU ordinance fails to meet the requirements of State ADU Law, the ordinance is "null and void" and the local jurisdiction must apply the standards set forth in State ADU Law until it adopts an ordinance that complies with state law (Gov. Code, § 66316). HCD recommends that a local jurisdiction with a noncompliant ADU ordinance repeal the ordinance to provide clarity for ADU applicants who may otherwise rely on the outdated ordinance.

HCD requests a response by January 4, 2026 with either (1) a description of how the ADU ordinance continues to comply with State ADU Law despite the changes to the law, or (2) a plan and timeline to either repeal the current ordinance or adopt an amended, compliant ordinance and submit it to HCD for review.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Hani Baker at Hani.baker@hcd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Jamie Candelaria

Jamie Candelaria
Section Chief, ADU Policy
Housing Accountability Unit