

ADU UNIVERSAL CHECKLIST

Are you thinking about building an ADU, JADU, or THOW? * If yes, be sure to use this checklist to learn if your lot qualifies for an ADU and if your project concept complies with City zoning and fire codes. Property owners and design professionals: **Avoid having to make costly changes to plans by closely following the directions and standards outlined in this checklist.** We'll help! Share your completed checklist and a sketch of your proposed ADU with a City planner for basic feedback. To obtain feedback, see the [ADU Plan Review & Permit Process](#) webpage and review [HCD Handbook Checklist](#).

*ADU - Accessory dwelling unit, also called a granny flat, secondary unit, or backyard home. May be attached to or detached from the main home. May also be a conversion of a garage or basement.

*JADU - Junior accessory dwelling units are built within the existing footprint of a single-family home. An attached garage may be converted into a JADU. Owner-occupancy of the main home is required.

*THOW - Tiny home on wheels. THOWs are a prefabricated type of ADU mounted on a trailer chassis and have their own checklist; view [Bulletin #291-Tiny Home on Wheels Permit Checklist](#).

Find more details on types of ADUs and ADU requirements at www.sanjoseca.gov/ADUs and [San José Municipal Code Part 4.5](#).

INSTRUCTIONS

To complete on a computer, download the checklist, save it to your hard drive, then use Adobe Acrobat Reader (free) to fill it out. For Parts 1 and 2, please use www.SJPermits.org for property research. Simply tap "Permits & Property Information." Enter your address. On the next screen, click "Select" by your property address. A list of property descriptions will appear.

QUESTIONS

YES NO

PART 1. DOES YOUR PROPERTY QUALIFY?

1. **DO YOU HAVE A SAN JOSE ADDRESS?** You can confirm that a property is in San José at SJPermits.org (see above instructions). At the "Incorporated" data field, "yes" means the property is in the city boundary; "no" means it is in a different jurisdiction.

> **Outcome:** If no, please work with the appropriate jurisdiction. If yes, continue with this worksheet.

2. **ZONING.** Is the property zoned R-1, R-2, R-M, or PD? Or, is it designated in the General Plan as:

- Downtown or Mixed-Use Neighborhood or Mixed-Use Commercial
- Residential Neighborhood or Rural Residential or Transit Residential
- Urban Residential or Urban Village

Find zoning at SJPermits.org. Find designations at the [General Plan Map](#). For questions about a planned development (PD) zone, speak with a City planner at 408-535-3555 during these [hours](#).

ENTER ZONING:

ENTER GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:

> **Outcome:** If no, an ADU is not allowed. If yes, here are the allowed ADUs:

- Single-Family Property - One ADU and one JADU are allowed.
- Duplex or Multifamily Property - Two detached ADUs are allowed. For a duplex, one attached ADU may also be allowed. For multifamily lots, a number of attached ADUs equivalent to up to 25% of existing units may also be allowed; for example, a building with 12 units may qualify for 3 attached ADUs. JADUs are not allowed.

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
PART 2. WHAT ARE YOUR PROPERTY DESIGNATIONS?		
<i>These designations affect your ADU project design. It's important to understand them.</i>		
<p>3. FLOOD ZONES. Is the property in flood zone A, AE, AH, or AO? Find designation at SJPermits.org. For questions, call 408-535-7803 or email floodzoneinfo@sanjoseca.gov</p> <p>ENTER FLOOD ZONE:</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, in flood zone A, AE, AH, or AO, your plans must adhere to the flood zone design requirements in Bulletin #211-ADU Plan Requirements; they do not apply to flood zones D and X.</p>		
<p>4. GEOHAZARDS OR SEISMIC HAZARDS. Is the property in a geohazard or landslide zone? At SJPermits.org, look for "Geohazards" and "Seismic Hazards." It will tell you "yes," "no," or note as "landslide."</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes or landslide, a Geologic Hazard Clearance is required. See the Public Works Geological Hazard webpage. For questions, call 408-535-7802 or email pwgeneralinfo@sanjoseca.gov</p>		
<p>5. HISTORIC PROPERTY. Is the property listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory map OR on the California Historical Resources list for Santa Clara County?</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, please speak with a City Planner at 408-535-3555. Simplified design standards will apply to the design of the ADU.</p>		
<p>6. WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE ZONE. Is the property located in a Wildland-Urban Interface Zone (WUI)? See map on page 3 of the WUI Fire Conformance Policy.</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, construction must comply with all requirements outlined in the WUI policy.</p>		
<p>7. EASEMENTS. Does the property have a dedicated easement? See the title report to the purchase of your home or contact a title company for a copy. Tract and parcel maps at the County Surveyor Record Index tool may show easements, but may be less accurate than a title report.</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, you must comply with the requirements of the easements. Often, no construction is allowed within the easement area.</p>		
<p>8. NONBUILDABLE AREA. Is there a nonbuildable area in the location of the proposed ADU, such as the area of a demolished swimming pool? If you're uncertain about a former pool on your property, you can check for pool permits at SJPermits.org; after clicking the Select button for your property, scroll to the bottom of the screen and click "View Permit/File."</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, there is nonbuildable area, For submittal, you will need a complete and accurate ADU submittal package and pool demolition supporting documents, either: 1. providing a plot plan presenting the requirements per Bulletin #289-Swimming Pool Demolition Requirements, handout or 2. provide Geotechnical Report and foundation design (may require an engineer) for the proposed ADU.</p>		
<p>9. CODE ENFORCEMENT CASE OR VIOLATION. Is there an open Code Enforcement case/Complaint/Violation associated with the primary residence or location of proposed ADU? Use the interactive Code Complaints map to search for an open violation.</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, before you submit your ADU plans, contact the Code Enforcement Department at BuildingCodeCompliance@sanjoseca.gov to address code compliance for the unpermitted work before you create ADU plans.</p>		
<p><i>NOTES: Enter any notes from the above property research:</i></p>		

QUESTIONS	YES	NO								
PART 3. DOES YOUR ADU MEET DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS? PER MUNI CODE SECTION 20.30.150										
LOCATION OF THE ADU										
<p>10. Will your proposed type of ADU be located in compliance with the following rules?</p> <p>SINGLE-FAMILY PROPERTIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attached ADU: Must share a wall with the main residence, OR, share a roof structure with the main residence and be separated by no more than 10 feet. If located in the front yard, the ADU front door cannot be on same street-facing façade as that of the primary residence. There are some exceptions; learn more by speaking with a Planner at 408-535-3555 during these hours. ▪ Detached ADU: Must be in the rear yard or minimum 45 feet from the front property line. May be newly constructed or a conversion of, or attachment to, a detached garage or accessory building. ▪ JADU: Must locate entirely within the main home’s existing footprint. <p>DUPLEX/MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attached ADU: Must be a conversion of existing non-livable space, such as a basement, attic, garage, storage room, boiler room, or passageway. ▪ Detached ADU: Must be in the rear yard or minimum 45 feet from the front property line. May be newly constructed or a conversion of, or attachment to, a detached garage or accessory building. ▪ JADU: Not allowed. <p>> Outcome: If yes, then the planned ADU location is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>										
SIZE OF THE ADU										
<p>11. Is the size of the proposed ADU within the maximum limits as shown in the table below? See page 6 for how to measure square footage.</p> <p>SINGLE-FAMILY PROPERTIES</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width:15%; vertical-align:top;">Lot size is less than 9,000 sf</td> <td> <p>Detached ADU: 1,000 sf maximum, subject to Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum OR up to 50% of the primary residence area without exceeding 1,000 sf. Example: For an 1,800 sf home, a 900 sf attached ADU is allowed if it also complies with the Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align:top;">Lot size is 9,000 sf or greater</td> <td> <p>Detached ADU: 1,200 sf maximum, subject to Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum or up to 50% of the primary residence area without exceeding 1,200 sf. Example: For an 2,400 sf home, a 1,200 sf attached ADU is allowed if it also complies with the Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align:top;">If JADU exists or is proposed</td> <td> <p>JADU: 500 sf maximum. Subject to standards, attached ADU and JADU allowed.</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum and must not exceed 50% of primary dwelling area.</p> <p>Detached ADU: 800 sf maximum</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Rear Yard Coverage Rule - The rear yard is the area from the rear property line to the rear of the main home, across the full width of the lot. Total coverage of the rear yard by structures may not exceed 40% of the rear yard OR 800 sf, whichever is greater. Structures include ADUs, accessory buildings, sheds, gazebos, or other structures.</p> <p>DUPLEX/MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width:15%; vertical-align:top;">Any lot size</td> <td> <p>Detached ADU: 800 sf maximum</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum</p> <p>JADU: Not allowed</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>> Outcome: If yes — the size of your proposed ADU is within the above-stated maximums — then your ADU plan is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>	Lot size is less than 9,000 sf	<p>Detached ADU: 1,000 sf maximum, subject to Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum OR up to 50% of the primary residence area without exceeding 1,000 sf. Example: For an 1,800 sf home, a 900 sf attached ADU is allowed if it also complies with the Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p>	Lot size is 9,000 sf or greater	<p>Detached ADU: 1,200 sf maximum, subject to Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum or up to 50% of the primary residence area without exceeding 1,200 sf. Example: For an 2,400 sf home, a 1,200 sf attached ADU is allowed if it also complies with the Rear Yard Coverage Rule.*</p>	If JADU exists or is proposed	<p>JADU: 500 sf maximum. Subject to standards, attached ADU and JADU allowed.</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum and must not exceed 50% of primary dwelling area.</p> <p>Detached ADU: 800 sf maximum</p>	Any lot size	<p>Detached ADU: 800 sf maximum</p> <p>Attached ADU: 800 sf maximum</p> <p>JADU: Not allowed</p>		
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QUESTIONS	YES	NO														
HEIGHT OF THE ADU																
<p>12. Does your proposed ADU comply with these rules for maximum height?</p> <p>SINGLE-FAMILY PROPERTIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attached ADU - Same height limitations as apply to the main dwelling unit. ▪ Detached ADU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One story: 18 feet maximum – Two-story: 24 feet maximum – If JADU is on property: 16 feet maximum <p>DUPLEX/MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attached ADU - Must maintain height of existing converted space ▪ Detached ADU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One story: 18 feet maximum – Two-story: not allowed <p>> Outcome: If yes — the height of your proposed ADU is within the above-stated maximums — your ADU plan is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>																
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<p>13. Does the proposed ADU meet these minimum setbacks and the Horizontal 6-Foot Distance Rule*?</p> <p>SINGLE-FAMILY PROPERTIES</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:15%;">1st Story Attached ADU</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If no more than 20 feet in height, minimum setback from rear and side property lines is 4 feet. ▪ If more than 20 feet in height, same setback requirements as apply to the main dwelling unit. See Table 20-60 in Municipal Code Section 20.30.200. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd Story ADUs</td> <td>For a second story detached ADU, exterior features such as decks, unenclosed entry landings and balconies located on the second floor of a detached ADU. may not locate along building walls nearest to the rear and side property lines, and the rear/side setback is 15 feet.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached ADU</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Front property line setback: 45 feet ▪ Rear/Side setback, ground floor: 3 feet; if less, fire mitigation may apply, see page 5. ▪ Rear/Side setback, second story: 4 feet ▪ Rear/Side setback if ADU exceeds 40% Rear Yard Coverage (see page 3) : 4 feet </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corner Lots</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rear/Side setback: 4 feet (Gov. Code, §65852.2, subd. (a)(1)(D)(vii).) ▪ If a 12.5-foot BSL (building setback line) is shown on Tract Map, the ADU must adhere to the requirements of the easement. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Riparian Corridors</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This setback applies to lots ½ acre or greater along a riparian corridor: 100 feet </td> </tr> </table> <p>DUPLEX/MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:15%;">Attached ADU</td> <td>Not applicable (attached ADU is limited to a conversion of existing nonlivable space)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached ADU</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Front property line setback: 45 feet ▪ Rear/side setback: 4 feet, allows for up to 1-foot projection of eaves </td> </tr> </table> <p>* Horizontal 6-Foot Distance Rule - The horizontal distance between all points of the ADU building walls and the walls of any other building on the property must be at least 6 feet (Zoning Code 20.30.520). Eaves may be closer but must meet applicable building code regulations.</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, your project is in compliance. If no, your ADU plans will not be approved.</p>	1st Story Attached ADU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If no more than 20 feet in height, minimum setback from rear and side property lines is 4 feet. ▪ If more than 20 feet in height, same setback requirements as apply to the main dwelling unit. See Table 20-60 in Municipal Code Section 20.30.200. 	2nd Story ADUs	For a second story detached ADU, exterior features such as decks, unenclosed entry landings and balconies located on the second floor of a detached ADU. may not locate along building walls nearest to the rear and side property lines, and the rear/side setback is 15 feet.	Detached ADU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Front property line setback: 45 feet ▪ Rear/Side setback, ground floor: 3 feet; if less, fire mitigation may apply, see page 5. ▪ Rear/Side setback, second story: 4 feet ▪ Rear/Side setback if ADU exceeds 40% Rear Yard Coverage (see page 3) : 4 feet 	Corner Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rear/Side setback: 4 feet (Gov. Code, §65852.2, subd. (a)(1)(D)(vii).) ▪ If a 12.5-foot BSL (building setback line) is shown on Tract Map, the ADU must adhere to the requirements of the easement. 	Riparian Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This setback applies to lots ½ acre or greater along a riparian corridor: 100 feet 	Attached ADU	Not applicable (attached ADU is limited to a conversion of existing nonlivable space)	Detached ADU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Front property line setback: 45 feet ▪ Rear/side setback: 4 feet, allows for up to 1-foot projection of eaves 		
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QUESTIONS	YES	NO
OTHER STANDARDS		
<p>14. BEDROOM AREA. The number of bedrooms in an ADU is not limited, but the bedroom area of each individual room shall not exceed 400 sf. Is the bedroom area or bedroom/s in the planned ADU no greater than 400 sf?</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, your plan for the bedroom area/s is allowed. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>		
<p>15. KITCHEN, BATHROOM, STORAGE. Does your proposed ADU or JADU comply with these rules?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kitchen - ADUs must have a sink, food preparation counter, storage, cabinets, and permanent cooking facilities such as a range or cooktop and oven. JADUs may have the same OR a small efficiency kitchen with plug-in appliances. The kitchen floor plan must clearly show/label a range or cooktop and oven. ▪ Bathroom/s - For ADUs, requiring a sink, toilet, and shower and/or bath facilities. For JADUs, sharing the bathroom with the main residence is allowed or one bathroom or a half bathroom is allowed. State ADU law does not allow for the limitation on the number of bathrooms of an ADU. ▪ Storage - A closet or other enclosed storage area cannot exceed 60 sf. <p>> Outcome: If yes, your design is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>		
<p>16. LAUNDRY. Does your ADU have a proposed laundry tray or automatic washer standpipe per CPC Table 422.1, "1 laundry tray or 1 automatic clothes washer connection per unit?"</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, your plan for laundry is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved. NOTE: ADUs cannot share common laundry facilities. JADUs may share common laundry facilities.</p>		
<p>17. PARKING REQUIREMENTS. Does your proposed ADU either provide a parking space OR qualify for an exemption?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exemptions: Many ADUs qualify for a parking exemption in accordance with state law. Please see the Parking Requirements page at www.sanjoseca.gov/ADUs for a list of the exemption criteria. ▪ Parking space location: If you are required to provide a parking space, it must be located on a surface free of mud or dust. It may be located within the front and side setbacks of the property, with a minimum driveway length of 18 feet. ▪ Parking requirements after a garage conversion: If you convert a garage to an ADU, replacement parking for the main home is no longer required. <p>> Outcome: If yes, your proposed project is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved.</p>		
PART 4. FIRE SAFETY & EMERGENCY ACCESS		
<p>The City’s Fire Bureau staff will review your ADU plans for compliance with the California Fire Code (CFC) so that projects are built for safety and ease of access during an emergency. For questions, call the Fire Prevention Bureau at 408-535-7750 or email SJFDPermitSpecialist@sanjoseca.gov</p>		
<p>18. ADU ADDRESS. Is the existing home address legible and visible from the street? Show Premises Identification for “ADU Unit Number” and primary residence address. CFC 505. The Fire Department requires the address to be visible from the street or road fronting the property. ADUs shall be provided with an approved unit number, which shall be legible and placed in position that is visible from the street or road fronting the property. Unit number shall be placed closely adjacent to the side of the ADU access entry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On the submitted Site Plan, show the address locations for the main dwelling unit and the ADU. <p>> Outcome: If yes, both addressess are legible and visible from the front street, then your project is in compliance. If no, your plans will not be approved. To obtain an ADU address, please complete Form #302-Address Assignment Request and email addressing@sanjoseca.gov.</p>		

<p>19. ADU ACCESS. Is the distance from the street curb of the lot to all portions of the proposed ADU no greater than 200 feet as measured along a minimum 3-foot clear path to all sides of the ADU?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On the Site Plan for submittal, show the distance along the minimum 3-foot clear path from the front property line to the ADU’s farthest exterior side or projection (such as eaves), whichever is farthest. CFC 503.1.1. <p>> Outcome: If no, your project may require a Fire Variance that entails additional safety measures. Call 408-535-7750 for information. See the Fire Variance Application.</p>		
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QUESTIONS	YES	NO
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<p>20. HYDRANT PROXIMITY. Are all exterior walls of the ADU within 600 feet of a fire hydrant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On the Site Plan Vicinity Map for plan submittal, mark one or more locations of fire hydrants closest to the project. Indicate the distance from the hydrant/s to the farthest exterior wall of the ADU, using the minimum 3-foot clear path of travel. CFC 507.5.1, SJ ORDINANCE 29807 SECTION 17.12.440. <p>> Outcome: If no, your project may require a Fire Variance that entails additional safety measures. Call 408-535-7750 for information. See the Fire Variance Application.</p>		
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<p>21. HYDRANT WATER FLOW. Is a minimum flow of 1,000 gpm at 20 psi available at the closest hydrant? Ask your Water Company for this information. Send an email with “ADU WATER FLOW REQUEST” in the subject line and present this information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your name ▪ Street name and address of the project ▪ Nearest cross street to that location <p>IMPORTANT: Submit the letter from the Water Company with your building permit application. Do not wait. A main reason for delays in permit issuance is because applicants did not provide this letter. Your water company will respond, so contact them today. Find Water Company contact information at the ADU Fire Requirements webpage.</p> <p>> Outcome: If the flow is other than 1,000 gpm at 20 psi, Fire staff will review flow data and will evaluate if additional fire safety measures are required.</p>		
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<p>22. FIRE SPRINKLERS. Is the primary residence protected by fire sprinklers?</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, the ADU must have a fire sprinkler system.</p>		
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<p>23. FIRE SPRINKLERS AND ATTACHED ADUS. Is the project an attached ADU greater than 500 sf AND does the overall gross floor area with the main unit exceed 3,600 sf?</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, the entire house and ADU are required to be protected with a fire sprinkler system.</p>		
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PART 5. MISCELLANEOUS

<p>24. TREE REMOVAL. Will constructing an ADU require removal of an ordinance-size or heritage tree?</p> <p>> Outcome: If yes, please see the City’s rules for removing trees: www.sanjoseca.gov/TreePermit</p>		
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<p>25. SCHOOL AND PARKLAND IMPACT FEES. Does the size of your ADU require you to pay school and parkland impact fees? These impact fees do not apply to ADUs less than 750 sf. If the ADU is 750 sf or greater, find school and parkland fee information on the Fees for ADUs webpage. The building permit will not be issued until the fees are paid. The Building Permit Specialist will provide school fee referral form at time of intake appointment.</p>		
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How To Measure Square Footage - The square footage of the main home and ADU is based on exterior corner-to-corner measurements of each livable floor. The square footage of the main home does not include unfinished, nonlivable spaces such as garages, unfinished attics or unfinished basements. Interior stairs count toward the upper floor area. Area below the interior stairs counts toward the first floor area.

ADU ALLY - HERE TO HELP YOU - Our ADU Ally is a staff member that will answer your questions and connect you to other staff who may be of assistance. Email: adu.ally@sanjoseca.gov Phone: 408-793-5302 **Hablo Español**

FIND MORE ADU INFORMATION AT www.sanjoseca.gov/ADUs