

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) & Guest Houses

ADUs provide housing options that fit well within existing neighborhoods and can adapt to changing family needs, such as smaller households or aging relatives. They are typically more affordable than traditional single-family homes and make efficient use of existing infrastructure like water, sewer, and streets.

A guest house offers a private and comfortable space for visitors, household staff, or temporary guests—without building a full second home.

What is an ADU?

An ADU is a secondary home located on the same property as a primary residence. It can be **attached** to the main home or **detached** from the main home.

Examples of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

ADUs in blue; main residence in white

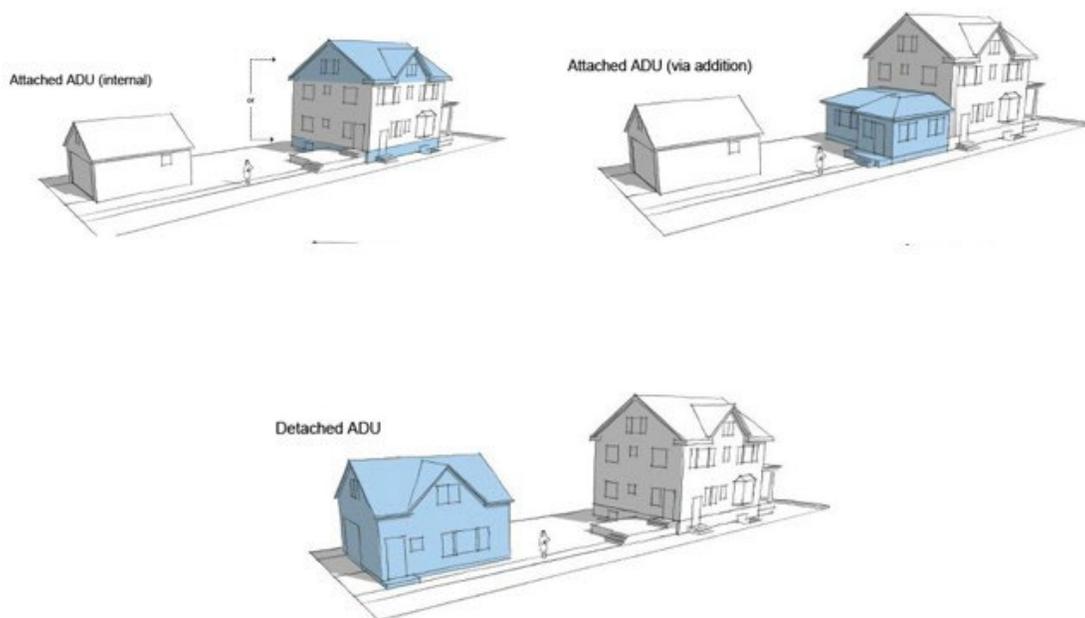


Image credit: City of Saint Paul, MN

Are ADUs Allowed Everywhere in Kitsap County?

No. ADUs are allowed in most areas where a primary residence is permitted, but not in every zone. In most urban areas, ADUs are a permitted use, so you only need construction permits. In rural areas, attached ADUs are allowed with only construction permits, but detached ADUs require a Conditional Use Permit in addition to construction permits ([KCC 17.410](#)).

What is the Difference Between Attached and Detached ADUs?

Attached ADU

An attached ADU is connected directly to the main home by at least four feet of habitable space ([KCC 17.110.017](#)). Enclosed breezeways that are at least four feet wide qualify as a connection ([Director's Interpretation 6/30/2025](#)).

Detached ADU

A detached ADU is separate from the main home ([KCC 17.110.020](#)).

Are There Different Rules for ADU's in Rural vs. Urban Areas?

Yes. In urban areas, ADUs can be larger, you may have up to two per lot, and they must connect to urban services like sewer and water. In rural areas, only one ADU is allowed per lot, detached ADUs must be located near the primary home and must meet health district standards for water and sewage.

Both urban and rural ADUs have specific requirements for parking, setbacks, and design. For full details, see [KCC 17.415.010](#) and [KCC 17.415.015](#).

Pre-Approved ADU Plan Sets

Kitsap County offers pre-approved ADU plans which can help speed up the permitting process, lower pre-construction costs, and make it easier to create more housing options in our community. These plans have already been reviewed and meet building codes, so you can focus on bringing your ADU to life with less hassle!

To learn more and explore available plans [visit the Pre-Approved ADU website](#).

What is a Guest House?

A guest house is an accessory building that provides living space for temporary guests, household staff, or the property's occupants. It is not considered a separate dwelling unit ([KCC 17.110.317](#)).

Are Guest Houses Allowed Everywhere in Kitsap County?

No. Guest houses are allowed in most areas where a primary residence is permitted, but not in every zone ([KCC 17.410](#)).

Are There Different Rules for Guest Houses in Rural Areas vs. Urban Areas?

No. The rules for a guest house are the same everywhere they are allowed. Guest houses must be under 900 square feet. They may have up to two habitable rooms. Guest houses cannot be rented separately, and only one is allowed per parcel. They are not permitted on properties with a detached ADU.

A guest house may have either a kitchen or a bathroom, but not both. If a guest house is built above or next to a garage or shop, the entire structure is treated as one building. This means guest house rules apply to the whole structure, including limits on kitchens and bathrooms. See [Director's Interpretation 6/30/2025](#).

New guest houses must meet standard setbacks; older structures built before May 7, 1998, may be remodeled at their existing setback. They must be within 150 feet of the main home, share the same street entrance, and meet health standards for water and sewage. Owners must also record a notice to title approved by the county ([KCC 17.415.260](#)).

How do I Apply for Permits?

[Visit the Permit Pathways Website](#) to apply for permits.

More Questions?

Visit: [Contact Us](#)

Call: 360.337.5777

Email: help@kitsap1.com

This handout is provided for general information only and is not a substitute for, nor modifies or supersedes, any applicable federal, state, or local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, or codes. In any apparent conflict between this handout and any applicable legal requirement, the applicable legal requirement will control. The applicant/property owner is solely responsible for determining and complying with all applicable legal requirements and should consult its own qualified professional(s) as appropriate. Kitsap County Code is available online and DCD makes no warranties and assumes no liability arising from use of or reliance on this handout.