

Accessory Apartments

Staff has reviewed the issues of accessory apartments. They feel that the choice to be made is a policy concern that should be established by RORZOR. The following is a list of pros and cons for each of the three identified policy questions to be answered regarding accessory apartments. When we discuss this point, we will be reviewing each question provided below, looking for a consensus of yes or no on each.

The general question for this section is how much the City would like to encourage them.

- 1) Do we want to allow them over a detached garage or only as attached to main dwelling unit (as currently required)? If they are allowed over garages, there must be an amendment to the current accessory structure dimensional standards in residential zones to permit more than one story or detached garage.
- 2) Are they to be encouraged in all residential districts or only in select locations, such as near a metro stop?
- 3) How much encouragement do we want to include? Currently, special exception allowances have prohibited them if there is any opposition. This also needs to be reviewed in light of boarding and room rentals. If additional regulations are to be placed on those uses, need to list them within this article.

Remember, as you review these, that the allowance of more accessory apartments would not affect every neighborhood equally – those staff feel are most likely to be the most affected will be Twinbrook, College Gardens, East Rockville, and Maryvale.

| Issue | PROS | CONS |
|--|--|--|
| Allow structure above garage or not | | |
| Single Dwelling Unit Districts | | To allow apartment above a garage would, to some, promote the feeling that here is no longer a “single” unit on the lot. |
| Structure Size | Second story apartments can be created so that they blend with the neighborhood. | Second story apartment would require the allowance of a bigger structure than are currently allowed. |

| Issue | PROS | CONS |
|--|--|--|
| Allow more accessory apartments in different neighborhoods or not | | |
| Parking | Can limit the amount of off-street parking, and/or limit accessory apartments in other situations where additional off-street parking is required (such as home occupations) | Would need to provide for more parking on site to allow for more of these. This will increase impervious surface coverage on each lot. |
| Diversity | Accessory apartments encourage diversity within the City | The mix of cultures can cause conflicts in neighborhoods due to different values |
| Economic | Allowing more apartments allows for more moderately priced housing units in the City and provides additional income to those who rent the apartment. | Allowing more apartments potentially can decrease the value of surrounding property. |
| Expectations | Neighborhoods change and people can expect more urban densities. | Individuals coming to existing older neighborhoods do not expect accessory apartments, unlike new developments where accessory apartments have always been in existence. |
| Walkability | Higher densities in certain areas can increase the market in that area, allowing more walkability in neighborhoods. | |
| Enforcement | The allowance of accessory apartments is easier to enforce than the determination of “family” living within one residence. | |
| Allow as Special Exception or Permitted by Right | | |
| Public Input | As a SE, the public could become involved in each application to be sure that they are allowed only where the particular neighborhood wants them to be allowed. | As a SE, they may never be allowed though the City may have a policy to encourage more. |