



Village of Oak Park

STAFF REPORT

TO: Plan Commission

REVIEW DATE: September 2, 2021

FROM: Village Staff

PREPARED BY: Craig Failor, Village Planner

PROJECT TITLE

PC 21-08: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Accessory Dwelling Unit. The Petitioner requests text amendments to the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance as follows: Article 2 (Definitions & Rules of Measurement) by adding a definition of an “*accessory dwelling unit*,” and Article 9 (“Site Development Standards”), Subsection 9.3A(3) by exempting attic, basement and attached accessory dwelling units from accessory structure setback regulations, and adding a new Subsection 9.3B (“*Accessory Dwelling Units*”) to allow attic and basement conversions with separate entrances and attached accessory dwelling units with separate entrances.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT

Village of Oak Park
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, IL 60302

Analysis

Description

In early 2020, during a Village Board goal setting session, the concept of constructing an accessory dwelling unit within an existing home, specifically within a larger estate-type residence, was discussed and became a Village Board goal. In addition to this accessory housing type, staff felt it important to include other accessory dwelling unit opportunities in order to ensure a full and complete discussion of the subject. The Plan Commission held two working meetings discussing this matter, in June and July.

Accessory dwelling units (ADU) are additional independent housing units that can be located above a garage, as is with our current coach house regulation, an addition attached to a single-family home, a converted attic, a converted basement, a converted garage or a new stand-alone structure. ADUs generally range in size from 600 to 1,000 square feet and should be designed in a way that is compatible with the neighborhood where it is to be located. There are many reasons for wanting an ADU, including providing homeowners with additional income as a rental property or providing for residents who may wish to downsize and age in place in the ADU and rent out the main house or vis versa. These units can be made “age-friendly” with a zero step entry and

designed with accessible bathrooms, etc. for people with mobility differences. These units can also be available for young adults returning to the community, elderly parents or even for home healthcare companions, etc. According to AARP, internal ADUs can cost around \$50,000, new detached ADUs can cost about \$150,000, depending on the design, location, etc. Depending on how these are financed, these costs can be made up through rent after a few years, but require a substantial cost up front.

The proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendments are to incorporate Accessory Dwelling Units as a permitted use on zoning lots that contain a single-family residence. Currently, the Village allows coach houses (dwelling units over a garage) as a permitted use on any zoning lot that contains a single-family residence. The zoning ordinance does have restrictions on lot size, number of units on a zoning lot, design, height and location. It should be noted, that two-story garages at 20 feet tall measured at the mid-point of the roof (half-way between the eave and ridge) has always been allowed, thus allowing office or storage use on a second floor, however no dwelling units were allowed prior to the 2017 Zoning Ordinance revision.

When the Village adopted the current Zoning Ordinance in 2017, a residential coach house provision was a first step toward ADU inclusion. This inclusion also reinvigorated the Village's historic built form as many coach houses from the early 20th century remained intact. These existing coach houses were either being utilized as legal nonconforming dwelling units, illegal dwelling units or they were being underutilized with storage or they were vacant. Prior to and shortly after the Zoning Ordinance adoption, several coach houses were constructed either for office use or residential use. Occasionally we have inquiries regarding "in-law" apartments within single-family homes with no ability to pursue.

The Village's Comprehensive Plan, Envision Oak Park, in Chapter 7 *Neighborhoods, Housing, and Diversity* is clear that, "Housing that is truly accessible includes options that are responsive to potential residents with various levels of income, physical capability, family size, age and other characteristics. Providing this level of housing choice throughout the village is critical in sustaining neighborhoods that are as diverse and integrated as possible. The Village can continue to be proactive in encouraging the rehabilitation and development of accessible and integrated housing." "This could include amendments to local zoning and building regulations."

Z o n i n g O r d i n a n c e

Proposed amendments are provided in redlined documents attached to this staff report. The following is a brief description of the proposed modifications.

Article 2 (Definitions & Rules of Measurement) by adding a definition of an "*accessory dwelling unit*," and Article 9 ("Site Development Standards"), Subsection 9.3A(3) by exempting attic, basement and attached accessory dwelling units from accessory structure setback regulations, and adding a new Subsection 9.3B ("*Accessory Dwelling Units*") to allow attic and basement conversions with separate entrances and attached accessory dwelling units with separate entrances.

The Plan Commission and Village Board must consider the following standards when determining appropriateness of the proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment.

Standards for Text Amendments:

- a. The extent to which the proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety, and welfare of the Village.
- b. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the applicant.
- c. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan and any adopted land use policies.
- d. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Ordinance.
- e. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, or reflects a change in policy.
- f. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.
- g. The extent to which the proposed amendment is consistent with the overall structure and organization of this Ordinance.

Recommendation

Staff supports the text amendment requests. While there are many housing options in the Village currently, staff believes there can be additional accessible and/or adaptable options within single-family residential areas. ADU's can accommodate those wishing to age in place, elderly parents or returning young adults, etc. who would like to remain or live in the Oak Park community, but cannot otherwise.

End of Report.

- c. Plan Commission
Greg Smith; Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins / Plan Commission Attorney
Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director
Michael Bruce, Zoning Administrator

-att – back up information
