



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Vanessa L. Koster
Deputy Commissioner

April 9, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the
Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee
City of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 301-B

Dear Committee Members:

File No. 240999 relates to zoning regulations for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). This file defines an ADU as “a room or set of rooms with its own cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities which is located on the same lot as a single-family or 2-family dwelling and which is smaller in area than the main dwelling to which it is accessory.” The file classifies an ADU as a limited use in residential and commercial zoning districts, subject to certain design and limited use standards. The ordinance would permit internal, attached, and detached accessory dwelling units that meet these limited use and design standards.

The file creates definitions for “internal” ADUs located within the walls of an existing dwelling, “attached” ADUs added as an addition to an existing dwelling, and “detached” ADUs, which are free standing structures located on the same parcel as a separate principal building. ADUs would be classified as limited uses within all residential zoning districts. If the limited use standards are met, the ADU would be permitted. If the limited use standards are not met, the ADU would be prohibited.

The Zoning Code Technical Committee (ZCTC) reviewed the initial draft of this proposed ordinance on February 5th, 2025. DCD and City Attorney’s Office representatives to ZCTC raised a number of technical concerns with the initial draft of the ordinance. ZCTC found that the that draft version of the ordinance did not meet the ZCTC review criteria with respect to legality and enforceability, administrative efficiency, and consistency with the format of the Zoning Code. After review by ZCTC, an updated version of the ordinance has been drafted and submitted for CPC review (“Proposed Substitute A”). The “Proposed Substitute A” includes adjustments that address the concerns raised at ZCTC.

The City Plan Commission heard this item at its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, April 7, 2025. DCD provided an overview of their analysis of the proposed text change file. The file sponsors, Common Council President Perez and Alderman Bauman, spoke on the rationale for ADU’s and how they have been permitted in many cities both regionally and nationally and provide opportunities to add additional rental income for home owners or support intergenerational living arrangements. They clarified that owner occupancy of the primary residence can only be required at the permit stage under the proposed legislation based on input from the City Attorney’s Office and also based on research on financing challenges in jurisdictions with additional styles of requirements. Members of the public appeared, both with questions and concerns. Those who testified with concerns suggested that the proposed text change file should add protections for nearby homeowners, explore potential future ADU incentive programs, and carry out financial feasibility studies and property value impact analysis with the



City Assessor. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the City Plan Commission recommended approval of Proposed Substitute A with one member abstaining.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Crump", followed by the word "for" in a standard font.

Lafayette L. Crump
Executive Secretary
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

CC: Pres. Perez
Ald. Bauman