



R-28

Date: January 4, 2022

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Al Austin II, Eighth District
Councilmember Dr. Suely Saro, Sixth District

Subject: Pre-Approved Accessory Dwelling Unit Plan (ADUs)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Recommendation to request the City Manager to work with all appropriate departments to report back to the City Council in 60 days with recommendations for implementing a pre-approved Accessory Dwelling Units program.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Long Beach (City) is in the midst of a housing crisis. The 2013-2021 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) set a target of 7,048 total housing units to be permitted over the next eight years in Long Beach. As of 2020, the City only permitted 59% of that goal, and achieved just 16% of the affordable housing unit target set by the RHNA.

The 2021-2029 RHNA, which was presented to Council with the proposed 6th Cycle Housing Element (Housing Element) on November 16, 2021, increased the City's allocation to 26,502 total units, with 11,188 of those being low- and very-low-income units. There is a need to rapidly increase development of new, affordable, sustainable housing if such goals are to be met.

The proposed Housing Element outlines several strategies the City can utilize to achieve this goal, one of which is expanding development opportunities for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Due to their relatively low cost, small size, and compatibility with single-family zoning, they have the potential to be a useful tool for creating more low- and very-low-income housing units. The State has passed multiple bills in recent years to remove constraints to the development of ADUs, including SB 13 (2019), AB 587 (2019), and AB 671 (2019).

The proposed Housing Element projects there will be 2,800 ADUs permitted over the next eight years. One recommended action from the proposed Housing Element meant to facilitate the rapid construction of these units is the expansion of pre-approved standard ADU plan types. Pre-approved ADU plans expedite production by offering standardized floor plans which can be flipped to meet site conditions and come already reviewed by the city's building and safety departments responsible for approving such projects. Development Services currently utilizes a similar program, offering pre-drawn specifications for garage conversion ADUs to residents. Plans for a full pre-approved ADU program were considered, but ultimately derailed by the

COVID-19 pandemic.

Development Services currently estimates the ADU approval process takes between 2-4 weeks, on average. In cities that have adopted pre-approved ADU programs, like Los Angeles, that process may take as little as one day. These steps save money and time for prospective customers, and simplify the permitting process on the City's end as well.

Numerous cities throughout the state have adopted pre-approved ADU programs that best fit the needs of their communities:

- Chico, CA contracted the design of 13 units to one local firm and provides these plans to residents free of charge. The units come in three sizes: 496 square feet, 599 square feet, and 749 square feet.
- San Jose, CA allows construction plans to be submitted by individual businesses. If approved, these plans are made available to residents. Currently, residents can choose from 8 pre-approved vendors with 1- and 2-bedroom floorplans ranging from 330 square feet to 900 square feet.
- Los Angeles, CA has plans designed by private licensed architects and engineers to accommodate various site conditions. Pre-approved standard plans are owned by the firms and must be purchased directly from the plan owner. Currently, there are 42 pre-approved plans which range from 200 square feet to 1,200 square feet and may have multiple stories or a rooftop patio.

Long Beach must make significant strides in housing availability and affordability to reach the figures outlined in the proposed Housing Element. Advancing ADU development is a reasonable approach to developing new low- and very-low-income housing. A streamlined pre-approved ADU program will help effectively generate unit construction and save on costs associated with development.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on December 16, 2021.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with all appropriate departments to report back to the City Council in 60 days with recommendations for implementing a pre-approved Accessory Dwelling Units program. The requested action is anticipated to have a moderate impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and a moderate impact on existing City Council priorities. If this new program is adopted, there is uncertainty as to what will be required for implementation, including the potential additional impact on staff hours. Staff will monitor and report back any concerns and updates as additional information is received.