

# Accessory Dwelling Unit Handbook



# Overview

## Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

An ADU is a dwelling unit located on a lot with an existing primary dwelling unit that provides facilities for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation with no access to the primary unit. The City of Thornton permits the construction of an ADU on most lots that permit a detached single-unit dwelling (Dwelling, 1 Unit Detached), **unless the primary dwelling has two kitchens.**

## Using this Handbook

This handbook breaks down the different types of ADUs along with the regulations and design considerations associated with them. Use this document to determine what ADU may be most appropriate to meet your needs before working with Thornton's City Development Department to get it permitted!

## Application Process

It is important to become familiar with the use standards for an ADU. Some of these standards are highlighted in this document, but the entire code section is found in Section 18-339 of the Thornton City Code. Additional requirements in the city's Building and Fire codes will also need to be met. The general process for gaining ADU approval is detailed below.

- 1** Determine if an ADU is allowed on your property.
- 2** Review the size, setback, parking, and other restrictions applicable to your ADU.
- 3** Design your ADU and submit for a **Development Plan**, if required.
- 4** Record a **deed restriction** with the Adams County Clerk and Recorder.
- 5** Once you have Planning approval, submit for a **Building Permit.**

## City Development

City staff is available to assist!

Call the Planner of the Day: **303-538-7295**

Email: **POD.info@ThorntonCO.gov**

Call Building Inspections: **303-538-7250**

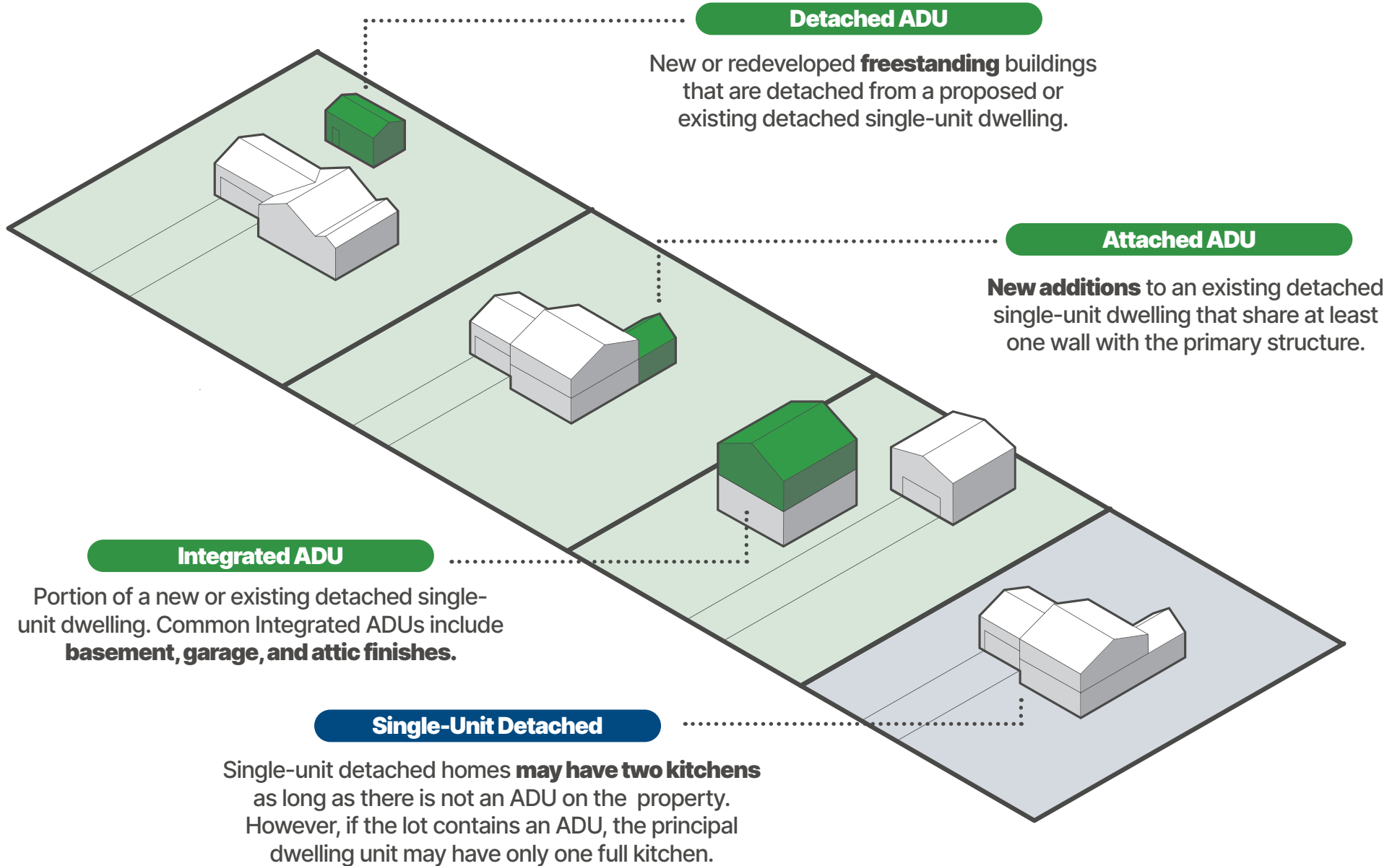
## Utility Billing

ADUs require additional utility connection fees.

Call the Utility Billing Department: **303-538-7370**

Email: **utilbilling@ThorntonCO.gov**

# Types of ADUs



## Detached ADU

New or redeveloped **freestanding** buildings that are detached from a proposed or existing detached single-unit dwelling.

## Attached ADU

**New additions** to an existing detached single-unit dwelling that share at least one wall with the primary structure.

## Integrated ADU

Portion of a new or existing detached single-unit dwelling. Common Integrated ADUs include **basement, garage, and attic finishes**.

## Single-Unit Detached

Single-unit detached homes **may have two kitchens** as long as there is not an ADU on the property. However, if the lot contains an ADU, the principal dwelling unit may have only one full kitchen.

# ADU Requirements

## Site Attributes

- The property is zoned one of the following: **RE, RL, RM, RH, AG, SFD-L**.
- The existing or planned primary use is **Dwelling, 1-Unit Detached**.
- The existing or planned primary dwelling has only **one kitchen**.
- There are at least **3 parking spaces** on the property (1 in a garage).

## ADU Design

- All ADUs will need **Building Permit approval** from City Development.
- The ADU will have a separate **exterior access and address**.
- The size of the ADU is no more than **50% of the primary dwelling size or 1,000 sqft** (whichever is greater). This calculation does not include a garage, porch, or similar area.
- The exterior design of the ADU will be **complementary or consistent** with the characteristics of the surrounding area.
- If adding **additional plumbing fixtures** to an existing water service, the Plumbing Data Worksheet (page 5) should be submitted with a Building Permit application.
- The ADU will utilize the **same water and sewer connections** as the primary dwelling. However, additional **utility connection fees** are still required. Contact the Utility Billing Department to learn about current fee costs and pay.

## Occupancy and Deed

- The property owner's **primary residence** must be in either the primary dwelling or ADU.
- A deed restriction is a document that limits the use of a property. A template for this deed restriction is found in this guide. You will be required to **record the deed restriction**, with the legal description of your property attached, with the Adams County Clerk and Recorder's Office. This deed restriction will become part of the title for the property where the ADU will be located.

## Detached ADUs

- For Detached ADUs over 500 sqft and it is visible from the right-of-way, a **Development Plan** needs to be approved by City Development.
- If a Detached ADU is less than 500 sqft or it is not visible from the right-of-way, a **Development Plan is not required**.
- Detached ADUs must be **setback 5 feet** from the side and rear property lines\*.
- Detached ADUs have a **maximum height of 16 feet\***.
- \*Different standards apply to the **RE zone**.

## Attached ADUs

- For building additions over 500 sqft, a **Development Plan** needs to be approved by City Development.
- Attached ADUs must meet the primary use **setback requirements and height maximums** for the zone district they are located in.
- Attached ADUs **cannot have an interior entry** to the primary dwelling.

# Plumbing Data Worksheet



Plumbing Data Sheet							
2024 IPC Water Fixture Unit Calculation							
*For Tenant Finish Applications, Provide Existing Water Meter Size **Calculate the total FU's for ALL SPACES SERVED BY METER					Water Fixture Units		
					Fixture Units (F.U.) 2024 IPC	Total FU 2024 IPC	
Fixture	Occupancy	Type of Supply	Quantity				
Project	Bathroom Group	Private	Flush Tank		3.6		
	Bathroom Group	Private	Flush Valve		8		
Address	Bathtub	Private	Faucet		1.4		
	Bathtub	Public	Faucet		4		
	Bidet	Private	Faucet		2		
Phone	Combination Fixture	Private	Faucet		3		
	Dishwashing Machine	Private	Automatic		1.4		
Engineer of Record	Drinking Fountain	Offices	3/8" valve		0.25		
	Kitchen Sink	Private	Faucet		1.4		
Firm	Kitchen Sink	Hotel, Restaurant	Faucet		4		
	Laundry trays (1 to 3)	Private	Faucet		1.4		
Address	Lavatory	Private	Faucet		0.7		
	Lavatory	Public	Faucet		2		
	Service sink / Mop basin	Offices	Faucet		3		
Phone	Shower head	Public	Mixing Valve		4		
	Shower head	Private	Mixing Valve		1.4		
Peak Demand Estimate	Urinal	Public	1" flush valve		10		
	Urinal	Public	3/4" flush valve		5		
Add'l Continous GPM Flow (i.e. irrigation demand)	Urinal	Public	Flush Tank		3		
	Washing Machine (8 lbs)	Private	Automatic		1.4		
Total GPM	Washing Machine (8 lbs)	Public	Automatic		3		
	Washing Machine (15 lbs)	Public	Automatic		4		
Existing Meter Size (if applicable)		Inches					
Required Water Meter Size	Water Closet	Private	Flush Valve		6		
	Water Closet	Private	Flush Tank		2.2		
	Water Closet	Public	Flush Valve		10		
	Water Closet	Public	Flush Tank		5		
	Water Closet	Public or Private	Flushometer Tank		2		
	Hose Bib	Private	Faucet		3		
	Hose Bib, each additional	Private	Faucet		1		
	Hose Bib	Public	Faucet		5		
	Hose Bib, each additional	Public	Faucet		1		
						<b>Total Water FU</b>	

Approved with City of Thornton Stamp above

Engineer of Record Stamp and Signature

**RESTRICTIVE COVENANT TO PROPERTY  
DECLARATION OF RESTRICTIONS**

THIS DECLARATION OF RESTRICTIONS (“**Declaration**”) is made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ (“**Effective Date**”), by \_\_\_\_\_ (“**Declarant**”).

**RECITALS**

WHEREAS, Declarant is the owner of a certain parcel of real property in the City of Thornton, County of Adams, State of Colorado, more particularly described in **Exhibit A** attached hereto and made a part hereof (the “**Property**”); and

WHEREAS, Declarant is encumbering the Property as a condition to a request for issuance of a building permit by the City of Thornton for an accessory dwelling unit, as defined in the Thornton City Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of good and valuable consideration, the receipt and legal sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, and intending to be legally bound hereby, Declarant for itself, its successors and assigns, does hereby agree that the Property shall be subject to and shall be used in conformance with the following restrictive uses.

**AGREEMENT**

1. Restrictions. The Property shall be subject to the following restrictions:
  - (a) The accessory dwelling unit shall not be sold separately from the principal dwelling unit, as described in the Thornton City Code, nor shall the lot on which it is situated be subdivided unless such subdivision has been approved by the city of Thornton in accordance with all provisions of Chapter 18 of the Thornton City Code; and
  - (b) The accessory dwelling unit shall comply with an approved minor development permit; and
  - (c) The certificate of occupancy for the accessory dwelling unit shall be in effect only so long as either the principal dwelling unit or the accessory dwelling unit is occupied by the Property owner of record as the owner’s permanent place of residence. A permanent residence shall mean the home which ones habitation is fixed to and to which ones, whenever they are absent, has a present intent to return, regardless of the duration of the absence.
  
2. Declaration Runs with the Land. The restrictions under this Declaration shall be deemed restrictive covenants and shall run with the land, shall be a benefit and a burden to the Declarant, their successors and assigns and any person acquiring an interest in the Property, their grantees, successors, heirs, administrators, devisees, or assigns.
  
3. Release of Restrictive Covenants. This Declaration may be terminated as to the Property only by recorded document, issued and executed by the City of Thornton, pursuant to applicable City of Thornton procedure.
  
4. Violation of Restrictive Covenants. Should the restrictive covenants be violated at any time, it shall be considered a violation of Chapter 18 of the Thornton City Code and the remedies described in Section 18-4 thereof shall be available to the City of Thornton. The Declarant shall be responsible for any and all costs, including but not limited to attorneys’ fees and costs, incurred by the City of Thornton for any enforcement actions brought for violations of these restrictive covenants.
  
5. Severability. All of the restrictions, covenants, agreements and conditions contained herein shall be construed together, but if it shall at any time be held by a court of competent jurisdiction that any

