



City of East Palo Alto

Planning & Housing Division

1960 Tate Street, East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Phone: 650-853-3189 • Fax: 650-853-3179

E-mail: planning@cityofepa.org • Website: www.cityofepa.org/planning

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

On October 9, 2017, new development standards were adopted to encourage secondary dwelling units, to reduce constraints to legalizing unpermitted conversions of garages and accessory structures, and to establish provisions related to guest houses. The tables below apply to single-family dwellings in R-LD Zone.

SETBACKS		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Front (to house)	10 feet	Table 2-2
Front (to street facing garage)	23 feet	
Front (to non-street facing garage)	20 feet	
Side (interior lot)	5 feet	
Side (corner lot)	12 feet	
Rear	10 feet	

BUILDING SIZE		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Site Coverage*	50 percent	Table 2-2
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)†	55 percent	

*Site Coverage is calculated by dividing the footprint (including any areas are surrounded by two or more walls) of all structures on the lot by the lot size.

†FAR is calculated by dividing the total square footage of all structures (including any areas that are surrounded by two or more walls) by the lot size

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Unit Size	1,000 square feet max.	18.96
Attached Unit Size	50% of the existing primary dwelling, provided an 800-square foot unit is not prohibited	
Bathroom and Kitchen Facilities	Permitted	
Setbacks		
Front	Subject to the front setback requirement of the underlying zoning district	
Side	4 feet	
Rear	4 feet	
Rear and to existing house, if detached	6 feet, provided an 800-square foot attached accessory unit is not prohibited	
Height	17 feet	
Open Space	50% of the remaining rear yard up to 750 square feet	
Architectural Compatibilities	The architectural features and design of the unit shall be compatible with the existing unit	

*Site Coverage and FAR shall apply when ADU is greater than 800 square feet.

JUNIOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (JADUs)		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Unit Size	500 square feet max.	18.96
Location	Constructed within the walls of a proposed or existing single-family residence	
Kitchen Facilities	An efficiency kitchen is permitted including: 1. A cooking facility with appliances; and 2. A food preparation counter and storage cabinets.	
Bathroom	Individual bathroom or shared bathroom with the main dwelling	

GUEST HOUSES		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Lot size	5,000 square feet min.	18.48.100
Structure size	700 square feet of gross area	
Number of units	1 guest house per lot	
Height	1 story/15 feet max.	
Bathroom	Permitted	
Kitchen Facilities	Not permitted	
Setbacks	Standard setback applies for attached structures. Setback for accessory structures applies for detached structures	

HEIGHT LIMITS		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Dwelling Units	2 stories or 26 feet, whichever is greater	Table 2-2
Dwelling Units within Flood Zone ^{††}	30 feet	
Accessory Structures	15 feet	

^{††}Where a new structure or an addition to an existing structure will exceed eighteen (18) feet in height, the required setback from the front and side property lines of the site shall be increased by one foot for each two feet of height in excess of eighteen (18) feet, such increased setbacks to be imposed only with respect to that portion of the new structure or addition that exceeds eighteen (18) feet in height. Up to fifty (50) percent of the proposed structure can utilize the single-story side setback for a structure; provided that the area where the addition will occur will not reduce light, air and privacy to adjoining properties. The planning commission, as part of the design review process, can permit more than fifty (50) percent of the proposed structure to utilize the single-story setback if the proposal exhibits exceptional design.

DETACHED ACCESSORY STRUCTURES		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Height – 6’6” or lower, Size – 120 square feet or less		
Distance from House/Other Structures	6 Feet/6 Feet	18.24
Side Setback	3 feet**	
Rear Setback	3 feet**	
Height – 6’6” or lower, Size – larger than 120 square feet		
Distance from House/Other Structures	6 Feet/6 Feet	18.24
Side Setback	3 feet**	
Rear Setback	3 feet**	
Front Setback	20 feet	
Maximum Size (projected roof area)	1,000 sq. ft.	

Height – higher than 6’6”, Size – larger than 120 square feet		
Distance from House/Other Structures	6 Feet/3 Feet**	18.24
Side Setback	3 Feet**	
Rear Setback	6 Feet	
Front Setback	20 Feet	
Maximum Size (projected roof area)	1,000 sq. ft.	
Maximum Height	15 Feet	

**A 5 feet setback is encouraged in order to meet Building Code.

OPEN SPACE FOR NON-ADU PROJECTS		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Usable Open Space (rear yard)***	750 square feet min.	Table 2-2
Common Open Space	250 square feet	Table 2-2
Private Open Space		
Ground Floor Units	200 square feet	Table 2-2
Upper Floor Units	100 square feet	

***Usable Open Space is an outdoor or unenclosed area within a residential development on the ground, or on a roof, balcony, deck, porch or terrace, designed and accessible for outdoor living, active or passive recreation, pedestrian access, or landscaping. Parking facilities, driveways utility or service areas, required front or street side setback areas, and submerged land do not constitute usable open space.

PARKING****		
Standard	Requirement	Code Section
Tandem Parking	Permitted (min. 20’ driveway)	Table 3-1
Compact Parking Size	8’x16’	18.30.70
Standard Parking Size	9’x18’	Table 3-2
Covered Parking	10’x20’ min. inside dimensions 9’x18’ if within a residential garage with a min. clear space of 10’x20’	18.30.90
0 to 1 Bedroom	1 parking space	Table 3-1
2 to 4 Bedrooms	2 parking spaces	
5 to 6 Bedrooms	3 parking spaces	
More than 6 Bedrooms	1 additional parking space for every bedroom above 6	

**** Parking requirements for ADUs and JADUs are different. Please refer to the ADU Handout.

For more information, please refer to Chapter 18.10 of the Development Code