CITY OF AUSTIN
Development
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Building a Better and Safer Austin Together

Pre-Approved ADU Plans

Housing and Planning Committee | May 31, 2022

Brent Lloyd, DSD Development Officer

Status Update re: Resolution No. 20211209-064

Agenda

- History of Pre-Approved ADU Plans Direction
- Seattle's "ADUniverse" Program
- Staff Recommendation
  - Steps and Timeline
  - Challenges to Implementation



History of Pre-Approved ADU Plans Direction

Direction 1 (Resolution No. 20200409-080):

- April 9, 2020
- Directed staff to “explore partnerships with organizations such as Community Powered Workshop that can provide a menu of pre-approved ADU models as part of a streamlined permitting process.”

Staff Response:

- June 25, 2021
- “Create menu of pre-approved building plans for detached ADUs that are created and owned by local designers or organizations”



History of Pre-Approved ADU Plans Direction

Specific Steps outlined in Staff Response:

- Engage with community, specifically low- and moderate-income homeowners and renters as well as design professionals, to develop criteria for ADU designs;
- Issue a public call for ADU plans from local design professionals or organizations that meet the criteria developed;
- Review and approve qualifying plan submissions;
- Partner with selected design professionals or organizations to establish pre-approved ADU plan guidelines for use and processes to complete design modifications and permitting processes; and
- Use affirmative marketing to inform eligible homeowners facing displacement pressures of the ADU building plan options.

History of Pre-Approved ADU Plans Direction

Direction 2 (Resolution No. 20211209-064):

- December 9, 2021
- Directed staff to “estimate the amount of staff time and resources that would be required to create a menu of pre-approved building plans for detached ADUs, as described in the June 2021 staff memo”

Staff Response:

- February 1, 2022



Seattle's "ADUniverse" Program

Required the following steps to develop and implement:

- Creating criteria for ADU plans based on technical code requirements and public feedback
- Releasing an open call for plan submissions from design professionals
- Creating a selection committee to review 160 submissions
- Selecting 10 plans to be made available to homeowners for a flat fee
- Developing a streamlined permitting process for projects that use pre-approved plans

Seattle's "ADUniverse" Program

Effectiveness of ADUniverse:

- Seattle built approximately 500 ADUs in 2020
  - Approximately half of Seattle's ADU production consists of attached ADUs, which are not eligible for the "ADUniverse" program

- 36 pre-approved ADUs were built utilizing the "ADUniverse" program between 2020-2021

February 1, 2022 Staff Recommendation

Task	Timeline	Hours to Complete
TASK 1: Solicit Community Feedback for Creation of Design Criteria	3-6 months	650 hours
TASK 2. Submission of ADU Plans	6 months	314 hours
TASK 3. Review Plan Submissions	6-10 months	320 hours
TASK 4. Implementation & Launch	7-9 months	678 hours
TASK 5. Ongoing Maintenance	Yearly, after adoption	50 hours

Challenges to Implementation

- Pre-approved plans can be designed to address technical code and structural safety requirements. However, unless regulations are changed, zoning regulations depend on site-specific conditions which must be reviewed individually *even if* plans are pre-approved.
- The extent to which pre-approved ADU plans reduce costs to applicants depends on how ownership and liability are addressed.
- Using pre-approved plans reduces design costs and design time, but does not reduce construction costs.





Questions and Comments