



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



A grayscale background image of the Seattle skyline, featuring various high-rise buildings and a bridge in the distance.

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 certain technical code and structural safety requirements. However, zoning regulations and structural requirements related to the foundation of a structure both 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.



An aerial, grayscale photograph of a city skyline. A wide river flows through the lower half of the image, with a multi-span bridge crossing it. The city is densely packed with various skyscrapers and buildings, some with distinctive architectural features like pointed tops or tiered sections. Lush green trees and parks are interspersed among the buildings, particularly along the riverbanks. The overall scene is a panoramic view of a major urban center.

Questions and Comments