

## **AGENDA**

### **EAST GRAND RAPIDS PLANNING COMMISSION May 9, 2023 - 5:30 PM Community Center – Commission Chambers**

Citizens may also stream the meeting via the following link: <https://bit.ly/2xXILvn>  
Comments not accepted via the livestream.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: March 14, 2023 Meeting
4. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
5. Study Session – Accessory Dwelling Units
6. News Article Regarding Recent Planning Activities
7. Report of the City Commission
8. Next Regular PC Meeting: June 13, 2023
9. Adjournment

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

March 14, 2023  
East Grand Rapids Community Center – Commission Chambers

Present: Chairman Mary Mapes, Commissioners Steve Achram, Matt Feyen, Karey Hamrick, Greg Metz, Peter Michell, Brian Miller, Chris Rosmarin and Tom Tilma.

Also Present: City Manager Shea Charles, Deputy City Manager Doug LaFave, Zoning Administrator Jay Gianotti, City Attorney John Huff, and Recording Secretary Lynda Taylor

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mapes called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Miller and supported by Commissioner Achram to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Commissioners Achram, Feyen, Hamrick, Mapes, Michell, Miller, Rosmarin and Tilma - 9  
Nays: -0-

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 14, 2023

A motion was made by Commissioner Michell and supported by Commissioner Metz to approve the minutes as submitted.

Yeas: Commissioners Achram, Feyen, Hamrick, Mapes, Michell, Miller, Rosmarin and Tilma - 9  
Nays: -0-

4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public present to comment.

5. STUDY SESSION – ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Zoning Administrator Gianotti led the study session on accessory dwelling units. Mr. Giannotti's summary of this discussion is below:

- Planning Commissioners seemed generally open/interested in allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as a way to increase less expensive housing options to the City. It was also noted that some may already exist but are unnoticeable because they comfortably fit in with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Commissioner Tilma noted it would be good to see examples of other ADU regulations from other communities. Commissioner Hamrick noted that Holland recently approved an ADU ordinance while working with Housing Next, and it may be useful for Housing Next to speak to the Planning Commission about this topic.
- Commissioners generally felt that ADUs would be appropriate to allow across the entire City. Commissioner Achram asked if it would be possible to sketch out some ADU options in the City. City staff will work on that for the next study session.
- Commissioners generally felt that ADU regulations should generally follow the current standards for accessory uses. However, they also felt that relaxing some standards may be acceptable to make them more feasible. Some suggestions include:

- Relaxing some setback standards
- Relaxing lot coverage standards in the R-2 Residential District
- Commissioner Metz noted that fire codes may require a minimum setback between buildings.
- Regardless of specific regulations, all Commissioners generally felt that an owner-occupancy requirement and a ban on short-term rentals for ADUs should be included.
- Commissioner Feyen questioned if the neighborhood should be notified if an ADU is proposed for development instead of strictly allowing them by-right.
- In terms of parking regulations, most Commissioners felt requiring limited off-street parking was reasonable, but wanted to see how other communities handle the issue. Commissioner Rosmarin was sensitive to the potential of increasing the number of people living on a lot (with an ADU) without increasing the required parking. Commissioner Hamrick suggested tailoring parking requirements based on the zoning district.
- Commissioner Tilma questioned if design standards would be defensible if included in the zoning ordinance.

## 6. REPORT OF THE CITY COMMISSION

Commissioner Hamrick reported the following:

- On Saturday, March 11 the City Commission met with department directors to go over the strategic plan for the year. Categories covered were infrastructure, Public Works, Parks & Rec, Public Safety, Community Development, city operations, Finance and personnel.
- Swearing in ceremony for new Ward 1 commissioner, Ryan Burdick.
- Approved playground funding for three elementary schools which includes equipment, site work and furniture. Katerberg-Ver Hage is the contractor. The work will start April 14.

## 7. NEXT REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: April 11, 2023

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamrick and supported by Commissioner Miller to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 PM

Yeas: Commissioners Achram, Feyen, Hamrick, Mapes, Michell, Miller, Rosmarin and Tilma - 9  
Nays: -0-

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Taylor  
Recording Secretary



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5

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JAY GIANOTTI, AICP  
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Hearing Required?	No
Notices Mailed	N/A
Notice Published	N/A

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: East Grand Rapids Planning Commission  
FROM: Jay Gianotti, Zoning Administrator  
DATE: May 4, 2023

RE: **Study Session – Accessory Dwelling Units**

**Action Requested:**

That the Planning Commission hold a study session to learn more about and discuss the topic of Accessory Dwelling Units.

**Background:**

The 2018 East Grand Rapids Master Plan lists many goals for the future of the City. One of these overall goals is to “include a focus on additional diverse housing opportunities for new families, aging in place, and young professionals<sup>1</sup>.” The City recently took a step towards this goal by revising the MFR Multiple-Family Residential District standards to promote new multi-family uses in and around Gaslight Village. Another increasingly popular way to increase housing supply is through the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). In previous discussions, the Planning Commission felt the idea of allowing ADUs as a permitted use was worthy of further study, but there were several concerns and reservations raised. Permitting ADUs would allow a residential lot to add a second, accessory residential use on their property, with the “accessory” designation implying that their design, size, and location are distinctly different and separate from the principal home.

This topic was introduced for discussion at the March 2023 Planning Commission meeting. That meeting was focused on introducing what ADUs are, what they might look like, and samples of ways they can be regulated. The general consensus from the Planning Commission was that there was an interest in allowing them to be developed in the City. There was also interest in having a representative from Housing Next speak about this topic, as they had spoken with Holland, MI regarding their recent ADU ordinance. This City is working to have Ryan Kilpatrick at Housing Next come to the next Planning Commission to give this talk. For now, tonight’s study session intends to delve deeper into this subject by exploring two additional topics: investigating how other communities regulate ADUs and what types of ADU development could occur under the City’s current regulations.

**Comparison of How Local Communities Handle ADUs:**

This first topic for exploration tonight involves comparing how other local and similar communities that allow ADUs regulate them. At this time, City staff has identified six other communities in Michigan that currently allow ADUs on some level. To get a sense of how ADUs are treated outside of Michigan, two other communities from outside Michigan were also compared: Durango, CO and Bloomington, IN. Both are smaller communities relatively similar to EGR and the other communities

<sup>1</sup> See [EGR 2018 Master Plan](#), p. 23

compared in terms of population and urban form. The appendix at the end of these materials shows a detailed breakdown of the various standards and regulations for ADUs. Overall, there appears to be a lot of variability in how these communities treat ADUs. The following is a summary of some notable takeaways from this comparison.

- With minor exceptions, these researched communities appear to allow ADUs in all residential districts or any lot with a single-family home on it. One notable exception: Grand Rapids and Traverse City generally prohibit ADUs on a nonconforming lot.
- Many of these communities appear to generally treat ADUs the same as other accessory buildings in terms of their dimensional requirements (setbacks, height, etc.) Some notable exceptions:
  - Grand Rapids – Max. height can vary depending on if structure meets the required setbacks for a principal building, but generally allowed to be taller than other accessory buildings.
  - Holland – Max. height varies depending on if ADU is on first or second story; setbacks equal to the minimum required side yard for a principal building, standards for ADUs compared to other accessory buildings; screening requirement for a ground floor ADU.
  - Hastings – In some zones, setbacks vary depending on the height of the accessory building.
- Approval for ADUs range from full administrative approval to requiring special use permits from the planning commission. Grand Rapids and Holland appear to offer a hybrid where residents in close proximity are notified if an ADU is proposed, but only requires a public hearing/planning commission approval on resident request. There was some discussion at the previous study session about getting neighborhood input before approving an ADU. While it appears this sort of arrangement may accomplish this, it should be noted that such a practice would increase the overall approval time and increase the risk that a project that meets the zoning ordinance standards would be denied for unrelated factors. Therefore, the pros and cons of such an approach should be carefully considered.
- All communities provide a maximum allowable area for ADUs, though not all have minimum sizes for ADUs. In some communities, the maximum size is based on the size of the lot or the existing house.
- Most researched communities require at least one parking space per ADU.
- None of these communities were specifically found to restrict the use of ADUs as rental housing. Some go further to specifically prohibit the use of ADUs for short-term rentals.
- Only three researched communities specifically have a deed restriction requirement for ADUs.
- Some communities required ADUs to be registered with the City, regardless of if the ADU is rented or not.

The Planning Commission is encouraged to review and discuss their overall thoughts on these different regulations, including which parts they like, which they feel may not be relevant to the City, and how these might be applicable to the City.

### **Examples of ADU Development with EGR's Current Standards:**

As noted above, Planning Commissioners showed interest in ADU development but felt it would be most appropriate to permit them within the existing zoning ordinance standards in the City. The second exercise, then, is to compare how ADUs could be developed in East Grand Rapids based on the existing dimensional standards. A series of sample studies were developed to illustrate the potential for ADU development across different zoning districts and scenarios. This is also intended to identify if there are quantifiable impediments to ADU development in the City.

For this exercise, five sample lots based on actual developed lots in the City were analyzed. For each category, two different tables are provided. The first is a basic breakdown of the existing lot size and

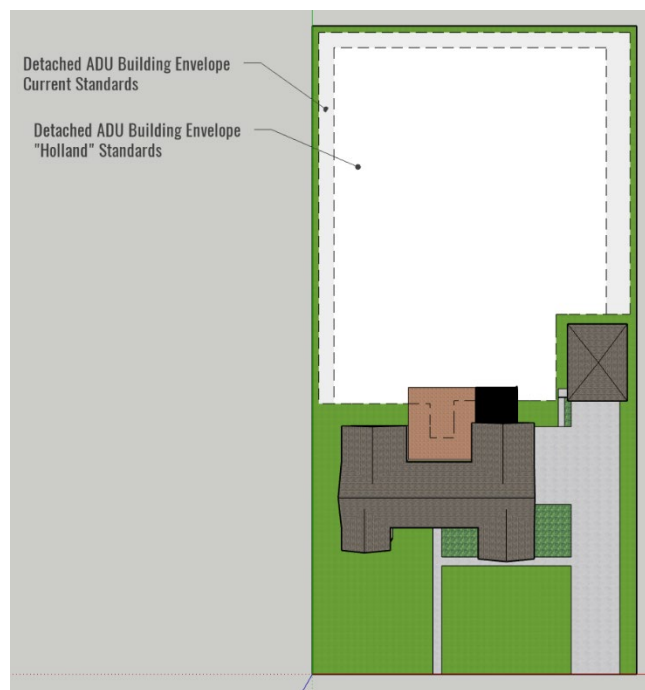
coverage compared to what would be allowed in that zoning district. The second looks at the four types of ADUs previously discussed – interior, garage, detached, and attached – and assesses the viability of it being developed on that lot. For detached ADUs, two building envelopes are provided for reference. The larger one represents the current 3’ setback for all accessory buildings in the City. The smaller one represents the “Holland” model where the side and rear setbacks are equal to the minimum required side yard for that district<sup>2</sup>. Also, in assessing the viability of detached ADUs, two different standards are used. The first involves a strict following of Table 5.70-1 where the maximum area of accessory buildings is defined by lot size and the number of attached garage spaces. The second bypasses that and only uses a “no more than 25% of the rear yard” standard.

The following pages show a representation of each lot category with an assessment of what types of ADUs could reasonably be developed on them. While these are small sample sizes, City staff endeavored to choose examples that are representative for the districts as a whole.

## R-1 CONFORMING LOT EXAMPLE

LOT CHARACTERISTICS	
LOT AREA	45,000 s.f.
LOT COVERAGE	
Buildings	4,289 s.f. (10%)
All impervious surface	9,621 s.f. (21%)

ADU POTENTIAL	
INTERIOR ADU?	Yes
GARAGE ADU?	Yes
Max. “livable area” (over 7.5’ height)	397 s.f.
DETACHED ADU?	Yes
Max. allowable - Table 5.70A	502 s.f.
Max. allowable – 25% rear yard area	6,930 s.f.
ATTACHED ADU?	Yes
Max. allowable footprint addition	8,379 s.f. (larger than house footprint)

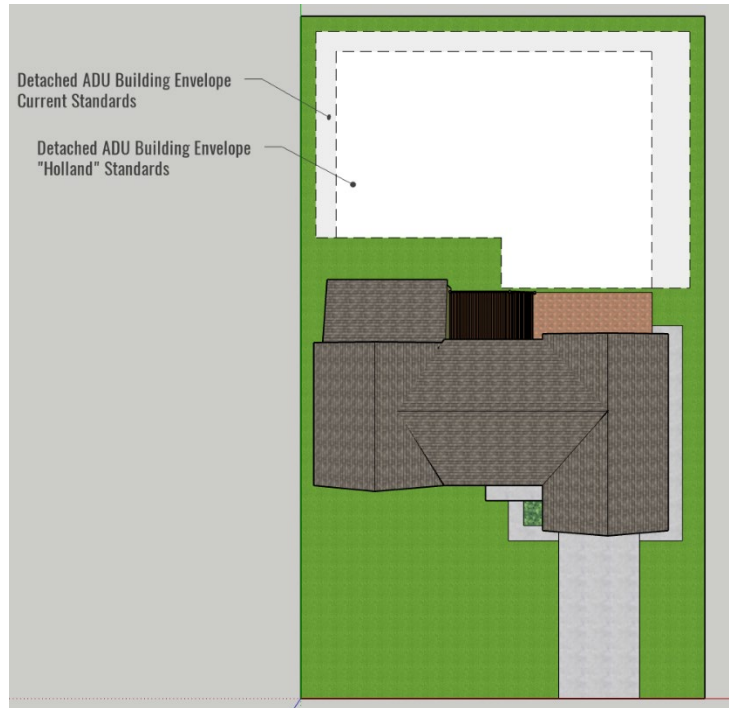


<sup>2</sup> Neither of these accessory building envelopes appear to impact the overall allowable size of a detached ADU.

## R-2 CONFORMING LOT EXAMPLE

LOT CHARACTERISTICS	
LOT AREA	10,800 s.f.
LOT COVERAGE	
Buildings	2,064 s.f. (19%)
All impervious surface	3,241 s.f. (4,800 s.f. max allowable)

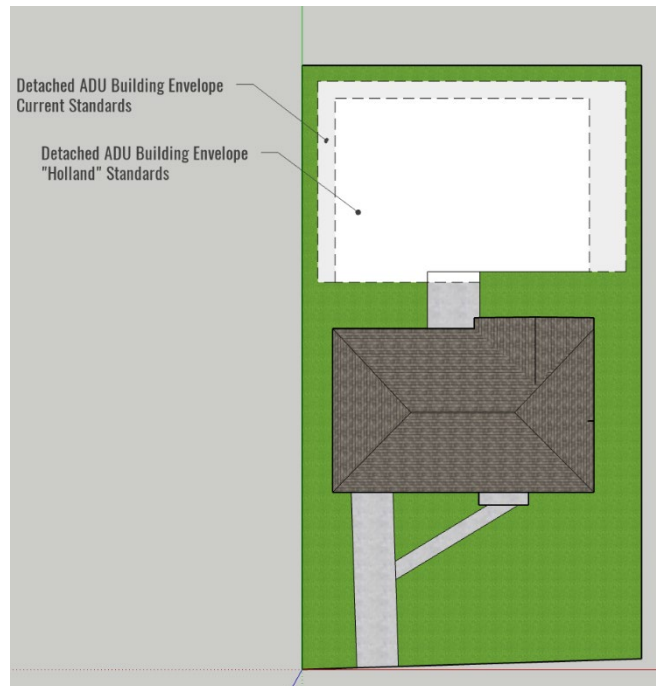
ADU POTENTIAL	
INTERIOR ADU?	Yes
GARAGE ADU?	n/a
DETACHED ADU?	Yes
Max. allowable - Table 5.70A	336 s.f.
Max. allowable - 25% rear yard area	1,076 s.f.
ATTACHED ADU?	Yes
Max. allowable footprint addition	1,559 s.f. (76% of ex. foundation)



## R-2 NONCONFORMING LOT EXAMPLE

LOT CHARACTERISTICS	
LOT AREA	7,438 s.f. (6,500 s.f. in the first 100' depth)
LOT COVERAGE	
Buildings	1,328 s.f. (18%)
All impervious surface	1,852 s.f. (25%)

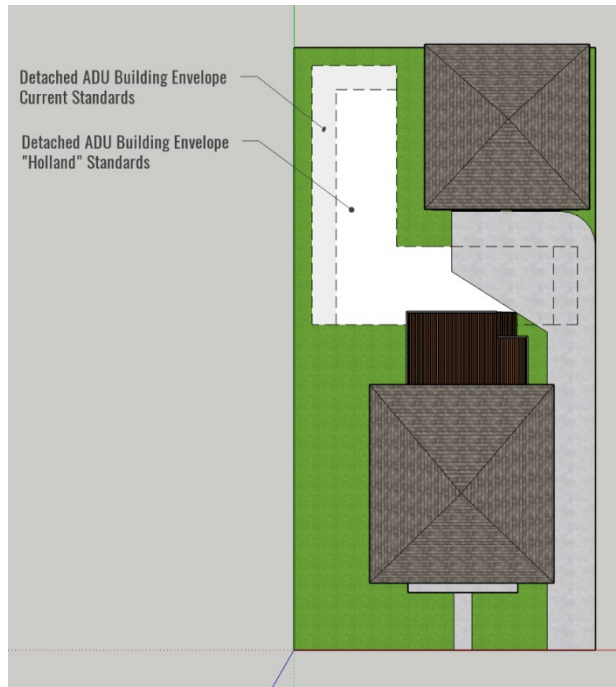
ADU POTENTIAL	
INTERIOR ADU?	Yes
GARAGE ADU?	n/a
DETACHED ADU?	Yes
Max. allowable - Table 5.70A	576 s.f.
Max. allowable - 25% rear yard area	804 s.f.
ATTACHED ADU?	Yes
Max. allowable footprint addition	1,495 s.f. (larger than house footprint)



### R-3 CONFORMING LOT EXAMPLE

LOT CHARACTERISTICS	
LOT AREA	5,000 s.f.
LOT COVERAGE	
Buildings	1,200 s.f. (24%)
All impervious surface	2,295 s.f. (46%)

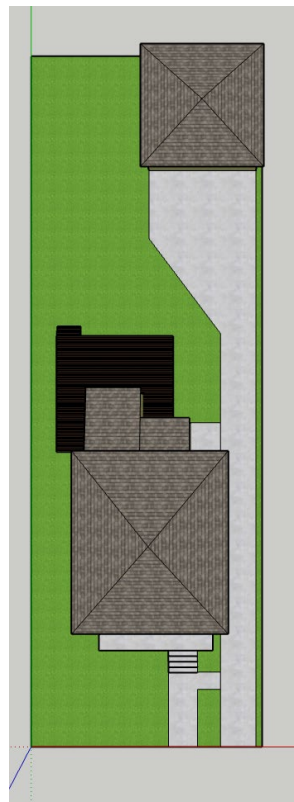
ADU POTENTIAL	
INTERIOR ADU?	Yes
GARAGE ADU?	Depends on standards
Max. "livable area" (over 7.5' height)	288 s.f.
DETACHED ADU?	No
Max. allowable footprint	124 s.f.
ATTACHED ADU?	Possible
Max. allowable footprint addition	205 s.f.



### R-3 NONCONFORMING LOT EXAMPLE

LOT CHARACTERISTICS	
LOT AREA	4,800 s.f. (4,000 s.f. in the first 100' depth)
LOT COVERAGE	
Buildings	1,058 s.f. (22%)
All impervious surface	2,334 s.f. (49%)

ADU POTENTIAL	
INTERIOR ADU?	Yes
GARAGE ADU?	Depends on standards
Max. "livable area" (over 7.5' height)	171 s.f.
DETACHED ADU?	No
Max. number of accessory buildings	1
ATTACHED ADU?	Unlikely
Max. allowable footprint addition	66 s.f.





Based on these samples, the following items are noted.

- Interior ADUs can be developed virtually anywhere as they generally involve the basement or existing interior of a home. This means that no additional building area needs to be added.
- Detached ADU viability appears to be limited in the R-3 Districts and for many lots with a detached garage. From a practical standpoint, it appears that many lots in the R-3 District already have detached garages, which limits the ability to develop a second accessory building on the lot or expand an existing accessory building. Even if sufficient area remained in this scenario, the required 6' setback between accessory buildings would also limit where, if at all, a detached ADU can be placed.
- Attached ADUs are possible in all zoning districts, but may be more difficult to develop in the R-3 District. This appears to be because many lots in this district are already close to the maximum allowable lot coverage. This limits the ability to add sufficient building area for an interior ADU unless a portion of the existing building is used for such a purpose. On the flip side, on larger lots, there is a potential for an attached ADU to be larger than the principal building footprint if other measures or limits are not in place.
- Depending on the allowable size, garage ADUs may be difficult to develop in any district. This appears to be related to the existing limits on accessory building height and area. The current height limit of 16' or 1.5 stories effectively limits the development of an upper floor ADU (or any finished space) to half of the overall garage area. Section 5.30 of the zoning ordinance requires 300 s.f. of livable area for the smallest allowable studio dwelling unit. If that standard were kept for garage ADUs, a lower-level garage would need to be at least 600 s.f. in area to support a garage ADU. While a suitably large garage could be theoretically developed on most lot sizes, in practice detached garages tend to be more prevalent on smaller lots where it is difficult to build a sufficiently large garage for this purpose. Additionally, if there are already attached garage spaces within the principal building, then the allowable size for a second detached garage is further limited. Therefore, if garage ADUs are deemed desirable, allowing for extra building height and/or allowing smaller dwelling unit sizes for garage ADUs could be considered.
- None of these scenarios investigate the impact of parking requirements as there are multiple variables for the size and form they can take. It should be noted that having parking requirements could reduce the area of land that can be used to develop an ADU, particularly for detached and garage ADUs.

**Summary:**

These exercises and observations are not intended as specific recommendations. These are being provided simply to demonstrate the possibility and current limitations of potential ADU development in the City. The Planning Commission is encouraged to discuss these findings to help clarify if ADUs are still deemed desirable, and if so, what shape or form would be most suitable. City staff will take all of the feedback received tonight to determine the next steps in this process.

## APPENDIX - Comparison of Various ADU Standards and Regulations

Community		Grand Rapids, MI	Holland, MI	Ann Arbor, MI	Traverse City, MI
<b>Approval</b>		Administrative or Planning Commission	Administrative or ZBA	Administrative	Administrative
<b>Approval Conditions</b>		Requires "qualified review" that can consider neighborhood impact; properties owners within 300' notified, who can request a public hearing with PC; if no hearing requested, permit can be approved administratively	All prop. owners within 300' notified; notified resident can request hearing before ZBA; ZBA can approve ADU with conditions	n/a	n/a
<b>Max. ADU's allowed</b>		1	1	1	1
<b>Location</b>		Any lot with a detached single-family dwelling	LDR, MDR, TNR, GMU, & PUD zones, but only on lots with a single detached dwelling unit; not allowed in Hope Neighborhood Overlay District	Any lot with a detached single-family dwelling	Any lot with a detached single-family dwelling, but not if there is a licensed Tourist Home
<b>Min. Size</b>		400 s.f.	300 s.f.	n/a	n/a
<b>Max. Size</b>		850 s.f. or 40% of principal dwelling unit's gross floor area, whichever is greater	720 s.f. or 1/3 of principal dwelling unit's gross floor area above grade, whichever is greater	If lot area less than 7,200 s.f.: 600 s.f. or ground floor area of primary dwelling unit, whichever is less If lot area 7,200 s.f. or more: 800 s.f. or ground floor area of primary dwelling unit, whichever is less	800 s.f., but no larger than the size of the principal dwelling unit.
<b>Max. Height (Detached ADU)</b>		If ADU meets primary structure setbacks: 25' If not: 20'	On first floor: 16' average height On second floor: 22' average height	Same as other accessory buildings (21')	Same as other accessory buildings (25' or height of principal building, whichever is less)
<b>Setbacks (Detached ADU)</b>	<b>Front</b>	not allowed	not allowed	not allowed	not allowed
	<b>Side</b>	Same as other accessory buildings (3' from property lines & other accessory buildings, 6' from house)	Same as principal structure	Same as other accessory buildings (3' from property lines)	Same as other accessory buildings (4' from property lines)
	<b>Rear</b>		Same as side yard setback for principal structure		
	<b>Other</b>		Corner lot: same as secondary street yard setback for principal structure		
<b>Nonconforming Lot Conditions</b>		Lot must meet min. required size	n/a	n/a	"Site and use [must be] substantially in compliance with this Zoning Code."
<b>Maximum ADU Occupancy</b>		2 bedrooms	2 persons	Same as defined in zoning ordinance, except for max. 2 unrelated persons and their offspring	n/a
<b>Owner-Occupancy Requirement</b>		Yes	Yes	No (non owner-occupied requires regular inspections)	Yes
<b>Parking Requirement</b>		1 space per dwelling unit plus .25/per bedroom over 1 bedroom	1 space per dwelling unit	No	1 space per dwelling unit
<b>Lease Length</b>		Not less than 30 days; no short-term rental	No short-term rental or B&B	Not less than 30 days	Not less than 3 months
<b>Deed Restriction Requirement</b>		Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a
<b>Design Standards</b>		"The ADU shall be designed to maintain the architectural design, style, appearance and character of the main building as a detached single-family dwelling, including but not limited to entrances, roof pitch, siding and windows."	Must undergo Infill Design Review Process (includes form, massing, façade materials, roof style/pitch, orientation, etc.)	n/a	- Max. 1 entrance to ADU facing the street (some exceptions) - Stairs accessing an upper floor ADU shall not be on front of primary dwelling unit.
<b>Other Standards</b>		- Rented ADUs need to be registered with the City	- 6' high screening if ADU is on the ground floor		- Limit of 15 newly registered ADU's per year - ADUs must be registered & reviewed annually

**APPENDIX - Comparison of Various ADU Standards and Regulations**

Community		Barry County, MI	Hastings, MI	Durango, CO	Bloomington, IN
<b>Approval</b>		Planning Commission	Administrative	Administrative	Administrative
<b>Approval Conditions</b>		Requires Special Use Permit	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Max. ADU's allowed</b>		1	2?	1	1
<b>Location</b>		Only in RL, RR, LDR, MDR, HD, and A Districts	All residential, apartment, and office districts, provided a principal building/structure is present	Generally any lot with a single-family home; some zoning districts have lot size minimums or only allow attached ADUs	Any lot with a detached single-family dwelling or duplex dwelling
<b>Min. Size</b>		400 s.f.	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Max. Size</b>		1,000 s.f.	900 s.f. or 1,200 s.f., depending on zone; also subject to 1,100-1,500 s.f. limit for all accessory buildings on lot, depending on zone	550 s.f., except there is no limit for an ADU entirely in a basement	840 s.f. or maximum allowable accessory building size, whichever is less
<b>Max. Height (Detached ADU)</b>		Same as other accessory buildings (no taller than maximum height allowed for underlying district)	Generally 14-18' depending on zone	Generally 13.5' to roof plate and 20' to roof peak	25' to highest point of roof
<b>Setbacks (Detached ADU)</b>	<b>Front</b>	Not allowed except for waterfront lots (20') and farm-based uses (50' from County road and 75' from State highway)	Not allowed in required front yard; can be built between required front yard and the principal building if principal building side yard setback is met (some exceptions)	not allowed	not allowed
	<b>Side</b>	Same as other accessory buildings (same setbacks as required for underlying district)	- For all R1 and R1-A zones, plus some R-2 zones: 10' for buildings taller than 14' - For R-S and R-R zones: equal to height of accessory building - For all other zones: same as for other accessory buildings (3' side and rear, provided the building is at least 60' from the front property line)	Varies by zoning district and building height If no alley access: 10' If alley access: 3'; if ADU is above a garage, must provide min. 25' vehicle maneuvering space from alley to garage door	Same as other accessory buildings (5' from property lines)
	<b>Rear</b>				
	<b>Other</b>	Must be 10' from principal building	Must be 10' from principal building and 6' from other accessory buildings on the lot	Corner lot: same as secondary street yard setback for principal structure	Existing accessory buildings converted to ADUs may be exempt from side/rear setback requirements
<b>Nonconforming Lot Conditions</b>		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Maximum ADU Occupancy</b>		n/a	n/a	n/a	2 bedrooms; no more than one family as defined in ordinance
<b>Owner-Occupancy Requirement</b>		No	n/a	Yes; exceptions available for extended absences up to 2 years	Yes
<b>Parking Requirement</b>		1 space per dwelling unit	n/a	1 space per dwelling unit; tandem parking with primary dwelling unit allowed	No
<b>Lease Length</b>		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Deed Restriction Requirement</b>		n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
<b>Design Standards</b>		n/a	n/a	Yes; full section on design standards	n/a
<b>Other Standards</b>		- Only allowed in existing accessory buildings - Only allowed on lots with at least 10,000 s.f. area and 75' width	- Basements not allowed to be used for dwelling units	- Must maintain usable outdoor area in rear yard: min. 600 s.f. and no dimension less than 10'	- Rented ADUs need to be registered with the City



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JAY GIANOTTI, AICP  
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

**MEMORANDUM**

TO:                East Grand Rapids Planning Commission  
FROM:            Jay Gianotti, Zoning Administrator  
DATE:            May 4, 2023

RE:                **News Article Regarding Recent Planning Activities**

**Action Requested:**

None.

**Background:**

East Grand Rapids was recently featured in an article in Crain's Grand Rapids Business regarding how local communities are flexing their zoning ordinances to address housing issues in the area. EGR was featured along with Gaines Township and Wyoming regarding different ways these communities are trying to increase housing options and address housing shortages in their communities and the region as a whole. EGR's portion of the article references, among other items, recent multi-family development in the City and the recent discussions that have begun regarding allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The City wanted to highlight this with the Planning Commission so they are aware of their role and impact in working through these issues, even if on a small scale. The article can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.craingsgrandrapids.com/news/real-estate/trio-of-grand-rapids-suburbs-work-to-flex-zoning-codes-as-demand-for-housing-grows/>