



Residential Second Unit Summary Sheet City of El Monte Planning Division

A residential second unit is an additional structure, which may be attached or detached from the principal property, subject to meeting minimum requirements, used for the sole purpose of housing. A “guest house” or “accessory living quarters” are not considered residential second units, although they may be converted to a residential second unit if the requirements are met.

Lot Restrictions

Residential second units are prohibited on the following types of lots:

- Residential lots already developed with more than one dwelling or structure used for habitation;
- Lots within a Planned Residential Development (PRD);
- Lots developed with attached dwellings or within a condominium development;
- Lots developed or subdivided with vehicular access from a common private drive, Private Street or private access easement.
- The public right of way must be a minimum of 60 feet wide.

The minimum lot size on which an attached residential second unit may be located is 8,500 square feet.
The minimum lot size on which a detached residential second unit may be located is 12,000 square feet.

General Development Standards

All residential second units must meet the general standards of the zoning designation for the lot, including maintaining the approved density level within the zoning district. In addition, the second unit must match the design and architectural style of the primary residence and use materials that are compatible with the primary residence and the other structures in the neighborhood. All construction related to the residential second unit must meet current building, electrical, fire and plumbing code regulations. Since this is considered a second home on the property, it must include kitchen and bathroom facilities with utility metering capabilities separate from the primary residence.

Size and Scale Standards

A residential second unit must adhere to the following size and scale requirements:

- Maximum size (attached unit): 30% of the total living floor area of the primary residence or 650 square feet, whichever is less.
- Maximum size (detached unit): 650 square feet
- Minimum gross floor area (detached unit): 530 square feet
- Maximum bedrooms: 2
- Maximum height: 15 feet or the height of the primary residence, whichever is less
- Minimum distance between dwellings: 10 feet

Parking Requirements

All residential second units must provide two off-street uncovered parking spaces in addition to the required spaces for the primary residence. One driveway must be maintained for both dwellings, unless there is access available from an alley. If you wish to convert the garage of the primary residence into a residential second unit, the garage must be replaced elsewhere on the property and included in the plan.

Ownership Requirements

Property owners are required to live on the property that contains the residential second unit. It is at their discretion which unit they wish to live in. The residential second unit cannot be sold separately from the primary residence. If the owner moves off of the property, the residential second unit must no longer be used.

Submitting a Proposal

Proposals for construction of a residential second unit or converting a “guest house” or “accessory living quarters” must be submitted to the planning department for review. In order for the planning department to provide a thorough and expeditious review, please include the following:

1. A plot plan drawn to scale showing the principal dwelling, accessory structures and the proposed residential second unit.
2. A floor plan, drawn to scale, of the principal dwelling and the proposed residential second unit.
3. Elevations of the principal dwelling and proposed residential second unit showing the existing and proposed architectural design and exterior building color, material, and finish.
4. A landscape and irrigation plan, prepared by a state licensed landscape architect,
5. Documentation verifying that the existing dwelling is owner-occupied.
6. The proposed method of water supply and sewage disposal for the residential second unit, including “can and will serve” letters from a public water district or an existing mutual water company, where appropriate.

Summary Checklist

- Lot size _____ Zoning _____
- Lot is not prohibited from containing a residential second unit.
- Addition of unit will not increase the allowable density of the lot.
- Presence of existing non-conforming development.
- Public right of way a minimum of 60 feet wide.
- Maximum height: 15 feet or height of primary residence, whichever is less.
- Minimum distance between dwellings, if detached: 10 feet.
- Minimum size: 530 sq. ft.
- Maximum size: 650 sq. ft (detached), 30% of total living area of primary residence or 650 sq. ft., whichever is less
- Maximum bedrooms: 2
- Kitchen and bathroom facilities present.
- Separately metered utilities for unit.
- Separate entrance, not visible from the front of the property.
- Minimum parking: two off street uncovered spaces.
- Garage available for the primary residence.
- Property owner living on the property.
- Block wall required if on and intersection of two or more streets.

Please note, while this is a summary of requirements for a residential second unit, additional restrictions and conditions may apply. Please refer to Ordinance No. 2585 for detailed requirements. For questions or assistance, please contact the Planning Department at (626) 258-8628.