



ADU watch: Redwood City tightens what was a less restrictive ordinance

By Maggie Angst, The Mercury News, July 27, 2019

“Redwood City had one of the least restrictive ADU ordinances on the Peninsula — allowing units to reach 28 feet above the ground and 700 square feet of space above a garage. But the city council voted 6-1 to limit the size and height of second-story granny flats while providing incentives for construction of single-story units. The new ordinance is expected to go into effect at the end of September.

“Since the last ADU ordinance update in 2017, more than 120 ADUs have been built, including about 20 above garages. [But some] residents in older neighborhoods with single story homes [objected to] second-story units built above garages [which they said] affected their privacy and downgraded neighborhood character.

“So the council adopted measures to bar second-story decks and roof decks, require opaque windows that look out onto neighbors, and reduce the height of units atop garages to 20 feet above the ground, with exceptions for a slightly taller structure if necessary for the roofline to match that of the main house.

“Although the maximum size of an ADU in a detached garage will remain at 700 square feet, the measures restrict the portion of the unit above the garage to 576 square feet.

“[At the same time,] the council made it easier to produce single-story ADUs, allowing them to be built closer to property lines, cover more than half of a rear lot, and replace a detached garage.

“Redwood City is also setting its sights on the size of single-family homes.

“On Aug. 26, the city council will discuss limiting the size of single-family home projects to 40 percent of the lot area or a maximum house size of 2,500 square feet — whichever is greater.

“The proposed measure is intended to serve as a short-term solution that would be repealed within two years or in conjunction with the adoption of new residential design guidelines.”

[Read the full article here.](#)