PLANNING & ZONING
GREENE COUNTY, VIRGINIA
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PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance Revision

Work Session Discussion Packet | October 2026

Purpose of the Work Session

The purpose of this work session is to review proposed revisions to the Greene County Zoning Ordinance provisions governing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), compare the existing ordinance with the proposed amendment and the new Virginia statutory framework, and receive Planning Commission direction before preparation of an ordinance amendment for future public hearing.

Board Direction

On June 9, 2026, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 2026-005 establishing planning and zoning priorities for ordinance revisions and Comprehensive Plan integration. Accessory Dwelling Units were identified as a priority, specifically calling for review of the ADU definition and establishment of minimum and maximum allowed square footage. The resolution directs staff and the Planning Commission to use the priorities in drafting necessary ordinance revisions for future public hearings and final Board consideration.

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VIRGINIA CODE FRAMEWORK

Virginia Code Change

Virginia Code § 15.2-2292.4 becomes effective July 1, 2027. It defines an ADU as an attached or detached dwelling unit on a residential dwelling lot that provides complete independent living facilities, is located on the same lot as a proposed or existing primary residence, and includes facilities for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

- Single-family residential zoning ordinances are deemed to include ADUs as a permitted accessory use, subject only to requirements authorized by the statute.
- A locality may require an ADU permit and may charge a fee of no more than $500, in addition to other applicable permit or inspection fees.
- The statute identifies requirements localities may impose, including parking, certain floor-area limits, code compliance, limited owner-occupancy provisions at application, a maximum 500-foot separation from the primary dwelling, and prohibitions on separate sale or subdivision.
- The statute also identifies requirements localities may not impose, including certain more-restrictive rear/side setbacks, restrictive covenants required by the locality, public-street improvements except for repair of disturbed streets, and family-relationship requirements between occupants.
- The statute does not supersede private covenants or other private agreements affecting real property.
- The statute states that a locality may adopt an ADU ordinance before July 1, 2027, that substantially complies with the section.

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EXISTING ORDINANCE AND PROPOSED REVISION

Existing Greene County ADU Provisions

The current ordinance defines an ADU as a separate living unit on a single-family residential lot, subordinate in use, size, location, and appearance to the primary unit. The compiled ordinance provisions identify the following principal standards:

- By-right districts expressly identified in Article 22: A-1 Agricultural, C-1 Conservation, and R-1 Residential.
- Size: minimum 300 square feet; maximum 800 square feet.
- Bedrooms: maximum of two.
- Parking: two additional off-street spaces.
- Owner occupancy: owner must occupy at least one dwelling as a permanent legal residence, verified by notarized affidavit.
- Limit: no more than one ADU per parcel.
- Location: within the single-family dwelling or in a conforming accessory structure.
- Mobile or manufactured homes may not be used as an ADU.

Proposed Article 22 Replacement

The September 28, 2026, draft would replace the existing Article 22 ADU definition and parameters. Major proposed changes include:

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Definition	Aligns the definition with the statutory concept of an attached or detached independent dwelling unit on the same lot as a primary residence.
Ownership / occupancy	Requires the ADU to remain on the same lot and prohibits separate sale or subdivision. Owner occupancy would not be required.
Zoning districts	Would expressly allow ADUs as an accessory use with a single-family dwelling in A-1, C-1, R-1, R-2, SR, and PUD.
Density treatment	Would clarify that an ADU is not an additional principal dwelling for density, lot-area, division-right, or principal-unit allocation calculations, with an SR age-restriction provision.
Number permitted	Retains a general limit of one ADU per parcel, with language addressing dwellings authorized under Section 16-1-5.
Configuration	Would allow an ADU within, attached to, or detached from the primary dwelling.
Floor area	Proposes a minimum of 200 square feet and a maximum of 1,500 square feet, with a detailed method for calculating ADU floor area.
Parking	Proposes one dedicated off-street parking space and replacement of any required primary-dwelling parking eliminated by ADU construction.
Manufactured homes	Would allow a qualifying manufactured home as a detached ADU, subject to the same zoning standards as a detached site-built ADU and applicable state/building requirements.

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PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following items are presented for discussion and direction. They are not intended to predetermine the Commission's recommendations.

1. Zoning Districts

Should the ordinance expressly permit ADUs in A-1, C-1, R-1, R-2, SR, and PUD as proposed? Consider how the R-2 cross-reference, SR age-restricted provisions, and approved PUD plans should be addressed.

2. Minimum and Maximum Floor Area

The current range is 300-800 square feet. The draft proposes 200-1,500 square feet. What minimum and maximum should Greene County establish while remaining consistent with applicable state law?

3. Floor-Area Measurement

Is the proposed detailed method for measuring ADU floor area clear and administratively workable, including treatment of shared space, storage, stairs, and later incorporation of additional space?

4. Parking

The current ordinance requires two additional off-street spaces. The draft proposes one dedicated ADU space plus replacement of required primary-dwelling parking eliminated by construction. Is this approach appropriate?

5. Owner Occupancy

The current ordinance requires owner occupancy and a notarized affidavit. The draft removes the ongoing owner-occupancy requirement. Does the Commission support the proposed approach in light of the new state statute?

7. Density and Rural-District Treatment

Does the proposed language adequately distinguish an ADU from a separate principal dwelling, particularly in A-1 and C-1 and in relation to Section 16-1-5?

8. Additional Administrative Standards

Does the Commission want staff to develop permit procedures, application materials, or other administrative provisions authorized by Virginia Code § 15.2-2292.4 for consideration with the ordinance amendment?

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Requested Direction

Staff requests Planning Commission discussion and direction on the proposed ADU definition, permitted zoning districts, floor-area limits, parking, owner occupancy, manufactured homes, density treatment, and any additional revisions the Commission would like incorporated before the amendment advances to public hearing.

Work Session Materials

- Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 2026-005 (June 9, 2026)
- Virginia Code § 15.2-2292.4 (effective July 1, 2027)
- Greene County Zoning Ordinance - Existing ADU Provisions / Redline Extract
- ADU Draft Changes - Proposed Article 22 Replacement (September 28, 2026)