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PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Revision

Current Ordinance and Proposed Changes | November 18, 2026

VIRGINIA CODE FRAMEWORK

Virginia Code Change

Virginia Code § 15.2-2292.4 becomes effective July 1, 2027 and establishes an ADU framework for covered localities. Subsection I says it does not apply to a locality that adopted an ADU ordinance before January 1, 2026. Greene's ADU definition bears a July 23, 2013 revision date.

For covered localities, single-family residential districts are deemed to allow ADUs as a permitted accessory use, with only the requirements authorized by the statute.

- The statute addresses floor-area limits, parking, code compliance, limited owner occupancy at application, location, and separate sale or subdivision. It also restricts certain setback, lot, street-improvement, and family-relationship requirements.
- Va. Code § 15.2-2290 governing manufactured housing is a separate current requirement. The proposed manufactured-home provision needs review under that section.

The proposed ordinance is a policy update informed by state law. The draft retains alternatives for Planning Commission discussion and is not a final recommendation.

EXISTING ORDINANCE AND PROPOSED REVISION

Existing Greene County ADU Provisions

The current Article 22 definition establishes the following principal standards:

- Express by-right districts: A-1, C-1 and R-1. R-2 imports most R-1 uses, but Article 22 does not name R-2; SR and PUD are not expressly listed.
- Size: 300 to 800 square feet; maximum of two bedrooms.
- Two additional off-street parking spaces and continuing owner occupancy of one unit, verified by notarized affidavit.
- One ADU per parcel, within the primary dwelling or a conforming accessory structure; mobile or manufactured homes are excluded.

Current and Proposed Comparison

During the September 2026 work session, the Planning Commission reviewed Greene County's existing accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations and discussed potential amendments intended to provide greater flexibility for property owners while maintaining appropriate development standards.

The following topics and options were presented for Planning Commission consideration and guidance:

- **Cooking facilities:** What appliance makes a unit an ADU.
- **Owner occupancy:** Whether the owner must live in either dwelling.
- **ADU floor area:** A 200-square-foot minimum and alternative maximum sizes for attached and detached ADUs.
- **Floor-area calculation:** How to count shared rooms, basement space, garages, storage, stairs, and later conversions.
- **Bedrooms:** Whether to restore the two-bedroom limit.
- **Parking:** Whether detached ADUs need two spaces instead of one.
- **Density:** Whether an ADU counts toward density, lot-area, division-right, or principal-unit allocations.
- **Existing approvals:** How ADUs interact with proffers, approved unit caps, PUD plans, and SR age restrictions.
- **Section 16-1-5 dwellings:** How to distinguish an ADU from an additional principal dwelling authorized in A-1 or C-1.

The middle column summarizes the current ordinance. The right column describes the base working draft and identifies alternatives where the PC Options document has not settled a single approach.

Topic	Current ordinance	Proposed draft and options
Definition and cooking	Separate unit in the house or accessory building, with kitchen, sleeping and bathroom facilities.	Attached or detached unit with complete independent facilities. Cooking requires a permanently installed appliance; portable countertop appliances do not qualify.
Owner occupancy	Owner occupies one unit as permanent legal residence; affidavit and absence limit.	Base A removes continuing owner occupancy and bars separate sale/subdivision. A-1 retains owner occupancy; A-2 keeps the base draft.
Zoning districts	A-1, C-1 and R-1 expressly; R-2 cross-reference unclear; SR/PUD not named.	Paragraph C expressly adds R-2, SR and PUD for lots with an existing or proposed single-family dwelling. Companion district amendments remain to be drafted.
Density and rural dwelling	No express ADU density exclusion or relationship to §16-1-5 additional rural dwelling.	E excludes ADUs from principal-unit density, minimum lot area per dwelling, division rights and unit allocations; H distinguishes an ADU from a §16-1-5 principal dwelling. Proffers and approved conditions remain subject to review.
Number and configuration	One per parcel; within the primary dwelling or conforming accessory structure.	One per parcel (with §16-1-5 reference); within, attached to, or detached from primary dwelling, subject to code compliance.
Size and bedrooms	300–800 sq. ft.; maximum two bedrooms.	Base: 200–1,500 sq. ft., no bedroom cap. Options: 800 detached / 1,500 attached or interior; or 50% of primary dwelling area. Separate option restores two-bedroom limit.
Floor-area measurement	No detailed rule for shared, unfinished or accessory space.	J counts residential space serving the ADU even if shared or outside its drawn boundary; excludes qualifying principal-only and nonresidential accessory areas; requires dimensioned plans and review of later changes.
Parking	Two additional off-street spaces.	Base K: one dedicated ADU space plus replacement of displaced required parking. K-1: two for detached, one for attached or interior.
Manufactured homes	Mobile or manufactured homes cannot be used as ADUs.	O allows a qualifying manufactured home as a detached ADU under the same zoning standards as a site-built detached ADU, subject to state and building requirements.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following choices are open in the working draft. Staff requests direction so that a single clean ordinance amendment can be prepared.

1. Definition and cooking facilities. Review the permanent-appliance test with the Building Official. The proposed definition includes a freestanding range in a designated kitchen location, while excluding portable countertop appliances.

2. Minimum and maximum floor area. Choose the 200–1,500-square-foot base draft, the 800-square-foot detached and 1,500-square-foot attached/interior option, or a maximum of 50% of the primary dwelling area. The options should not be combined without clarifying how the limits interact.

3. Floor-area measurement and bedrooms. Confirm Paragraph J's treatment of shared laundry, bathrooms, circulation, recreation space, basement and unfinished storage, and later conversions. Decide whether to reinstate the two-bedroom maximum; coordinate with the Building Official and Health Department.

4. Parking. Choose one dedicated space for every ADU or two for a detached ADU and one for an attached/interior ADU. Both alternatives replace any required primary-dwelling parking displaced by construction.

5. Owner occupancy and rental term. Choose whether to retain continuing owner occupancy or remove it. The working draft does not add a rental-term or tourist-lodging restriction; either would require express language if desired.

6. Density, existing approvals and age restrictions. The proposed density exception is intended to allow ADUs even in built-out communities, while SR occupancy percentages still count occupied ADUs. Confirm treatment of site-specific proffers, approved PUD plans and special use permit conditions. Paragraph E cannot by itself establish how every prior unit cap applies.

7. Districts and remaining drafting. Confirm R-2, SR and PUD inclusion and prepare companion use-list and dimensional amendments. Clarify Paragraph F's reference to §16-1-5 principal dwellings. Review ADU permit procedures, cooking facilities, floor-area measurement and manufactured homes before public hearing.

Requested Direction

Staff recommends that the Commission identify a preferred floor-area standard, decide the owner-occupancy and bedroom questions, select a parking standard, and provide direction on cooking facilities and shared-space measurement.