



DATE: August 5, 2024

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

VIA: Stefan Chatwin, City Manager
Marlene Subhashini, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Sofia Mangalam, Community Development Director
Helen Gannon, Senior Planner

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE GREEN AND LIVABLE ACCESSIBLE DWELLING UNIT RESOURCE (GLADUR) PRE-REVIEWED DESIGNS FOR DETACHED ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs) PREPARED BY THE HOUSING ENDOWMENT AND REGIONAL TRUST OF SAN MATEO COUNTY (HEART) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING ELEMENT PROGRAM H-D-4-c, "PREAPPROVED ADU/JADU DESIGNS AND EXPEDITED REVIEW," AND FIND THE PRE-REVIEWED DESIGNS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (SCH NUMBER 2022010509) PREPARED FOR THE FOSTER CITY HOUSING AND SAFETY ELEMENTS UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council, adopt a resolution (Attachment 1) adopting the Green and Livable Accessible Dwelling Unit Resource (GLADUR) pre-reviewed designs for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) prepared by the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust of San Mateo County (HEART) for the implementation of the Housing Element program H-D-4-c, "Preapproved ADU/JADU Designs and Expedited Review," and find the pre-reviewed designs within the scope of the Environmental Impact Report (SCH Number 2022010509) prepared for Foster City Housing and Safety Elements Update.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City's Housing Element 2023-31 includes program H-D-4-c: Preapproved ADU/JADU Designs and Expedited Review, which requires the city to adopt preapproved ADU/JADU designs/plans to streamline the review process, facilitate reduced applicant cost and expedited review for ADUs and Junior ADUs (JADUs). The timeline for implementation of the program is by December 2024.

On [June 6, 2024](#), the Planning Commission reviewed the pre-reviewed designs, and, through Resolution No. P-10-24, recommended that the City Council approve the GLADUR pre-reviewed designs for detached ADUs prepared by HEART.

Staff recommends that the city adopt the GLADUR pre-reviewed designs for detached ADUs by HEART to implement the Housing Element program H-D-4-c and comply with state law.

BACKGROUND

An ADU is an attached or detached residential dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary residence. ADUs are also commonly known as in-law, granny units, or second units.

The City's Housing Element 2023-31 includes ten programs under H-D-4 aimed at encouraging and promoting ADUs/JADUs. These programs encompass promotion and public information, financial incentives, preapproved designs, amnesty, objective design standards, monitoring, and more.

Staff would like to note the difference between GLADUR pre-reviewed designs and provisions of Assembly Bill (AB) 1332. AB 1332 requires local agencies to develop a program for the preapproval of ADU plans. This program requires local agencies to accept ADU plan submissions for preapproval and to approve or deny these applications. To streamline the ADU permitting process, the bill stipulates that local agencies either approve or deny applications for detached ADUs using preapproved plans within 30 days. There is a separate agenda item for Council's consideration for ADU compliance with AB 1332.

ANALYSIS

On March 20, 2024, the City of Foster City's [2023-2031 Housing Element Update](#) was adopted. Housing Element Implementation program H-D-4-c "Preapproved ADU/JADU Designs and Expedited Review," requires the city to adopt preapproved ADU/JADU designs and plans to streamline the review process, reduce applicant costs, and expedite review for ADUs/JADUs by December 2024.

On [May 16, 2024](#), staff provided a report to the Planning Commission on Housing Element programs for implementation for the year 2024, including H-D-4-c Preapproved ADU/JADU Designs and Expedited Review.

AB 1332 requires local jurisdictions to establish a program for the preapproval of ADU plans. This bill added section 65852.27 to the Government Code to require local agencies to develop a program for the preapproval of ADU plans by January 1, 2025. As part of that program, a local agency must accept ADU plans submitted for preapproval by an applicant and can review those plans pursuant to the standards established in Government Code section 65852.2. A local agency can also proactively develop and preapprove plans as part of the program for use by anyone who wants to construct an accessory dwelling unit. When an applicant proposes to build an ADU using any of these preapproved plans, the city must either approve or deny the application for preapproval of the ADU plan within 30 days.

Currently, HEART is the only entity in the County of San Mateo that offers pre-reviewed designs for ADUs. While the Housing Element program H-D-4-c includes JADUs, HEART does not currently provide pre-reviewed plans for JADUs. To date, five (5) jurisdictions- South San Francisco, Daly City, Belmont, Redwood City, and East Palo Alto-have partnered with HEART for GLADUR pre-reviewed designs.

HEART OVERVIEW

HEART is a non-profit corporation founded in 2003 to create and preserve affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families throughout San Mateo County by providing access to first-time homebuyer loans, developer loans, housing consulting services, and designs for ADUs. HEART is funded through a JPA with cities in San Mateo County, including the City of Foster City, as dues-paying members. In addition, HEART actively pursues grants and donations for its programs. HEART's ADU design program, GLADUR, was funded through a \$296,000 grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. HEART hired an architectural firm to prepare energy-efficient, all-electric detached ADU designs that can be downloaded by the public at no cost. In addition, HEART partners with jurisdictions to provide pre-reviewed plans to expedite the building permit approval process.

GLADUR currently offers four (4) schematic detached ADU designs, including:

- 400-SF studio;

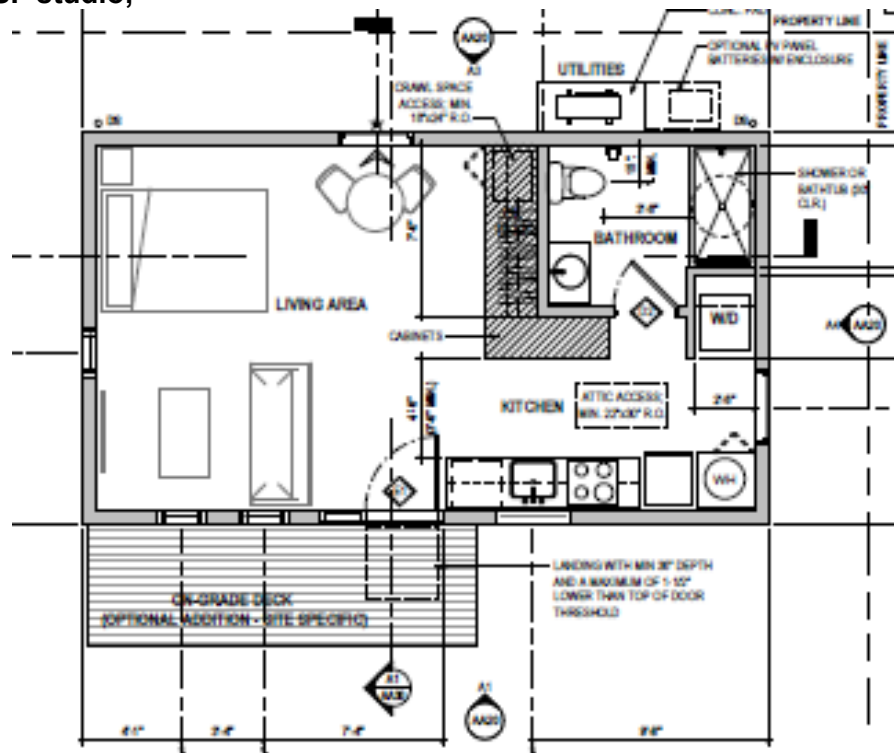


Figure 1: Studio ADU Floor Plan (HEART GLADUR Plans Sheet AA11)

- 575-SF 1-bedroom unit, rectangular footprint;

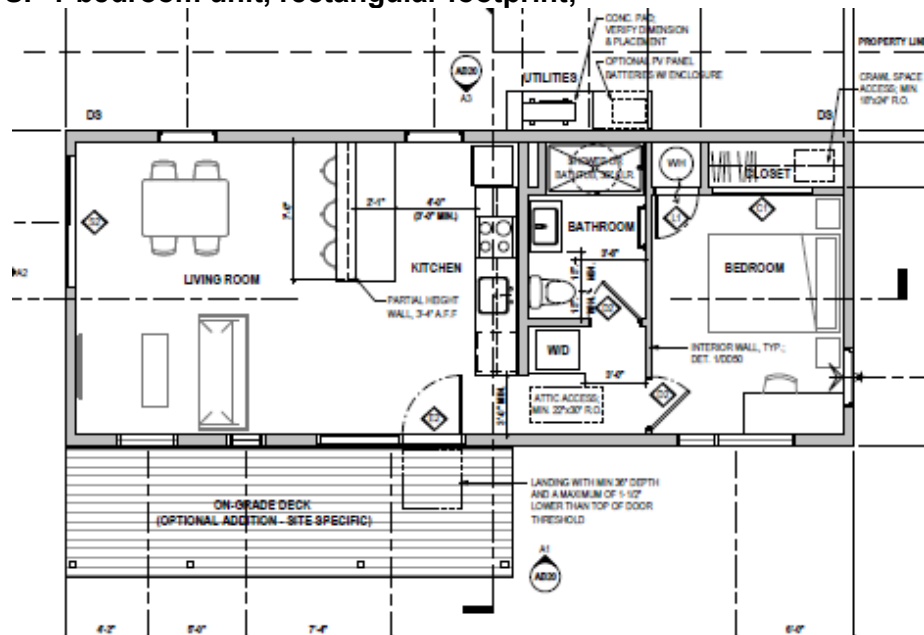


Figure 2: 1-bedroom ADU Floor Plan (HEART GLADUR Plans Sheet AB11)

- 745-SF 1-bedroom unit, square footprint; and

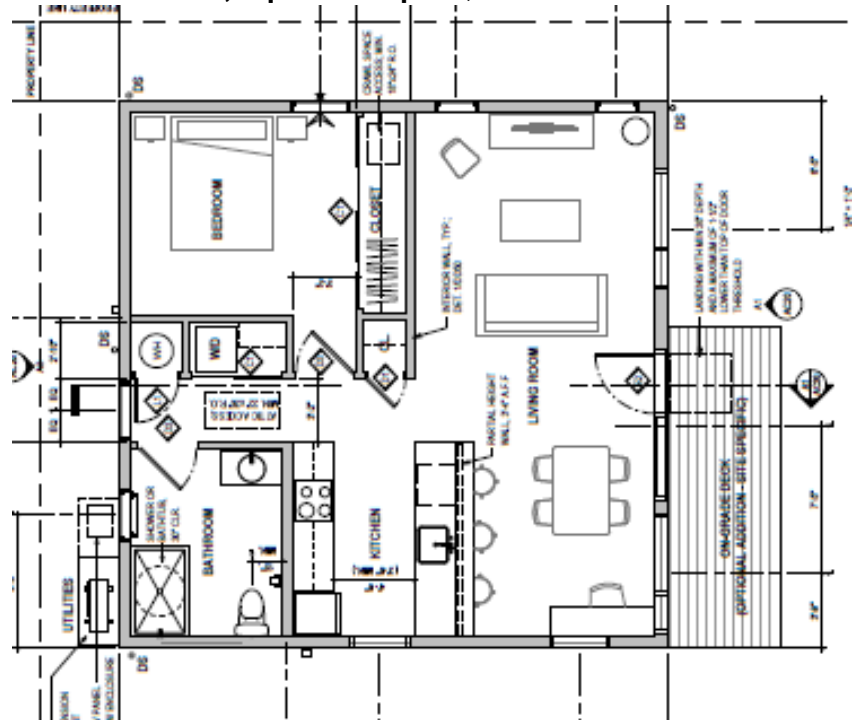


Figure 3: 1-bedroom ADU Floor Plan (HEART GLADUR Plans Sheet AC11)

- 800-SF 2-bedroom unit.

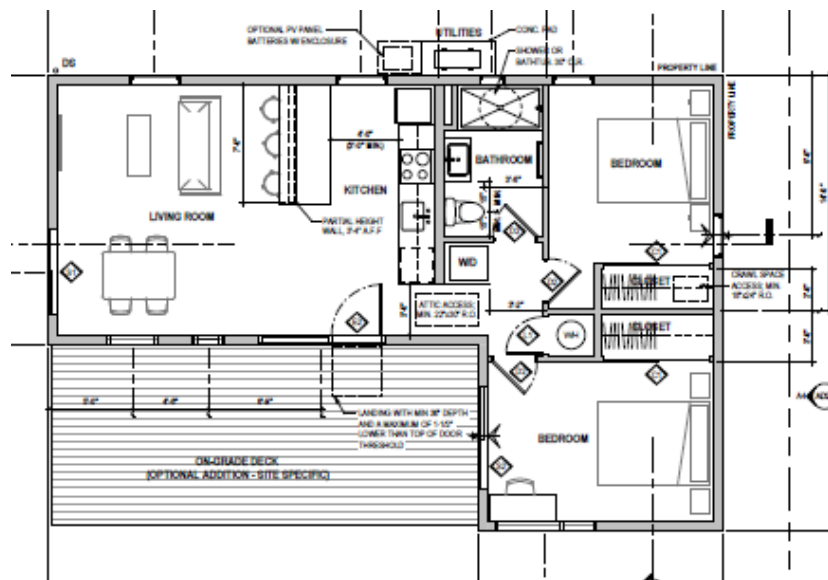


Figure 4: 2-bedroom ADU Floor Plan (HEART GLADUR Plans Sheet AD11)

For reference, the full set of plans for the 575 SF one-bedroom ADU can be viewed [here](#). The full sets of plans of all four schematic designs can be downloaded and viewed on the [HEART ADU Center webpage](#).

Property owners have the option to choose from any of the four (4) designs by simply inputting some basic, personal information and downloading the plans, which include roof plans, floor plans, building elevations, sections, lighting/electrical, mechanical/plumbing, doors and window schedule, and various structural details and choices of exterior finishes. By offering four (4) different floor plans, the GLADUR plans provide choices and diversity to accommodate a variety of household sizes and types. The two (2) smaller designs are compact and can fit on a variety of residential lot shapes and sizes within Foster City. In addition, all designs are consistent with the State of California's building codes and meet or exceed Title 24 energy code requirements. HEART intends to provide additional design options in the future based on demand and funding opportunities.



Figure 5: Renderings for ADUs (HEART ADU Center – Main Page)

Each design also includes multiple architectural styles (post-war, craftsman, and modern) and aesthetic variations to fit the homeowner's ADU style preferences. This customization also allows the new ADU to better fit the existing aesthetic of the primary structure and neighborhood. The designs provide an assortment of green feature options that allow the homeowner to customize their ADU to reach a variety of levels of sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

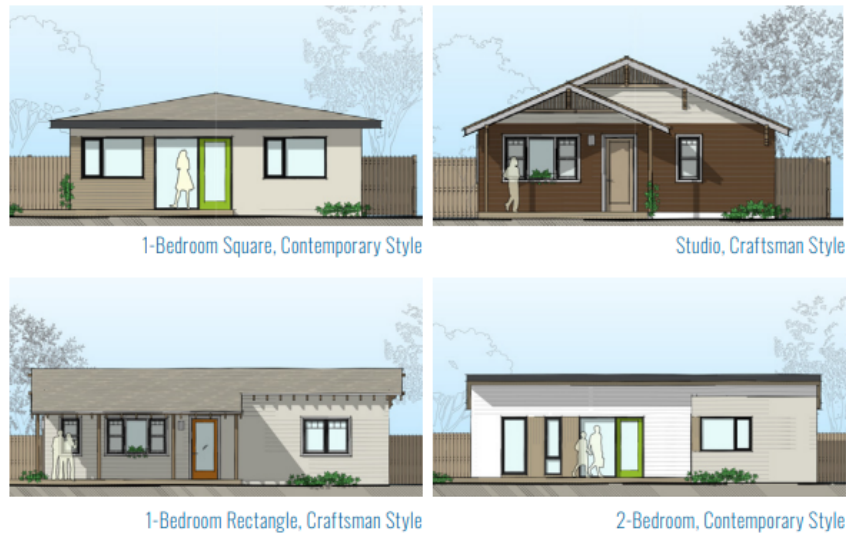


Figure 6: Style Elevations ([HEART-GLADUR ADU Handbook](#))

All five (5) listed jurisdictions that have adopted pre-reviewed ADU designs, have provided a list of additional site-specific information that is required for their respective building permit submittal. These requirements, which can be found on the [GLADUR pre-review webpage](#), assist in streamlining the ADU building permit approval process for property owners. At a minimum, and because city requirements differ by jurisdiction, all five (5) jurisdictions require property owners to prepare a site plan to ensure that the project is in an eligible zoning area, meets applicable city zoning codes, and that the site is suitable for the GLADUR designs.

The GLADUR designs are provided at no cost to the City, and HEART prioritizes partnering with jurisdictions in San Mateo County.

GLADUR PRE-REVIEWED DESIGN ADVANTAGES

There are many benefits for property owners who choose to use pre-reviewed ADU designs, such as:

- Design Certainty/Code Compliance: Know that the selected ADU design complies with the California Building Code and Citywide design guidelines.
- Expedited Review: Pre-reviewed plans will have a quick turnaround time as they have been reviewed previously by the City.
- Cost Savings: Avoid high costs of hiring an architect/designer to design an ADU.
- Options of sizes: GLADUR designs offers four (4) schematics detached ADU designs of varying sizes, ranging from 400 SF to 800 SF.

GLADUR PRE-REVIEWED DESIGN OVERVIEW

To develop Foster City's checklist requirements for GLADUR pre-reviewed ADU designs, staff met with the Building Division, Public Works Department, Police Department, and San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department during the City's IDEC meetings on February

28, 2024, and May 8, 2024. During these meetings, city staff jointly reviewed the GLADUR designs and prepared checklist requirements.

A list of Foster City's proposed requirements is included in Attachment 2 to this staff report.

Staff also contacted the five other participating jurisdictions to understand any challenges related to the implementation of pre-reviewed GLADUR designs. Redwood City staff noted that they have processed two (2) applications for ADUs using GLADUR pre-reviewed designs. Staff was also able to speak with Daly City, South San Francisco, East Palo Alto, and Belmont. None of the four cities have received any GLADUR pre-reviewed design applications at this time.

The objective of pre-reviewed designs is to eliminate the time typically spent on reviewing ADU plan submissions during the plan check process, thereby streamlining the process for property owners opting to use GLADUR designs.

The process for a property owner/applicant who chooses to use the pre-reviewed GLADUR designs would consist of:

1. The first step in building an ADU is for homeowners to gather pertinent information, including property zoning, lot size, lot coverage, and/or parking, to ascertain what is allowed to be built.
2. It is essential for homeowners to get an estimate of all the costs. Homeowners can use San Mateo County's Second Unit Resources Center, which has a free [ADU Calculator](#).
3. Applicant/property owner selects the GLADUR schematic design that fits their needs.
4. Applicant/property owner works with professionals/vendors to prepare and incorporate the project and site-specific information into the construction documents as required for submittal to the Building Division.
5. Applicant/property owner submits complete building permit package, inclusive of all requested materials found in Attachment 2.
6. City reviews permit submittal, denies or approves within 30 days.
7. City issues approved building permit for construction of ADU.
8. City conducts inspections until all the work authorized by the permit and all the required inspections have been completed.
9. In accordance with Government Code section 65852.27, the City shall post preapproved ADU plans and the contact information of the applicant on the City's website.

PLANNING COMMISSION

On [June 6, 2024](#), staff presented the GLADUR pre-reviewed designs to the Planning Commission. The Commissioners sought clarification that property owners would retain the option to design their own ADU designs and would not be limited to the GLADUR pre-reviewed designs. Staff confirmed that this Program offers another option for those who

may not have the resources to design their own detached ADU. Staff also noted that the property owners still have the flexibility to hire their own architect/designer and submit plans to the City that have not been pre-reviewed.

The Commission voted 5-0-0 vote to adopt Resolution No. P-10-24 (Attachment 3) recommending that the City Council adopt GLADUR pre-reviewed designs for detached ADUs.

ADUs and Zoning Districts

It shall be noted that ADUs/JADUs are allowed in zoning districts where residential uses are permitted (with or without a planned development combining district), including R-1 Single-Family Residence District, R-2 Two-Family Residence District, R-T Townhouse Residence District, R-3 Medium Density Multiple-Family Residence District, R-4 High Density Multiple-Family Residence District, and C-M Commercial Mix District. In addition, ADUs are also allowed in the P-F Public Facilities District. Upon approval from the City Council, these pre-reviewed plans can be used in all the noted zoning districts unless otherwise directed.

Annual Progress Report (APR)

California Government Code 65400 requires each jurisdiction to prepare an annual report on the status of the General Plan progress and provide information regarding the implementation of the General Plan for their city or county, including the Housing Element. The APR includes information for decision-makers to assess how the General Plan was implemented during the 12-month reporting period. Local jurisdictions must demonstrate compliance with state law by ensuring that the programs included in the Housing Element are implemented in a timely manner.

Therefore, it is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution to approve the Green and Livable Accessible Dwelling Unit Resource (GLADUR) pre-reviewed designs for detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs). This action supports the Housing Element program H-D-4-c, "Preapproved ADU/JADU Designs and Expedited Review," and is within the scope of the Environmental Impact Report (SCH Number 2022010509) prepared for the Foster City Housing and Safety Elements Update. This action would be included in the next APR submitted to the State.

In a separate staff report for the August 5 Council meeting, staff is also recommending including amendment to section *17.78.090 Permit Process*, of Chapter 17.78 Accessory Dwelling Unit in conformance with AB 1332. The section includes language that the City shall, by resolution, adopt a program for preapproval of ADU designs which may be amended from time to time. In addition, the City shall approve or deny the applications within 30 days.

Difference between Pre-approval Design Program per AB 1332 and GLADUR Pre-Reviewed Designs

- AB 1332 provisions provide a tool to the designers to submit construction documents for review to be part of Foster City's Pre-Approved ADU Design Program.

AB 1332 program has two (2) parts:

1. Pre-approval, which is for designers to submit their plans; and
2. Reusing the plans (site specific) phase, which is for the homeowners.



Fig 1: AB 1332 provisions, a tool for designers to submit ADU designs

Source: [Technical Assistance for Local Housing by Association of Bay Area Governments](#)

- GLADUR Pre-Reviewed Designs, in response to the Housing Element Program H-D-4-c, provides for four (4) schematics detached ADU designs for homeowners to download at no cost, which is phase 2 of AB 1332 (see above).

An alternative to GLADUR Pre-Reviewed Designs would have been the City hiring a designer to develop ADU plans, but keeping in mind the time and cost constraints, staff is recommending using GLADUR Pre-Reviewed Designs.

Upon approval from the City Council, HEART of SMC will add Foster City to the list of "Current jurisdictions that have pre-reviewed the GLADUR designs" and include Foster City's building permit submittal requirements on the GLADUR pre-review webpage. In addition, staff will post information regarding GLADUR designs on [City's ADU webpage](#).

California Environmental Quality Act

The City of Foster City, as the Lead Agency, certified the EIR (SCH Number 2022010509) for the City of Foster City Housing Element and Safety Element Updates on May 22, 2023, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines. The Program is included in the Housing Element with a timeframe of implementation by December 2024 and was contemplated in the certified EIR, therefore no further environmental review is necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with City Council adoption of the GLADUR pre-reviewed ADU program.

CITY COUNCIL VISION, MISSION, AND VALUE/PRIORITY AREA

Smart Planning, Development, and the Local Economy

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Resolution

Attachment 2 – City Department Checklist Requirements

Attachment 3 – Planning Commission Resolution No. P-10-24