

Resolution to Advise Ann Arbor City Council on Environmental Issues of Concern with Accessory Dwelling Units

Description: Ann Arbor City Council is considering modification of the existing zoning ordinance regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in areas zoned for single family homes in the city. Discussion of zoning changes must include assessment of the attendant increases in impervious surfaces and of construction activities on existing trees and storm water runoff.

Sponsor: Rita Mitchell

Title

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Body

Whereas, the currently proposed ADU ordinance stipulates that side and rear setbacks for a newly constructed detached ADU are both 3 feet from the property line;

Whereas, backyard trees tend to be located along the side and rear property lines in areas where they do not impinge on the main building envelope;

Whereas, construction that takes place nearby side and rear property lines may have a detrimental impact on the tree canopy by either total removal of trees or by compaction of root systems during construction, which may cause trees to die;

Whereas, the 2014 Urban Forestry Management Plan set a goal of increasing tree canopy in residential areas of the city from 37%, measured in 2014, to 60% in 2044;

Whereas, the A2Zero Version 3.0, Strategy 6, Enhance the Resilience of our People and Our Place, Action 3, Preserve and Enhance the Local Tree Canopy, includes updating the master plan to incentivize shade tree and vegetation planting for private projects, by planting 10,000 trees on private property and 10,000 trees in parks and along streets, by 2030;

Whereas, allowing or incentivizing the removal of trees conflicts with the goals of A2Zero, which recognizes the role of trees in carbon sequestration and storm water mitigation, and aims to increase our tree canopy, not decrease it;

Whereas, an increase in impermeable surface area will increase storm water runoff and have a negative impact on storm water management;

RESOLVED that the required setback from the side and rear property lines for the construction of new free-standing ADUs (not attached to the main house) be a minimum of 5 feet and 15 feet, respectively.

Sponsored by: Commissioner Rita Mitchell

Date: May 27, 2021