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LC005367

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

Introduced By: Representatives Ackerman, and Shekarchi

Date Introduced: March 07, 2022

Referred To: House Municipal Government & Housing

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 45-24-31 and 45-24-37 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-24  
2 entitled "Zoning Ordinances" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **45-24-31. Definitions.**

4 Where words or terms used in this chapter are defined in § 45-22.2-4 or 45-23-32, they  
5 have the meanings stated in that section. In addition, the following words have the following  
6 meanings. Additional words and phrases may be used in developing local ordinances under this  
7 chapter; however, the words and phrases defined in this section are controlling in all local  
8 ordinances created under this chapter:

9 (1) Abutter. One whose property abuts, that is, adjoins at a border, boundary, or point with  
10 no intervening land.

11 (2) ~~Accessory dwelling unit. A dwelling unit: (i) Rented to and occupied either by one or~~  
12 ~~more members of the family of the occupant or occupants of the principal residence; or (ii)~~  
13 ~~Reserved for rental occupancy by a person or a family where the principal residence is owner~~  
14 ~~occupied and that meets the following provisions:~~

15 (A) ~~In zoning districts that allow residential uses, no more than one accessory dwelling unit~~  
16 ~~may be an accessory to a single family dwelling.~~

17 (B) ~~An accessory dwelling unit shall include separate cooking and sanitary facilities, with~~  
18 ~~its own legal means of ingress and egress, and is a complete, separate dwelling unit. The accessory~~  
19 ~~dwelling unit shall be within, or attached to, the principal dwelling unit structure or within an~~

1 ~~existing structure, such as a garage or barn, and designed so that the appearance of the principal~~  
2 ~~structure remains that of a one-family residence.~~ Accessory dwelling unit (ADU). A residential  
3 living unit on the same parcel where the primary use is a legally established single-unit or multi-  
4 unit dwelling. An ADU provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons. It  
5 may take various forms including, but not limited to: a detached unit; a unit that is part of an  
6 accessory structure, such as a detached garage; or a unit that is part of an expanded or remodeled  
7 primary dwelling.

8 (3) Accessory use. A use of land or of a building, or portion thereof, customarily incidental  
9 and subordinate to the principal use of the land or building. An accessory use may be restricted to  
10 the same lot as the principal use. An accessory use shall not be permitted without the principal use  
11 to which it is related.

12 (4) Aggrieved party. An aggrieved party, for purposes of this chapter, shall be:

13 (i) Any person, or persons, or entity, or entities, who or that can demonstrate that his, her,  
14 or its property will be injured by a decision of any officer or agency responsible for administering  
15 the zoning ordinance of a city or town; or

16 (ii) Anyone requiring notice pursuant to this chapter.

17 (5) Agricultural land. "Agricultural land," as defined in § 45-22.2-4.

18 (6) Airport hazard area. "Airport hazard area," as defined in § 1-3-2.

19 (7) Applicant. An owner, or authorized agent of the owner, submitting an application or  
20 appealing an action of any official, board, or agency.

21 (8) Application. The completed form, or forms, and all accompanying documents, exhibits,  
22 and fees required of an applicant by an approving authority for development review, approval, or  
23 permitting purposes.

24 (9) Buffer. Land that is maintained in either a natural or landscaped state, and is used to  
25 screen or mitigate the impacts of development on surrounding areas, properties, or rights-of-way.

26 (10) Building. Any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or  
27 occupancy.

28 (11) Building envelope. The three-dimensional space within which a structure is permitted  
29 to be built on a lot and that is defined by regulations governing building setbacks, maximum height,  
30 and bulk; by other regulations; or by any combination thereof.

31 (12) Building height. For a vacant parcel of land, building height shall be measured from  
32 the average, existing-grade elevation where the foundation of the structure is proposed. For an  
33 existing structure, building height shall be measured from average grade taken from the outermost  
34 four (4) corners of the existing foundation. In all cases, building height shall be measured to the top

1 of the highest point of the existing or proposed roof or structure. This distance shall exclude spires,  
2 chimneys, flag poles, and the like. For any property or structure located in a special flood hazard  
3 area, as shown on the official FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), or depicted on the  
4 Rhode Island coastal resources management council (CRMC) suggested design elevation three foot  
5 (3') sea level rise (CRMC SDE 3 SLR) map as being inundated during a one-hundred-year (100)  
6 storm, the greater of the following amounts, expressed in feet, shall be excluded from the building  
7 height calculation:

8 (i) The base flood elevation on the FEMA FIRM plus up to five feet (5') of any utilized or  
9 proposed freeboard, less the average existing grade elevation; or

10 (ii) The suggested design elevation as depicted on the CRMC SDE 3 SLR map during a  
11 one-hundred-year (100) storm, less the average existing grade elevation. CRMC shall reevaluate  
12 the appropriate suggested design elevation map for the exclusion every ten (10) years, or as  
13 otherwise necessary.

14 (13) Cluster. A site-planning technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on the  
15 site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and/or preservation  
16 of environmentally, historically, culturally, or other sensitive features and/or structures. The  
17 techniques used to concentrate buildings shall be specified in the ordinance and may include, but  
18 are not limited to, reduction in lot areas, setback requirements, and/or bulk requirements, with the  
19 resultant open land being devoted by deed restrictions for one or more uses. Under cluster  
20 development, there is no increase in the number of lots that would be permitted under conventional  
21 development except where ordinance provisions include incentive bonuses for certain types or  
22 conditions of development.

23 (14) Common ownership. Either:

24 (i) Ownership by one or more individuals or entities in any form of ownership of two (2)  
25 or more contiguous lots; or

26 (ii) Ownership by any association (ownership may also include a municipality) of one or  
27 more lots under specific development techniques.

28 (15) Community residence. A home or residential facility where children and/or adults  
29 reside in a family setting and may or may not receive supervised care. This does not include halfway  
30 houses or substance-use-disorder-treatment facilities. This does include, but is not limited to, the  
31 following:

32 (i) Whenever six (6) or fewer children or adults with intellectual and/or developmental  
33 disability reside in any type of residence in the community, as licensed by the state pursuant to  
34 chapter 24 of title 40.1. All requirements pertaining to local zoning are waived for these community

1 residences;

2 (ii) A group home providing care or supervision, or both, to not more than eight (8) persons  
3 with disabilities, and licensed by the state pursuant to chapter 24 of title 40.1;

4 (iii) A residence for children providing care or supervision, or both, to not more than eight  
5 (8) children, including those of the caregiver, and licensed by the state pursuant to chapter 72.1 of  
6 title 42;

7 (iv) A community transitional residence providing care or assistance, or both, to no more  
8 than six (6) unrelated persons or no more than three (3) families, not to exceed a total of eight (8)  
9 persons, requiring temporary financial assistance, and/or to persons who are victims of crimes,  
10 abuse, or neglect, and who are expected to reside in that residence not less than sixty (60) days nor  
11 more than two (2) years. Residents will have access to, and use of, all common areas, including  
12 eating areas and living rooms, and will receive appropriate social services for the purpose of  
13 fostering independence, self-sufficiency, and eventual transition to a permanent living situation.

14 (16) Comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan adopted and approved pursuant to  
15 chapter 22.2 of this title and to which any zoning adopted pursuant to this chapter shall be in  
16 compliance.

17 (17) Day care -- Daycare center. Any other daycare center that is not a family daycare  
18 home.

19 (18) Day care -- Family daycare home. Any home, other than the individual's home, in  
20 which day care in lieu of parental care or supervision is offered at the same time to six (6) or less  
21 individuals who are not relatives of the caregiver, but may not contain more than a total of eight  
22 (8) individuals receiving day care.

23 (19) Density, residential. The number of dwelling units per unit of land.

24 (20) Development. The construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration,  
25 relocation, or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill, or land disturbance;  
26 or any change in use, or alteration or extension of the use, of land.

27 (21) Development plan review. The process whereby authorized, local officials review the  
28 site plans, maps, and other documentation of a development to determine the compliance with the  
29 stated purposes and standards of the ordinance.

30 (22) District. See "zoning-use district."

31 (23) Drainage system. A system for the removal of water from land by drains, grading, or  
32 other appropriate means. These techniques may include runoff controls to minimize erosion and  
33 sedimentation during and after construction or development; the means for preserving surface and  
34 groundwaters; and the prevention and/or alleviation of flooding.

1 (24) Dwelling unit. A structure, or portion of a structure, providing complete, independent  
2 living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating,  
3 cooking, and sanitation, and containing a separate means of ingress and egress.

4 (25) Extractive industry. The extraction of minerals, including: solids, such as coal and  
5 ores; liquids, such as crude petroleum; and gases, such as natural gases. The term also includes  
6 quarrying; well operation; milling, such as crushing, screening, washing, and flotation; and other  
7 preparation customarily done at the extraction site or as a part of the extractive activity.

8 (26) Family member. A person, or persons, related by blood, marriage, or other legal  
9 means, including, but not limited to, a child, parent, spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law,  
10 grandparents, grandchildren, domestic partner, sibling, care recipient, or member of the household.

11 (27) Floating zone. An unmapped zoning district adopted within the ordinance that is  
12 established on the zoning map only when an application for development, meeting the zone  
13 requirements, is approved.

14 (28) Floodplains, or Flood hazard area. As defined in § 45-22.2-4.

15 (29) Freeboard. A factor of safety expressed in feet above the base flood elevation of a  
16 flood hazard area for purposes of floodplain management. Freeboard compensates for the many  
17 unknown factors that could contribute to flood heights, such as wave action, bridge openings, and  
18 the hydrological effect of urbanization of the watershed.

19 (30) Groundwater. "Groundwater" and associated terms, as defined in § 46-13.1-3.

20 (31) Halfway house. A residential facility for adults or children who have been  
21 institutionalized for criminal conduct and who require a group setting to facilitate the transition to  
22 a functional member of society.

23 (32) Hardship. See § 45-24-41.

24 (33) Historic district or historic site. As defined in § 45-22.2-4.

25 (34) Home occupation. Any activity customarily carried out for gain by a resident,  
26 conducted as an accessory use in the resident's dwelling unit.

27 (35) Household. One or more persons living together in a single-dwelling unit, with  
28 common access to, and common use of, all living and eating areas and all areas and facilities for  
29 the preparation and storage of food within the dwelling unit. The term "household unit" is  
30 synonymous with the term "dwelling unit" for determining the number of units allowed within any  
31 structure on any lot in a zoning district. An individual household shall consist of any one of the  
32 following:

33 (i) A family, which may also include servants and employees living with the family; or

34 (ii) A person or group of unrelated persons living together. The maximum number may be

1 set by local ordinance, but this maximum shall not be less than three (3).

2 (36) Incentive zoning. The process whereby the local authority may grant additional  
3 development capacity in exchange for the developer's provision of a public benefit or amenity as  
4 specified in local ordinances.

5 (37) Infrastructure. Facilities and services needed to sustain residential, commercial,  
6 industrial, institutional, and other activities.

7 (38) Land-development project. A project in which one or more lots, tracts, or parcels of  
8 land are developed or redeveloped as a coordinated site for one or more uses, units, or structures,  
9 including, but not limited to, planned development or cluster development for residential,  
10 commercial, institutional, recreational, open space, or mixed uses as provided in the zoning  
11 ordinance.

12 (39) Lot. Either:

13 (i) The basic development unit for determination of lot area, depth, and other dimensional  
14 regulations; or

15 (ii) A parcel of land whose boundaries have been established by some legal instrument,  
16 such as a recorded deed or recorded map, and that is recognized as a separate legal entity for  
17 purposes of transfer of title.

18 (40) Lot area. The total area within the boundaries of a lot, excluding any street right-of-  
19 way, usually reported in acres or square feet.

20 (41) Lot area, minimum. The smallest land area established by the local zoning ordinance  
21 upon which a use, building, or structure may be located in a particular zoning district.

22 (42) Lot building coverage. That portion of the lot that is, or may be, covered by buildings  
23 and accessory buildings.

24 (43) Lot depth. The distance measured from the front lot line to the rear lot line. For lots  
25 where the front and rear lot lines are not parallel, the lot depth is an average of the depth.

26 (44) Lot frontage. That portion of a lot abutting a street. A zoning ordinance shall specify  
27 how noncontiguous frontage will be considered with regard to minimum frontage requirements.

28 (45) Lot line. A line of record, bounding a lot, that divides one lot from another lot or from  
29 a public or private street or any other public or private space and shall include:

30 (i) Front: the lot line separating a lot from a street right-of-way. A zoning ordinance shall  
31 specify the method to be used to determine the front lot line on lots fronting on more than one  
32 street, for example, corner and through lots;

33 (ii) Rear: the lot line opposite and most distant from the front lot line, or in the case of  
34 triangular or otherwise irregularly shaped lots, an assumed line at least ten feet (10') in length

1 entirely within the lot, parallel to and at a maximum distance from, the front lot line; and

2 (iii) Side: any lot line other than a front or rear lot line. On a corner lot, a side lot line may  
3 be a street lot line, depending on requirements of the local zoning ordinance.

4 (46) Lot size, minimum. Shall have the same meaning as "minimum lot area" defined  
5 herein.

6 (47) Lot, through. A lot that fronts upon two (2) parallel streets, or that fronts upon two (2)  
7 streets that do not intersect at the boundaries of the lot.

8 (48) Lot width. The horizontal distance between the side lines of a lot measured at right  
9 angles to its depth along a straight line parallel to the front lot line at the minimum front setback  
10 line.

11 (49) Mere inconvenience. See § 45-24-41.

12 (50) Mixed use. A mixture of land uses within a single development, building, or tract.

13 (51) Modification. Permission granted and administered by the zoning enforcement officer  
14 of the city or town, and pursuant to the provisions of this chapter to grant a dimensional variance  
15 other than lot area requirements from the zoning ordinance to a limited degree as determined by  
16 the zoning ordinance of the city or town, but not to exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of each of  
17 the applicable dimensional requirements.

18 (52) Nonconformance. A building, structure, or parcel of land, or use thereof, lawfully  
19 existing at the time of the adoption or amendment of a zoning ordinance and not in conformity with  
20 the provisions of that ordinance or amendment. Nonconformance is of only two (2) types:

21 (i) Nonconforming by use: a lawfully established use of land, building, or structure that is  
22 not a permitted use in that zoning district. A building or structure containing more dwelling units  
23 than are permitted by the use regulations of a zoning ordinance is nonconformity by use; or

24 (ii) Nonconforming by dimension: a building, structure, or parcel of land not in compliance  
25 with the dimensional regulations of the zoning ordinance. Dimensional regulations include all  
26 regulations of the zoning ordinance, other than those pertaining to the permitted uses. A building  
27 or structure containing more dwelling units than are permitted by the use regulations of a zoning  
28 ordinance is nonconforming by use; a building or structure containing a permitted number of  
29 dwelling units by the use regulations of the zoning ordinance, but not meeting the lot area per  
30 dwelling unit regulations, is nonconforming by dimension.

31 (53) Overlay district. A district established in a zoning ordinance that is superimposed on  
32 one or more districts or parts of districts. The standards and requirements associated with an overlay  
33 district may be more or less restrictive than those in the underlying districts consistent with other  
34 applicable state and federal laws.

1 (54) Performance standards. A set of criteria or limits relating to elements that a particular  
2 use or process must either meet or may not exceed.

3 (55) Permitted use. A use by right that is specifically authorized in a particular zoning  
4 district.

5 (56) Planned development. A "land-development project," as defined in subsection (38),  
6 and developed according to plan as a single entity and containing one or more structures or uses  
7 with appurtenant common areas.

8 (57) Plant agriculture. The growing of plants for food or fiber, to sell or consume.

9 (58) Preapplication conference. A review meeting of a proposed development held between  
10 applicants and reviewing agencies as permitted by law and municipal ordinance, before formal  
11 submission of an application for a permit or for development approval.

12 (59) Setback line or lines. A line, or lines, parallel to a lot line at the minimum distance of  
13 the required setback for the zoning district in which the lot is located that establishes the area within  
14 which the principal structure must be erected or placed.

15 (60) Site plan. The development plan for one or more lots on which is shown the existing  
16 and/or the proposed conditions of the lot.

17 (61) Slope of land. The grade, pitch, rise, or incline of the topographic landform or surface  
18 of the ground.

19 (62) Special use. A regulated use that is permitted pursuant to the special-use permit issued  
20 by the authorized governmental entity, pursuant to § 45-24-42. Formerly referred to as a special  
21 exception.

22 (63) Structure. A combination of materials to form a construction for use, occupancy, or  
23 ornamentation, whether installed on, above, or below the surface of land or water.

24 (64) Substandard lot of record. Any lot lawfully existing at the time of adoption or  
25 amendment of a zoning ordinance and not in conformance with the dimensional or area provisions  
26 of that ordinance.

27 (65) Use. The purpose or activity for which land or buildings are designed, arranged, or  
28 intended, or for which land or buildings are occupied or maintained.

29 (66) Variance. Permission to depart from the literal requirements of a zoning ordinance.  
30 An authorization for the construction or maintenance of a building or structure, or for the  
31 establishment or maintenance of a use of land, that is prohibited by a zoning ordinance. There are  
32 only two (2) categories of variance, a use variance or a dimensional variance.

33 (i) Use variance. Permission to depart from the use requirements of a zoning ordinance  
34 where the applicant for the requested variance has shown by evidence upon the record that the



1 subject land or structure cannot yield any beneficial use if it is to conform to the provisions of the  
2 zoning ordinance.

3 (ii) Dimensional variance. Permission to depart from the dimensional requirements of a  
4 zoning ordinance, where the applicant for the requested relief has shown, by evidence upon the  
5 record, that there is no other reasonable alternative way to enjoy a legally permitted beneficial use  
6 of the subject property unless granted the requested relief from the dimensional regulations.  
7 However, the fact that a use may be more profitable or that a structure may be more valuable after  
8 the relief is granted are not grounds for relief.

9 (67) Waters. As defined in § 46-12-1(23).

10 (68) Wetland, coastal. As defined in § 45-22.2-4.

11 (69) Wetland, freshwater. As defined in § 2-1-20.

12 (70) Zoning certificate. A document signed by the zoning-enforcement officer, as required  
13 in the zoning ordinance, that acknowledges that a use, structure, building, or lot either complies  
14 with, or is legally nonconforming to, the provisions of the municipal zoning ordinance or is an  
15 authorized variance or modification therefrom.

16 (71) Zoning map. The map, or maps, that are a part of the zoning ordinance and that  
17 delineate the boundaries of all mapped zoning districts within the physical boundary of the city or  
18 town.

19 (72) Zoning ordinance. An ordinance enacted by the legislative body of the city or town  
20 pursuant to this chapter and in the manner providing for the adoption of ordinances in the city or  
21 town's legislative or home rule charter, if any, that establish regulations and standards relating to  
22 the nature and extent of uses of land and structures; that is consistent with the comprehensive plan  
23 of the city or town as defined in chapter 22.2 of this title; that includes a zoning map; and that  
24 complies with the provisions of this chapter.

25 (73) Zoning-use district. The basic unit in zoning, either mapped or unmapped, to which a  
26 uniform set of regulations applies, or a uniform set of regulations for a specified use. Zoning-use  
27 districts include, but are not limited to: agricultural, commercial, industrial, institutional, open  
28 space, and residential. Each district may include sub-districts. Districts may be combined.

29 **45-24-37. General provisions -- Permitted uses.**

30 (a) The zoning ordinance shall provide a listing of all land uses and/or performance  
31 standards for uses that are permitted within the zoning use districts of the municipality.

32 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the following uses are permitted  
33 uses within all residential zoning use districts of a municipality and all industrial and commercial  
34 zoning use districts except where residential use is prohibited for public health or safety reasons:

- 1 (1) Households;
- 2 (2) Community residences; and
- 3 (3) Family daycare homes.

4 (c) Any time a building or other structure used for residential purposes, or a portion of a  
5 building containing residential units, is rendered uninhabitable by virtue of a casualty such as fire  
6 or flood, the owner of the property is allowed to park, temporarily, mobile and manufactured home,  
7 or homes, as the need may be, elsewhere upon the land, for use and occupancy of the former  
8 occupants for a period of up to twelve (12) months, or until the building or structure is rehabilitated  
9 and otherwise made fit for occupancy. The property owner, or a properly designated agent of the  
10 owner, is only allowed to cause the mobile and manufactured home, or homes, to remain  
11 temporarily upon the land by making timely application to the local building official for the  
12 purposes of obtaining the necessary permits to repair or rebuild the structure.

13 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, appropriate access for people with  
14 disabilities to residential structures is allowed as a reasonable accommodation for any person(s)  
15 residing, or intending to reside, in the residential structure.

16 (e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, an accessory family dwelling unit  
17 in an owner-occupied, single-family residence shall be permitted as a reasonable accommodation  
18 for family members with disabilities or who are sixty-two (62) years of age or older, or to  
19 accommodate other family members. The appearance of the structure shall remain that of a single-  
20 family residence and there shall be an internal means of egress between the principal unit and the  
21 accessory family dwelling unit. If possible, no additional exterior entrances should be added. Where  
22 additional entrance is required, placement should generally be in the rear or side of the structure.  
23 When the structure is serviced by an individual sewage disposal system, the applicant shall have  
24 the existing or any new system approved by the department of environmental management. The  
25 zoning enforcement officer shall require that a declaration of the accessory family dwelling unit for  
26 the family member, or members, and its restrictions be recorded in the land evidence records and  
27 filed with the zoning enforcement officer and the building official. Once the family members with  
28 disabilities or who are sixty-two (62) years of age or older, or any other family member, no longer  
29 reside(s) in the premises on a permanent basis, or the title is transferred, the property owner shall  
30 notify the zoning official in writing, **and but** the accessory family dwelling unit shall ~~no longer~~  
31 continue to be permitted, ~~unless there is a subsequent, valid application.~~

32 (f) When used in this section the terms "people with disabilities" or "member, or members,  
33 with disabilities" means a person(s) who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially  
34 limits one or more major life activities, as defined in § 42-87-1(7).

1 (g) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, plant agriculture is a permitted  
2 use within all zoning districts of a municipality, including all industrial and commercial zoning  
3 districts, except where prohibited for public health or safety reasons or the protection of wildlife  
4 habitat.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 45-24 of the General Laws entitled "Zoning Ordinances" are hereby  
6 amended by adding thereto the following sections:

7 **45-24-73. Consistent state wide treatment of accessory dwelling units required.**

8 (a) Any municipality which chooses to permit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) within the  
9 municipality, shall not impose any excessive restrictions as to the ADUs. More specifically, a  
10 municipality which permits ADUs shall not:

11 (1) Restrict tenants based on familial relationship or age unless such restriction is necessary  
12 to comply with the terms of a federal subsidy related to affordability;

13 (2) Charge unique or unreasonable application fees for the creation of an ADU;

14 (3) Require infrastructure improvements, including, but not limited to, separate water or  
15 sewer service lines or expanded septic system capacity, except as required under state law or  
16 regulation;

17 (4) Discriminate against populations protected under state and federal fair housing laws;

18 (5) Limit ADUs to owner-occupied properties;

19 (6) Impose unreasonable dimensional requirements on ADUs that effectively preclude their  
20 development or utilization;

21 (7) Require a larger minimum lot size for a property with an ADU over that required for a  
22 property without an ADU in the same zone;

23 (8) Require more than one parking space beyond what is already required for the primary  
24 use; or

25 (9) Limit ADUs to lots with pre-existing homes; provided, a municipality shall allow  
26 ADUs as part of applications for new primary dwelling units or subdivisions.

27 (b) To further enable the use of ADUs and to remove barriers to utilization, municipalities  
28 may allow ADUs in primary or accessory structures that are lawfully established pre-existing non-  
29 conforming through a special use permit and not require a variance, notwithstanding any provision  
30 of this chapter to the contrary that would require a variance.

31 (c) Private restrictions on ADUs imposed by condominium associations, homeowner  
32 associations, or similar residential property governing bodies, which conflict with the provisions  
33 of this section or the definition of an ADU as set forth in §45-24-31, shall be deemed a violation  
34 of state law and punishable by a civil fine of up to five hundred dollars (\$500) for each violation.

1 (d) The development of ADUs shall not be restricted by any locally adopted ordinance or  
2 policy that places a limit or moratorium on the development of residential units in land zoned for  
3 residential use.

4 **45-24-74. Additional zoning provisions for applications for accessory dwelling units.**

5 (a) Applications for ADUs that are not part of a larger development proposal shall be  
6 reviewed through an administrative officer or development plan review process. They shall not, by  
7 themselves, be reviewed as minor land development, major land development, or special use  
8 permits.

9 (b) ADUs shall be a permitted use in any residential district with a minimum lot size of  
10 twenty-thousand square feet (20,000 sq. ft.) or more, and where the proposed ADU does not expand  
11 the footprint of the primary dwelling unit.

12 (c) Municipalities may utilize a unified development review process for any application  
13 that includes ADUs, regardless of whether a city or town has opted into the current unified  
14 development review statute.

15 (d) As part of the approval process, municipalities may exempt ADUs from all or part of  
16 utility assessment and/or tie in fees

17 **45-24-75. Accessory dwelling units which may be counted towards low and moderate**  
18 **income housing.**

19 (a) Accessory dwelling units may be counted towards meeting a municipality's affordable  
20 housing goals pursuant to chapter 53 of title 45, and may be counted towards the ten percent (10%)  
21 of the year-round housing units reported in the census as required by §45-53-4, if the following  
22 conditions are met:

23 (1) The ADU is occupied by a household whose income does not exceed eighty percent  
24 (80%) of the area median income (AMI) as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and  
25 Urban Development.

26 (2) The cost of rent, heat, and utilities other than telephone in the unit shall not exceed  
27 thirty percent (30%) of the gross annual household income for a household with eighty percent  
28 (80%) or less of area median income, adjusted for family size as established by an approved  
29 monitoring agent.

30 (3) Documentation of eligibility required under this section shall be provided annually to  
31 Rhode Island housing in the form of a one-year lease and rent level certification by an approved  
32 monitoring agent.

33 (b) If an ADU is leased to a household with a publicly subsidized rental assistance voucher  
34 limiting income to no more than eighty percent (80%) of the AMI, documentation of eligibility

1 under this subsection shall be provided annually to Rhode Island housing in the form of a one-year  
2 lease and evidence of the public rental subsidy.

3 (c) ADUs serving eligible households as described in subsections (a) or (b) of this section  
4 shall be included in the next annual count of low and moderate income units following submittal  
5 of eligibility documentation to Rhode Island housing.

6 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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LC005367  
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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

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1           This act would revise and clarify the definition of an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in the  
2 zoning enabling act, and provide a consistent, statewide framework for the treatment of these units,  
3 while also removing barriers to utilization of these units. This act would also authorize a more  
4 streamlined process for the approval of ADUs. The act would further permit ADUs to be counted  
5 towards low and moderate income housing requirements, if certain income and other limitations  
6 are met.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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LC005367  
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