

Memo

To: Town of Century Town Council
From: Eric Christianson, Planner, Emerald Coast Regional Council
Cc: Dave Murzin, Town Manager; Carrie Moore, Town Clerk
Date: June 16, 2026
Re: Accessory Dwelling Unit Discussion Follow Up

Purpose

At the Council meeting on June 2, 2026, the Century Town Council reviewed the twelve policy questions in the May 19, 2026 memo prepared by ECRC staff regarding a revision to the Town's Accessory Apartment Ordinance. This memo summarizes the direction the Council provided on each question, identifies questions that require further discussion, and flags items that should be reviewed with the Town Attorney before drafting proceeds. A preliminary draft ordinance is included as an appendix to this memo.

Discussion Summary

Question 1 — Name and Definition

Council agreed by consensus to rename the ordinance from “Accessory Apartments” to “Accessory Dwelling Units.” Council noted that the term “accessory apartment” has been a source of confusion and frustration in the past.

Status: Direction received. Rename to “Accessory Dwelling Units”

Question 2 — Comprehensive Plan Consistency / Land Use Categories Permitted

Council discussed this question at length. The majority position appeared to be a preference to limit ADU development to Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential land use categories. These are

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the categories where the Comprehensive Plan currently most clearly supports this action. Council also expressed a desire to consult the Town Attorney before finalizing this decision. It should be noted that the Hilltop Rd property which prompted this discussion is located in the Rural Residential land use category.

Status: Preliminary direction toward LDR and MDR only, pending Town Attorney consultation. The Attorney's guidance may inform whether extending the ordinance to additional categories is defensible.

- **Option A:** Limit ADUs to Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential categories only. This is the most legally defensible choice. The Hilltop Road property would not be eligible.
- **Option B:** Include Rural Residential. This would make the Hilltop Road property eligible but carries greater legal uncertainty and may require a concurrent Comprehensive Plan amendment. *Note: Council may want to reconsider Mixed Use as well as many homes along N Century Blvd are in this category.*

Question 3 — Attached or Detached

Council was split on whether ADUs must be attached to the principal structure or whether separate detached structures should be permitted. No consensus was reached. Council agreed to return to this question at a future meeting.

Status: Requires further discussion.

Question 4 — Maximum Number Per Lot

After discussion, Council reached consensus that one ADU per lot would be the maximum permitted.

Status: Direction received. One ADU per lot.

Question 5 — Maximum Size

After significant discussion, Council compromised on a flat maximum of 700 square feet regardless of principal structure size. Council indicated it may wish to revisit this standard after the full draft ordinance is completed.

Status: Please confirm direction (1) 700 square feet flat maximum or (2) 75% of the size of the existing dwelling. We can revisit this when reviewing the draft ordinance.

Question 6 — Minimum Lot Size

After discussion, council agreed that ADUs should be permitted on conforming lots only. Legal nonconforming (“grandfathered”) lots would not qualify.

Status: Direction received. Conforming lots only.

Question 7 — Utility Connections

No strong consensus was reached. Council discussion identified several competing considerations: the Town would benefit financially from tap fees associated with separate utility connections, while separate connections raise the concern that ADUs would function as independent dwelling units inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan's density standards. One compromise discussed was requiring shared connections for attached ADUs and permitting separate connections for detached ADUs.

Section 42-48 of the Town's ordinances states:

"Each residential unit whether occupying one or more lots and whether it shall occupy any lot or parcel jointly with any other residential unit shall be considered a separate unit for the payment of the water fees and the sewage disposal fees, and separate connections and meters will be required for each of such units."

Requiring shared utilities in the ADU ordinance may conflict with Section 42-48 unless Section 42-48 is also amended. Second, Town staff has indicated that separate connections are preferred because they generate tap fee revenue with positive fiscal impact for the Town.

Status: Requires further discussion. Question 3 (attached vs. detached) decision will likely shape the utility connection answer.

Question 8 — Setbacks

Council directed staff to proceed with Option A from the previous memo: Standard 5-foot setbacks for attached ADUs and 10-foot side and rear setbacks for detached ADUs. One modification was proposed, setbacks should be measured from the roofline rather than from the wall of the structure.

Status: Direction received. Option A with roofline measurement.

Question 9 — Off-Street Parking

Council reached consensus that one off-street parking space in addition to parking for the main dwelling should be required. Council expressed concern about street parking occurring regardless of the requirement. Under Section 66-54 of the Town's code, street parking is permitted by default on residential roads with speed limits of 35 mph or less unless the Town has affirmatively prohibited it with signage. Street parking near ADUs cannot be restricted through the ADU ordinance itself. If the Council wishes to restrict parking on specific streets, that would require a separate action.

Status: Direction received. One dedicated off-street space required. Council may wish to discuss street parking further, but that is beyond the scope of this ordinance.

Question 10 — Design Standards

Council directed staff to remove design standards from the ordinance.

Status: Direction received. No design standards.

Question 11 — No Variance Provision

Council confirmed that the no variance provision should be retained.

Status: Direction received. No variance provision retained.

Question 12 — Purpose Statement

Council confirmed that the purpose statement should be revised to remove language referencing older households and elderly persons, replacing it with neutral language to address potential Fair Housing Act concerns.

Status: Direction received. Purpose statement to be revised.

Specific questions for further discussion with Town Attorney

On Question 2 (Comprehensive Plan Consistency): The Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential categories explicitly authorize accessory residential uses subject to LDC standards, making an ADU ordinance limited to these categories clearly consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Rural Residential category describes permitted development only as single-family detached homes on individual lots and does not contain equivalent language. The Mixed Use category, which covers a significant portion of the Town's land area including much of the Century Blvd Corridor, also lacks explicit accessory residential use language. Extending the ordinance to either of those categories may require a concurrent Comprehensive Plan amendment. The Council should receive the Attorney's advice on this question before staff proceeds with drafting.

On Question 7 (Separate or shared utility connections) Without a shared utility requirement, an ADU with independent connections could be considered functionally indistinguishable from a second dwelling unit. The Council should receive the Attorney's advice on whether permitting separate utility connections exposes the ordinance to a Comprehensive Plan consistency challenge.

On Question 8 (Setbacks) Roofline measurement is a new standard for the Town and should be reviewed to confirm it is workable given that it would be different from how the other setback standards in the Town's code are measured. It will effectively increase the functional setback beyond the stated distances for structures with roof overhangs. This higher standard may be justifiable given the potential for ADUs to have additional impacts on neighbors.

Next Steps

Once the remaining questions are resolved, ECRC will complete the draft ordinance attached to this memo. That ordinance will be sent to the Town Attorney for review and legal advice. ECRC will also develop an impact report summarizing how this ordinance change may affect the Town.

With both the attorney's advice and ECRC's impact report the Town Council will have another opportunity to comment and make changes before any adoption hearings.

Staff remains available to answer questions and to support the Council in moving this process forward.

ATTACHMENT: Draft Ordinance — Town of Century Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance

DRAFT — FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY — NOT FOR ADOPTION

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF CENTURY, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 90-81 OF THE TOWN'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO REVISE STANDARDS FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town of Century finds it in the public interest to provide additional housing options for residents while protecting neighborhood character and remaining consistent with the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town's existing Accessory Apartment Ordinance (Section 90-81) provides limited housing options and has been a source of confusion; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that revising Section 90-81 to allow Accessory Dwelling Units subject to clear objective standards is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CENTURY, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Amendment to Section 90-81

Section 90-81 of the Town of Century Land Development Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 90-81. Accessory Dwelling Units.

(a) Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to allow accessory dwelling units as an additional housing option within residential areas, supporting housing availability and multigenerational living arrangements while maintaining the character of residential neighborhoods.

(b) Definition. For purposes of this section, an accessory dwelling unit is a secondary residential unit located on the same lot as a principal single-family dwelling, providing self-contained living facilities including sleeping space and sanitary facilities.

(c) Applicability. [PENDING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION]

Accessory dwelling units may be permitted in the following land use categories, subject to the standards of this section:

- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- **[OPTION: Include Rural Residential (RR)]**
- **[OPTION: Include Mixed Use (MU)]**

(d) Standards. [PENDING ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION]

Accessory dwelling units may be allowed subject to all of the following requirements:

- (1) Principal Dwelling Required.** An accessory dwelling unit may only be established on a lot where a lawfully permitted principal residential structure already exists.
- (2) Number.** No more than one accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted on any residential lot.
- (3) Minimum Lot Size.** An accessory dwelling unit shall only be permitted on a lot that conforms to current minimum lot size requirements for the applicable land use district. Legal nonconforming lots shall not be eligible for an accessory dwelling unit.

(4) [PENDING COUNCIL DECISION]

OPTION A — Attached Only: The accessory dwelling unit shall be contained within or structurally attached to the principal structure.

OPTION B — Detached Permitted: A detached accessory dwelling unit may be permitted provided that a minimum separation distance of [] feet is maintained between the accessory dwelling unit and the principal structure. [Council to confirm minimum separation distance.]

- (5) Maximum Size.** An accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed the gross floor area of the principal structure. An accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 700 square feet of gross floor area. An accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed the height of the principal structure.

- (6) Setbacks.** Setbacks for accessory dwelling units shall be measured from the roofline of the structure to the property line.

- Attached accessory dwelling units: minimum 5-foot side and rear setbacks.
- Detached accessory dwelling units: minimum 10-foot side and rear setbacks.

All accessory dwelling units shall be located to the rear of the principal structure and shall not be located within the front yard.

(7) Utility Connections. [PENDING COUNCIL DECISION]

OPTION A — Shared Utilities Required: The accessory dwelling unit shall share water, sewer, and electrical connections with the principal structure. No separate utility accounts shall be permitted for an accessory dwelling unit.

OPTION B — Shared for Attached, Separate Permitted for Detached: Attached accessory dwelling units shall share water, sewer, and electrical connections with the principal structure. Detached accessory dwelling units may have separate utility connections subject to all applicable utility requirements and payment of applicable connection fees.

OPTION C — Separate Connections Permitted: Separate utility connections shall be permitted for accessory dwelling units subject to all applicable utility requirements and payment of applicable connection fees.

- (8) Off-Street Parking.** One off-street parking space shall be provided for the accessory dwelling unit in addition to the parking required for the principal dwelling. This space may be accommodated within an existing driveway provided the driveway is of sufficient size to serve both units without blocking access to the public right-of-way.

(e) No Variances. No variations, adjustments, or waivers to the requirements of this section shall be allowed in order to accommodate an accessory dwelling unit.

Section 2. Conflicts.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 3. Severability.

If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

Section 4. Effective Date.

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Century, Florida, on this _____ day of _____, 20____.

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