



City of Sumas Request for Council Action

Meeting Date: June 12, 2025

Subject:

Request for an ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) at 515 Mitchell Street,

Department: Planning Department

Prepared By: Michelle Quinn

Agenda Location:

☐ Public Hearing ☒ Old Business ☒ New Business ☐ Staff Reports

Brief Summary:

Mr. Vander Meulen is requesting to allow an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) at 515 Mitchell Street, with the condition no person will reside there until the City adopts an ADU ordinance.

The Report of Decision adopted on September 9, 2022, approved the two-story accessory structure; with a garage on the lower floor and an office with a half-bath on the second floor.

The Conditions of Approval #6 states the second floor shall not be used as a dwelling unit without written approval from the City.

Currently, the City does not allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Legal Review: ☐ Reviewed ☒ Not Reviewed ☐ Review Not Required

Staff Recommendation:

Staff is looking for councils' direction on how to proceed with this request.

Senior Staff Review:

- ☐ Mayor
- ☐ Finance Director
- ☒ City Clerk
- ☒ Public Works Director

Budget Implications:

- ☐ Current Budget
- ☐ New Budget Request
- ☒ Non-Budgetary

MAY 29 2025

CITY OF SUMAS

5-29-25

Dear Counsel Members

The purpose of this letter is to remedy and resolve issues with our 336 square foot detached garage with 336 square feet of space upstairs. When this plan was submitted, it was called out as home office. It had an office area, bathroom and a wet bar/coffee area. I also planned an area in the bathroom for a shower, planning for the future of an ADU.

This, in my opinion, was a reasonable game plan since most jurisdictions in Whatcom County had already adopted ADU ordinances. Unfortunately, Sumas has not yet adopted these ordinances, but from my understanding, it will be soon.

The current dilemma is the shower, which would technically make this an ADU, which the city has not yet adopted. In past conversations, this was discussed, and it was my understanding that I could put shower in as long as I wrote a letter to the city, stating that no one would reside in this upstairs area (home office/ future ADU) while I own this home, or future owners until the city officially adopted ADU ordinances and this building officially was an ADU.

We are finishing the upstairs of the garage. From a construction standpoint, to finish it without this shower, and then in the near future, when the ADU ordinances are adopted, demo sheetrock, install plumbing, install shower, re sheetrock, tape and mud, paint, seems unnecessary.

This brings us to where we are now. I feel that I have been honest about the intent of the upstairs of the garage from the beginning. From a construction standpoint and knowing that the city is mandated to adopt the ADU ordinances, I have installed this shower and am continuing on with finishing the upstairs.

Our site contains a single family residence, construction of an accessory structure is a permitted use in the residential, high density zoning district, according to item #6 of Finding of Facts, adopted September, 12,2022.

In conclusion, I ask the City to permit this as an ADU, with the condition that no person may reside in this unit, until which time the city officially has adopted the ADU ordinance.

Thank you



Tim Vander Meulen

515 Mitchell St.