

THE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT EXPERIENCE IN ARLINGTON

March 18, 2022
MFCOG Planning Directors
Technical Advisory Committee

RELATED HOUSING GOALS


ACCESSORY DWELLINGS IN ARLINGTON

- Provide an adequate supply of housing
- Help older adults age in place
- Provide a typically lower-priced housing alternative
- Enable homeowners to receive additional income

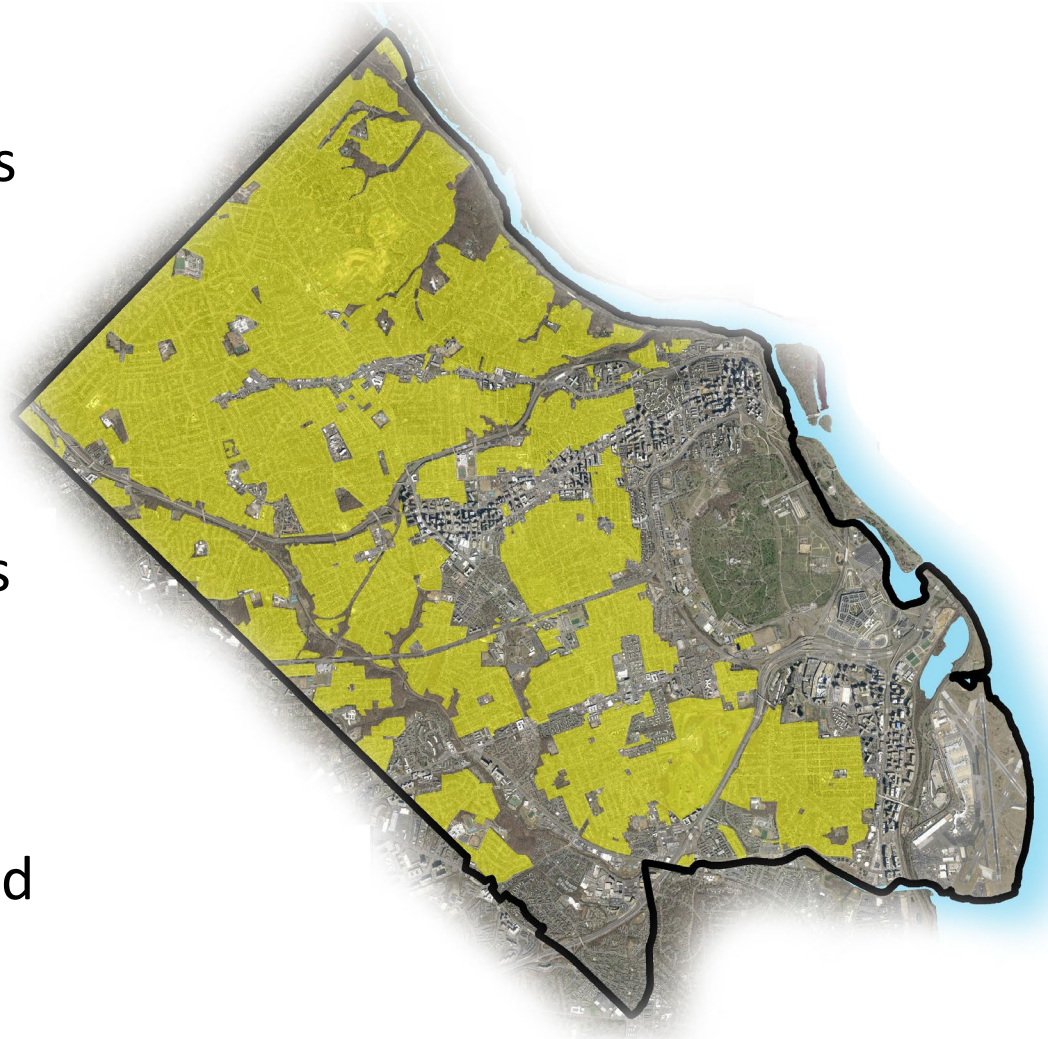


AREAS ELIGIBLE FOR ADs

Arlington, VA

 Low-Residential Areas
Comprise:

- 7,400 acres
- 45% of Arlington's land area
- 79% of residentially-zoned land



HISTORY OF COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS ON ADs

July 2008:

First standards for accessory dwellings (AD) enacted

Nov. 2017:

Comprehensive update to AD regulations; increases flexibility for ADs

Sept. 2015:

Affordable Housing Master Plan recommends review of AD regulations

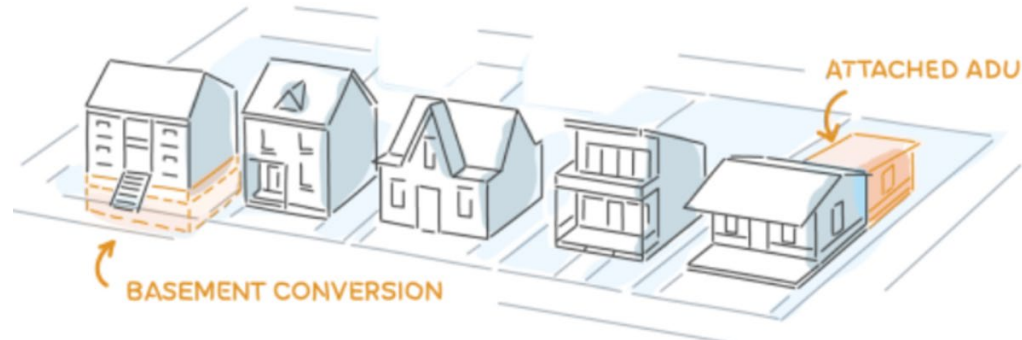
May 2019:

AD regulations permitted in new detached accessory dwellings

EVOLUTION OF AD_s IN ARLINGTON

2008 ACCESSORY DWELLING (AD) ORDINANCE TERMS

- Allowed Accessory Dwellings (AD) **within Single-Family Homes**
- AD is a completed independent dwelling unit, with kitchen and bath, occupied up to two persons, separate entrance
- **Very restrictive limits** on size (GFA), design, locations of entrances, prohibit exterior stairs
- No more than 28 ADs approved countywide annually
- Property owner must live in one of the units on-site
- Declaration of Covenants

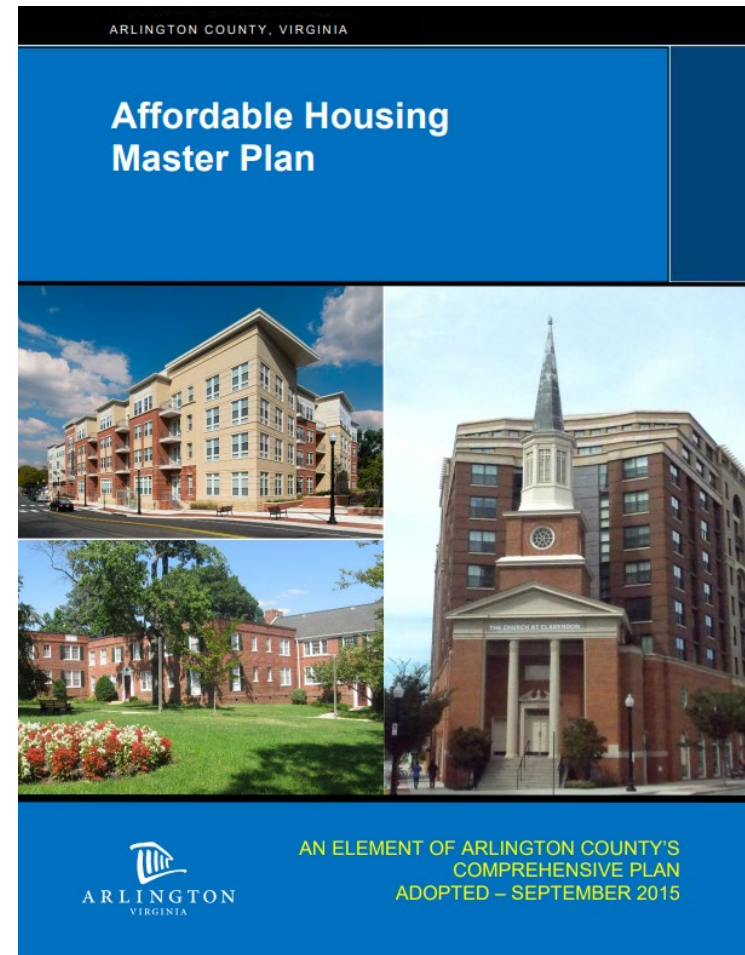


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EVOLUTION OF PERMISSIONS (AND POLICIES)

2015 AFFORDABLE HOUSING MASTER PLAN

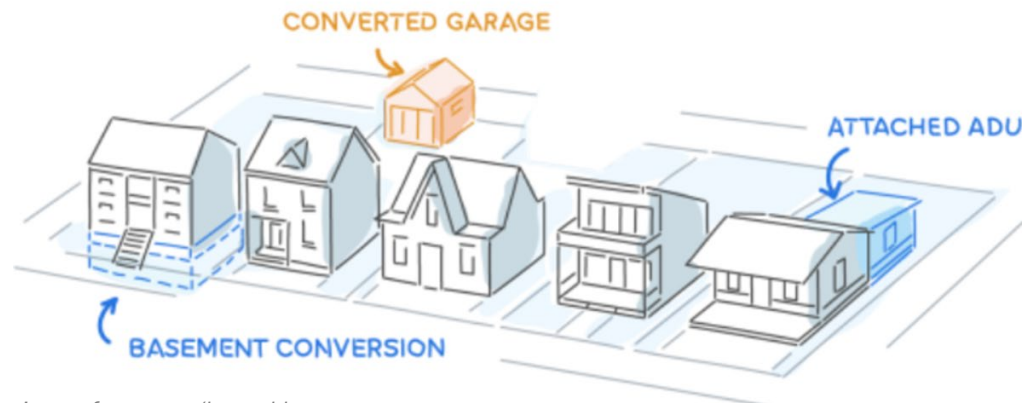
- Long Range Vision for Addressing Arlington's Housing Needs
- Emphasis on Expanding Diversity of Housing and Household Types in Low Residential Neighborhoods
- Recognized role of ADs as existing tool, and potential to revise AD regulations to encourage greater opportunities for ADs in Arlington



EVOLUTION OF AD_s IN ARLINGTON

2017 ACCESSORY DWELLING (AD) ORDINANCE UPDATES

- Expands ADs to existing, detached accessory buildings
- Removed prohibition against ADs on lots nonconforming to area/width
- Eliminates size limit of basement ADs; sets 750sf limit for detached Ads
- Sets maximum height of 25 feet (or 1.5 stories)
- More flexible locations for entrances and stairs
- Increases allowable occupancy from 2 to 3 persons
- Eliminates annual limit of 28 ADs countywide
- Allows accessory homestay

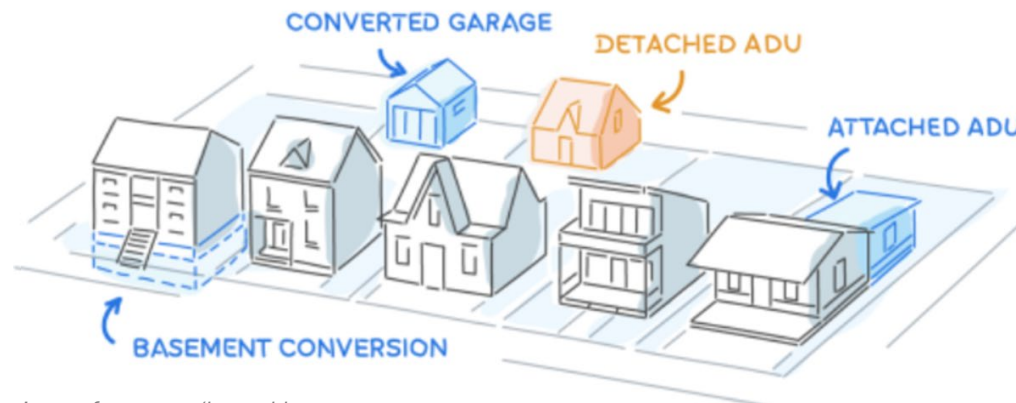


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EVOLUTION OF AD_s IN ARLINGTON

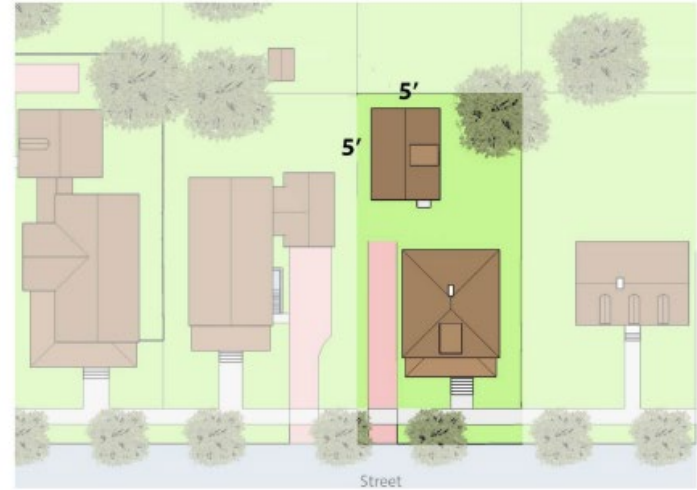
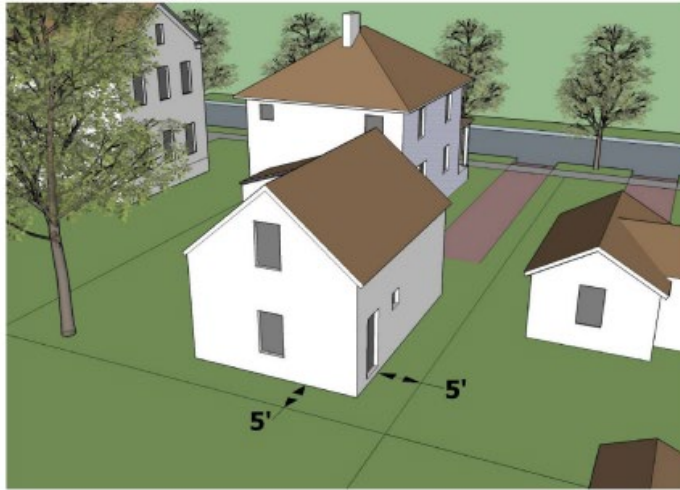
2019 ACCESSORY DWELLING (AD) ORDINANCE UPDATES

- Expands ADs to new, detached accessory buildings
- Setback of 5 feet for side and rear yards (10 feet rear SB on corner lots);
- Allows conversion of existing accessory structures even if non-conforming (but must meet GFA standard and limited to interior alterations only)
- Additional flexibility for exterior stairs for existing accessory buildings
- Clarify standards regarding non-conforming buildings and structures



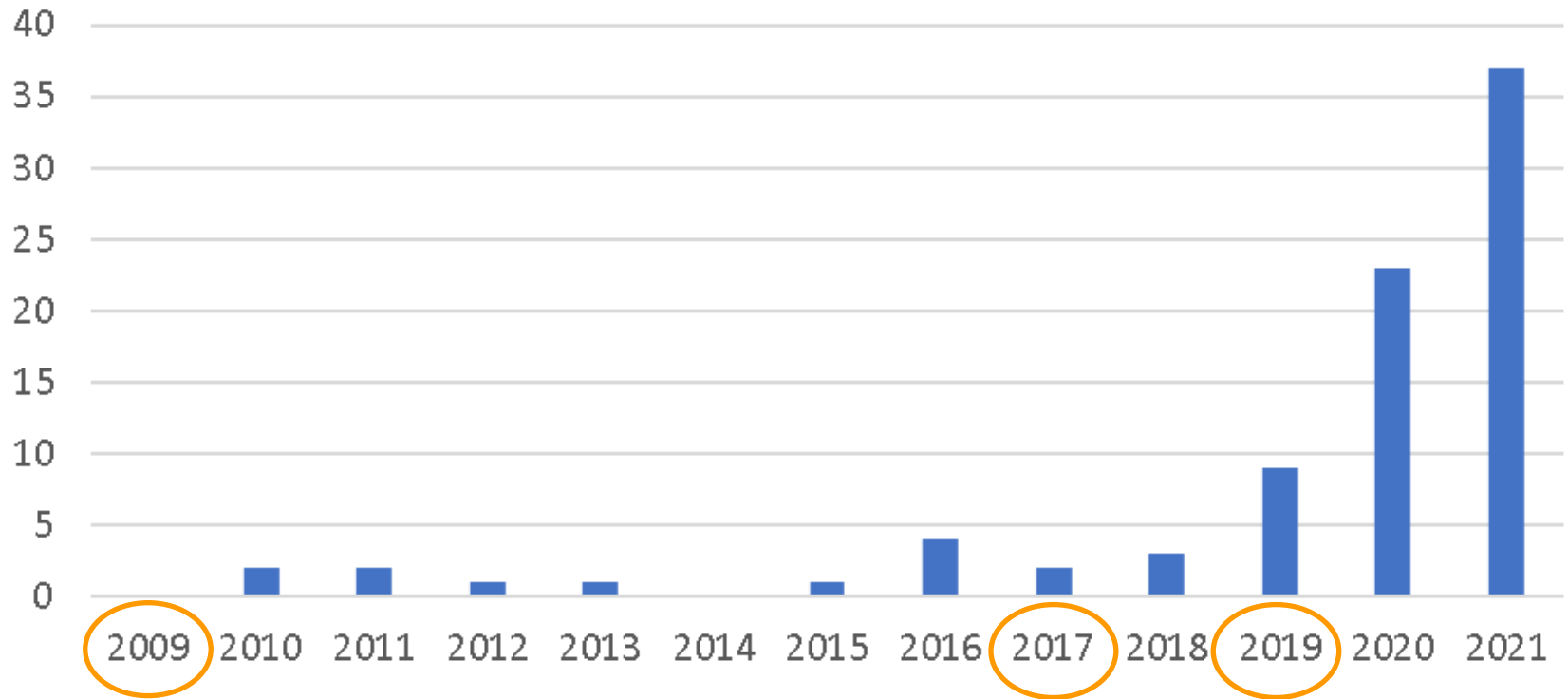
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2019 VISUALIZATION STUDIES FOR ZOA



ADs PERMITTED 2009-2021

Building Permits for Accessory Dwellings
Arlington, VA
2009-2021



ADs – A VISUAL SURVEY



ADs – A VISUAL SURVEY

2019



2021



ADs – A VISUAL SURVEY

2018



2021



ADs – A VISUAL SURVEY

2019



2021



ADs – FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- How well are ADs helping to meet Arlington’s housing goals?
 - Lower-priced housing option?
 - Additional income for owners of principal dwelling?
- Are certain parameters of AD regulations still too limiting ?
- Should the County play a larger role in incentivizing/supporting homeowners to build more ADs?
- How may our perspectives on AD rules evolve with/inform our planning/zoning work on Missing Middle Housing?



THANK YOU

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Photo Credit: David Hills