



Community Development Department

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Building Division

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Online Permit Portal Link: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/permits/>

PREAPPROVED PERMIT READY ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (PRADU)

PROCESS GUIDE

The Permit-Ready Accessory Dwelling Unit (PRADU) Program is envisioned to encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by offering property owners a selection of pre-approved PRADU building plans for detached ADUs. Designers and builders with building plans that are pre-approved by the City of Petaluma can offer their customers a streamlined, lower-cost, plan review, subject to any specific property or site considerations. The plans may include associated configuration options. The plans will clearly identify the level of scope for the plan. Pre-approved PRADU plans may be used in residential and mixed-use zoning districts with existing single-family, multi-family, or mixed-use residential units, and enable city staff to more quickly review a proposed project.

HOW DO I OBTAIN A PRADU PLAN APPROVAL?

There are state regulations on who may prepare building plans, and licensing and/or certification may be required. Please refer to this [handout](#) summarizing state law for plans preparation. It is advised that all building plans be prepared by an architect currently licensed in the State of California.

1. Prepare plans

Create ADU plans that are not site-specific and include architectural plans and structural drawings and calculations with the following information within the submittal package:

- Architectural Documentation: Comprehensive architectural plans, including floor plans elevations, sections and construction details.
- Structural Documentation: Detailed structural plans including the foundation, floor framing, roof framing, wall sections and elevations, structural details and structural load calculations (structural calcs).
- Truss Specification and Calculations: Detailed truss layout plans, and engineering calculations, for pre-manufactured trusses as necessary for the design.
- Foundation Design: For PRADUs, foundation design must be appropriate for the local soil conditions as identified in a soils investigation report. In cases where liquefaction, expansive clays or other unsuitable soils are present the design must accommodate these conditions. Designs that account for all soil conditions may be considered.
- Seismic Design requirements: Documentation of compliance with seismic design provisions, including detailing of structural connections and bracing as required by the California Building Code (CBC).

- Special Inspection and Testing requirements: Provide a statement of any special inspections or material testing that will be required during construction (for example soils, concrete, welding, or steel high strength bolting, epoxy and mechanical anchors, etc.).
- Tier 1 CalGreen compliance is required to be demonstrated on the [City form](#) and a local CalGreen inspector will verify construction compliance on the [City form](#).
- Energy Compliance Documentation: “Title 24”: Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the California Energy Code standards, as required.
- Fire sprinklers: Preapproved plans must include an automatic fire sprinkler system. A specific note should be placed on the plans that indicates for sites where the existing primary unit has no fire sprinklers, then fire sprinklers are not required for an ADU.
- Site Plan: A site-specific Site plan or a standardized site plan may be considered where all potential fire separation distance contingencies are described.

2. Schedule a preliminary pre-approved PRADU meeting

A preliminary meeting with city staff to discuss the proposed PRADU plan and the review process is required prior to submitting the plans for review. To schedule this meeting, email building@cityofpetaluma.org with the subject line stating, "Preliminary pre-approved PRADU plans meeting request."

Fees: Fees for review of plans for a preapproved PRADU plan will be waived.

3. Submit the plans

After the preliminary preapproved PRADU meeting, plans may be submitted online through the [Customer Self-Service \(CSS\) Portal](#), which requires prior registration. An accurate, complete submittal package is required. An incomplete submittal package will not be accepted, and additional reviews or several resubmittals may be required to achieve full compliance with all applicable code requirements.

Once submitted, plans will be routed and reviewed by Building, Planning, Fire Prevention, and the Public Works and Utilities staff. The estimated time necessary for City staff to complete plan review is approximately 15 business days or 30 calendar days per cycle review.

4. Get a listing on the City’s ADU and PRADU webpage

Upon approval of the plans, the preapproved PRADU concept drawings and a brief description of the size of the ADU will be posted on the [City’s ADU and PRADU webpage](#) along with the business name and contact information. The customer will contact the designer for permit ready copies of the construction documents.

5. Required updates to preapproved PRADU plans

Building, fire or zoning code updates affect plans. The preparer of the preapproved PRADU plans will need to refile a plan when the City or state adopts new building codes, building policies, zoning changes, or new Climate Action Plan ordinances or policies that are applicable to the PRADU plan. The city will notify the preparer of the plans if such changes take place. Plan revision fees will be assessed for the city to review and approve updated plans.

6. Removing a preapproved PRADU plan

If the preparer of preapproved PRADU plans wishes to have their plans removed from the city website, they may do so at any time by emailing building@cityofpetaluma.org. The City will remove the plans from the website within 30 days of receiving the request.

HOW DO I USE A PREAPPROVED PRADU PLAN?

Get informed: Before undertaking an ADU project, homeowners are encouraged to review the [ADU FAQ](#), applicable zoning regulations, Building and Fire Codes, and to consult with all reviewing city departments and divisions. This is important because ADU laws, and other related laws change frequently.

A homeowner should work with city staff to ensure that an ADU can be constructed on their site in the desired location and configuration. Specific site constraints may impact the allowable location and configuration of an ADU. It is important to understand if the project is subject to a planning permit, such as a coastal development permit, fire mitigation measures in the WUI, or other special circumstances that could affect plan preparation and permitting requirements. These requirements may also affect projects using a preapproved PRADU plan design due to varying project site conditions.

PRADU projects without changes to the pre-approved PRADU plan: For projects using a preapproved PRADU plan without any changes, a building permit application can be submitted through the [Customer Self-Service \(CSS\) Portal](#) with all required [forms and materials](#).

PRADU projects with modifications to a pre-approved PRADU plan: If the preapproved PRADU plan is modified, then the plan is required to be reviewed through the typical building permit review and approval process. This additional review may extend the processing time for the project.

Fees: When using a preapproved PRADU plan, plan review fees are currently waived except for permit fees and required state or regional fees, school or water district fees, and recording fees for a covenant as applicable, which is required. Any fees required can be identified when consulting with staff.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Building Division via e-mail at building@cityofpetaluma.org, or via telephone at 707-778-4301.