



Government Update



ADVOCACY

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Wicomico County ADUs

Number Allowed

Only one ADU per lot, parcel, or tract with a single-family detached dwelling. Density Rules

Size

Not to exceed 50% of the primary residence size.

Zones

A-1, V-C, R-8, R-15, R-20, R-30, TT

Parking

One space per bedroom

Other Provisions

Must comply with existing setback requirements

One entrance on the faced is permitted

Must be a harmonious design with the primary structure

ADUs cannot be added to a multi-family dwelling

This is silent on additional septic requirements for new ADU construction.



City of Salisbury ADUs

General Rules

ADUs are permitted on lots with an existing single-family detached dwelling.
Only one ADU per lot is allowed.
ADUs do not count toward density calculations.

Required Features

An ADU must contain complete living facilities, including:
Sleeping area
Cooking facilities
Eating area
Sanitation facilities

Location

An ADU may be:
Attached to the primary dwelling as an addition, or
Detached in a separate structure.
If attached, it must have a separate entrance.

Setbacks

The ADU must comply with the setback requirements of the underlying zoning district.

Owner Occupancy

Either:
The primary dwelling, or
The ADU
must be owner occupied.

Size Limitation

The ADU may not exceed 75% of the above-grade living area of the principal dwelling.

Height

Generally, an ADU cannot be taller than the principal dwelling.

Exception:

An ADU above a detached garage may extend one story higher than a one-story primary dwelling, provided the structure remains within the zoning district limit.



Worcester ADUs

The accessory apartment may be:

Inside the main house, or
In an accessory building (such as a detached garage conversion).
Manufactured homes and mobile homes do not qualify as accessory apartments.

Distance from Main Dwelling

If located in a detached accessory building:
The entire building must generally be within 100 feet of the principal dwelling.
Certain exceptions may allow greater distances outside Critical Areas.

Size Limits

The apartment must be:
At least 500 square feet.
No larger than 75% of the gross floor area of the principal dwelling.

Bedroom Limit

Maximum of 2 bedrooms.

Number Allowed

Only one accessory apartment per existing single-family dwelling.

Appearance

If the apartment is inside the main house:
The building must continue to appear as a single-family residence.

Parking

Additional off-street parking is required for the accessory apartment.

Subtitle ZS1:III: Supplementary Districts and District Regulations
§ ZS 1-338: Accessory apartments.
<https://ecode360.com/14021577>



Berlin ADUs

One ADU per residential lot in R-1 or R-2 zoning districts.

The ADU may be:

Attached to the house,
Created inside the house (such as a basement apartment),
Converted from an existing accessory structure (garage, workshop, etc.),
Built as a new detached structure.

Size Limits

Minimum: 350 sq. ft.
Maximum: 600 sq. ft. of livable space
Maximum: 1 bedroom
Maximum: 1 kitchen
Maximum: 1 toilet and 1 shower

Owner Occupancy

The owner must live on the property as their primary residence.

The owner may live in either:

The main house, or
The ADU.

If the owner does not live on the property:

The ADU cannot be rented to unrelated tenants.

Occupancy is generally limited to Immediate Family members unless a special exception is granted.

Detached ADU Requirements

Must be located in the rear yard.
Must remain visually subordinate to the main house.
Must meet accessory structure setback requirements.

Maximum height:

1½ stories, or 25 feet if built above a garage.



Wicomico County: Health Department Update

Wicomico County has been without a wet season since FY24, which has stalled many land sight evaluations. The Health Department monitors the county water levels regularly, but without reaching the threshold for a wet season, land sight evaluations are limited.

On April 17th, the County was granted permission from MDE to begin an “Alternative Testing Pilot”.

- Homeowners who have the oldest land sight evaluation permit applications will receive a letter in the mail to opt into this program.
- This alternative testing allows for soil and land evaluations outside the traditional wet season.
- Thus far, 24 homeowners have been contacted, with four land evaluations being completed.
- Homeowners are being reached out to by the Health Department, if you or someone you know has had a land evaluation application open for a prolonged period of time, they may be receiving notice from the Health Department about this program.

There are 177 open applications for septic replacements since FY23.



Links and Maps

[Most recent Health Department Permitting Data](#)

[Wicomico GIS Map Room](#)

Key Take Aways:

- Older applications may be eligible for the new Health Department testing program.
- Without a true wet season, land evaluations have stalled.
- With full staffing at the Health Department, the Department is confident in its ability to complete all open land evaluations during a regular wet season.
- The deadline for land evaluation applications is in early November.
- Only two holding tanks have been required in FY26.
- Most of the County's holding tanks are in the south west region of the County, where additional environmental regulations and higher water tables exist.

Tawes Tawes Tawes

Be sure to sign up for Tawes this year! Veronica has been excellent with advertising the event to the membership for September 23rd at Somers Cove marina from 11:30-3PM!

Somerset Forest Conservation Taxes

Somerset County is looking to offer a tax incentive to property owners that classify their land as forest conservation, this is under first reading.

Additionally, their planning commission is exploring a one year moratorium on data centers, this is still in its exploratory phase and the State doesn't permit outright bans, so a moratorium is on the table. I imagine that it will mimic Wicomico's recent moratorium.

Worcester County – Critical Bay Area Map

The Commissioners took bids from engineering firms to begin PFAS testing at the Assateague Point wastewater treatment facility. Bids were opened on Tuesday for site analysis, project management, and several rounds of testing beginning in 2026 and ending next year.

GOLDEN R	CRYSTAL R	STERLING R	STERLING R (con't)	PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE
Grace Masten	Tim Arnett	Veronica Bishop	Joni Martin Williamson	Grace Masten
	Lauren Bunting	Joe Brach	Mia McCarthy	Bernie Flax
	Kevin Decker	Kate Deckenback	Mac McGraw	Austin Whitehead
	Bernie Flax	Bilonna Dilling	Steve Parsons	
	Darron Whitehead	Jay Doaty	Carol Proctor	
	Joe Wilson	Diana Dovel	John Rego	
		Cameron Drew	Jenny Sheppard	
		Bethany Drew	Leslie Smith	
		Greg Erdie	Frances Sterling	
		Kim Heaney	Brigit Taylor	
		Debora Hileman	Mike Weisner	
		Hunter Isaac	Austin Whitehead	
		Chris Jett	Jessica Ziegler	
		Brandon Johnson		



MD REALTOR New Forms

October first has passed which means new laws and forms are in effect – if you haven't seen the MR new forms video, [it can be found here.](#)





MD REALTOR LEGISLATIVE WRAP UP

[Click here to view the Sine Die report from MR](#)

[View more here.](#)





Lower Shore Candidates

[Please use this link to see candidates who have filed for election in State and Local elections.](#)

I have been monitoring this site in preparation for this upcoming election year. This is updated twice a day and more have filed in the past few weeks as we approach the filing deadline in February.





Comptroller and DHCD Housing Update

The Maryland Comptroller, Brooke Lierman, presented her office's Housing portion of the State of the Economy, [linked here](#).

In it are key findings pertaining to Maryland's housing economy, including an acknowledgement of the 100,000 unit shortage in the state, potential reasonings behind that shortage including rising costs of materials and labor (Maryland cost of building exceeds the national average), stagnant permitting (neighbor states and states with high growth outpace Maryland in single-family and multi-family permitting), among other data points.

One analogy the report draws is to the Smith Island Cake, where the process to obtain the necessary permits to development is similar to our Somerset attraction's layers of cake and fudge.

Suggestions include expanded townhome zoning, residential development in commercial zones, ADU implementation, building code reform, among others. Certainly an interesting read and I'll have a summary of it next week!





DHCD Housing Needs Assessment for 2026

[Click here to read the full assessment.](#)

DHCD put their housing needs assessment out this past week – here are a few key takeaways:

- Maryland needs about 590,000 new housing units by 2045 to meet projected demand
- The cost burden for renters has increased from 33% since 2000 to 46% since 2022.
- Homeownership is increasingly out of reach for moderate-income households; only 49% could afford the median home in 2022, down from 75% in 2000.
- For every 1,000 renters earning 0–30% of Area Median Income (AMI), 610 affordable homes are missing.
- The lower shore has an average of 20% - 55%+ of its renters are cost burdened.
- Total annual permitted units has been halved since 2000.

Maryland's housing shortage is multifaceted, and DHCD will be bringing forth legislation this Session to remedy the worsening inventory shortage for our state. This is a very interesting read and I'm happy to discuss further!

