

Increasing Housing Opportunity Through ADU Reforms

How Accessory Dwelling Units Can Improve Housing
Affordability in Anchorage

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Sightline Institute is a regionally focused nonprofit think tank that provides public policy solutions for Alaska and the Pacific Northwest.

Sightline's mission is to make our region a model for thriving sustainable communities that are equitable and affordable for all.

Our Alaska program focuses on housing and democracy.

What are ADUs?



Benefits of ADUs in Anchorage

- Keeping Alaskans in Alaska
- Increasing access to desirable neighborhoods
- Helping the finances of both homeowners and renters
- Improving land-use efficiency
- Less expensive to heat and maintain

Anchorage ADU Map

About two percent of the 52,913 single-detached homes in Anchorage have ADUs.

Another view: Of the 106,567 occupied living units in Anchorage, less than one percent are ADUs.

There are at least 1,000 ADUs in Anchorage, from Chugiak to Girdwood.

About 600 ADUs are registered, while an estimated 400 are unregistered.

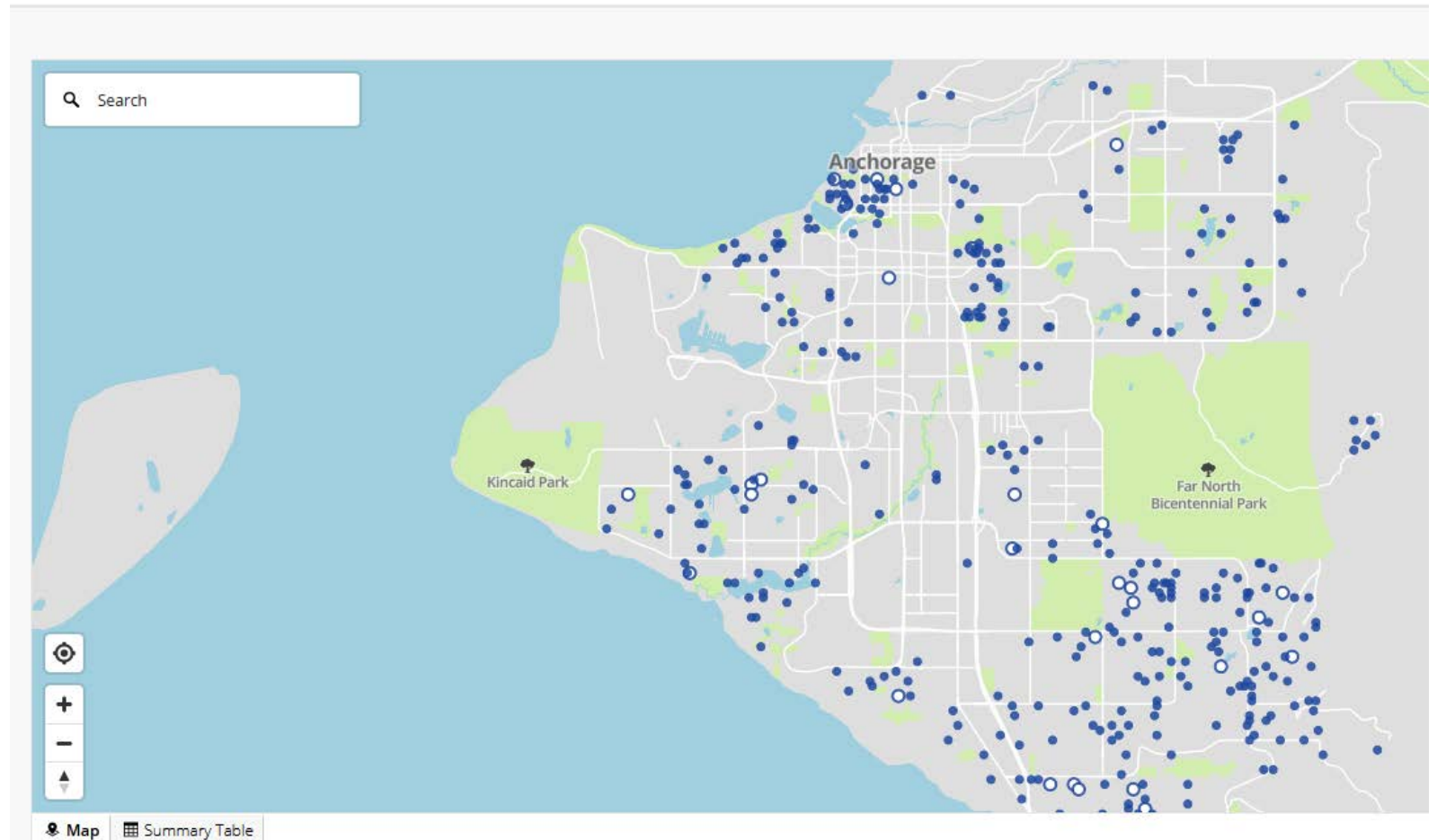


Municipality of Anchorage Open Data

2021 Single Family w/ Accessory Dwelling Unit

Housing And Homelessness

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Notable Changes to Anchorage's ADU Ordinance

- Attached ADUs and Detached ADUs are both allowed in all zones. DADUs no longer need to be part of a garage.
- One parking space required per ADU, which the city traffic engineer *may* allow to be on-street.
- Any number of related people or no more than five unrelated people.
- Less prescriptive design specifications

See Sightline's [article](#) on ADUs in Anchorage for a table showing all changes made by the Assembly to Anchorage's ADU ordinance in 2018.

Effects of the ADU Ordinance

- Owner occupancy affidavits are the best way to track ADU construction.
- Pre-ordinance (2013-2017) an average of 17 owner occupancy affidavits filed each year with the city
- Since the ordinance passed (2018-2020), an average of two dozen have been filed each year
- Bottom line: The gains have been modest enough that it's hard to tell what the effects have been.
- Pandemic effect is unknown
- Has it opened the door to additional reforms that will make ADUs easier to build?

Next Steps for ADU Reform

How can Anchorage encourage ADU homes?

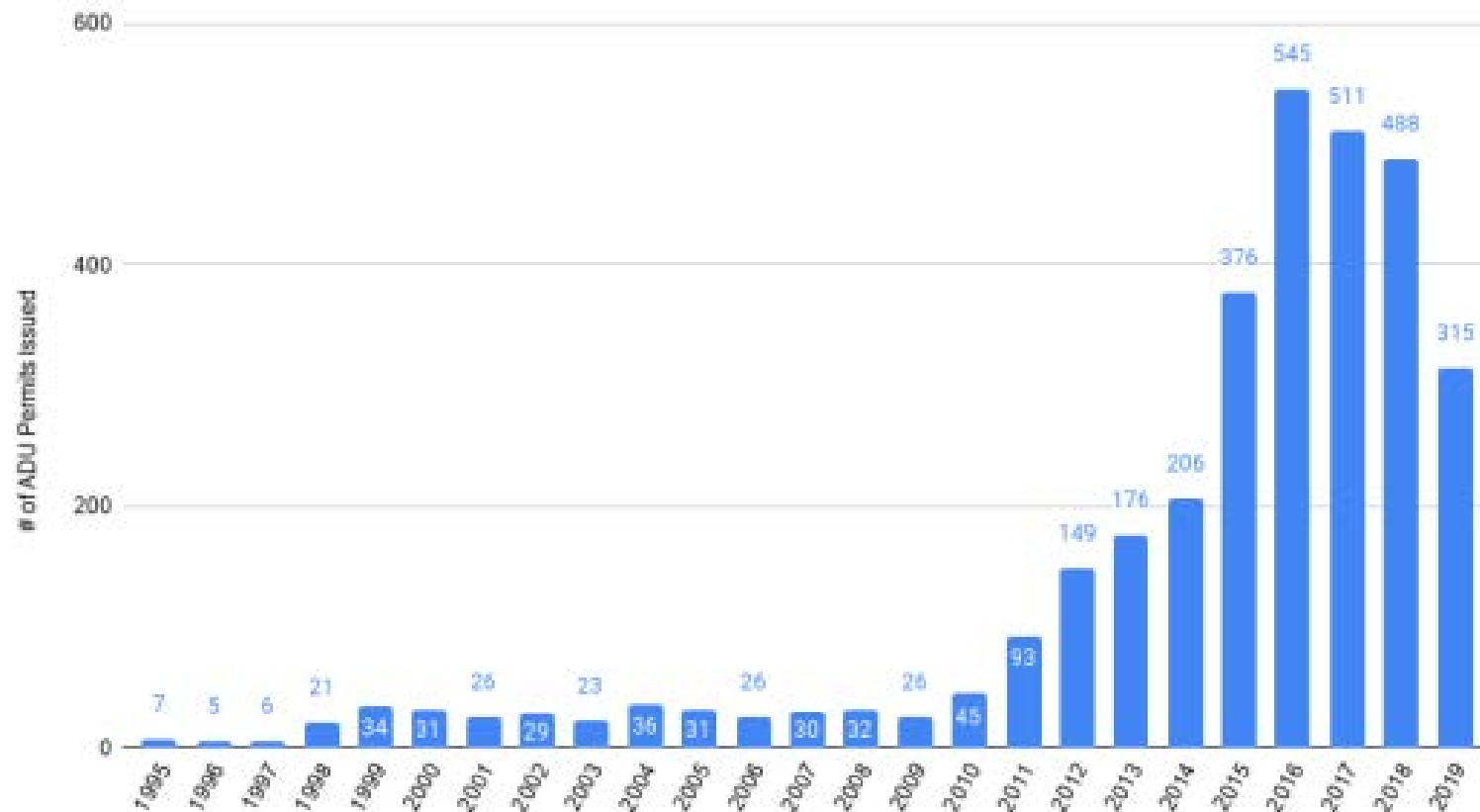
- Remove owner occupancy requirement
- Remove parking requirement
- Help homeowners finance ADUs
- Educate homeowners on financing, permitting, and building ADUs
- Allow duplexes to have ADUs

ADU reforms unlocked demand across Seattle

	2018	2019	2020	Percent change
ADU permit applications accepted	227	317	566	149.34%

Portland ADU permits rose after 2010 reforms

ADU Permits Issued from 1995-2019



Source: [Incremental Updates for ADUs for 2020](#), AccessoryDwellings.org

After successive statewide reforms, ADU permits jumped across California in 2019

	2018	2019	Percent change
California	5,911	15,571	163.42%

In Vancouver, B.C. one in
three single-detached
houses has an ADU.

Diversify Housing Options in Single-Family Zones





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