

**Perkasie Borough
Planning Commission
Meeting October 22, 2025**

AGENDA

1. Meeting Convenes – 7:00 PM
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Minutes from September 24, 2025
4. Public Forum
5. Old Business
 - Accessory Dwelling Unit Use Discussion
6. New Business
7. Other Business
8. Adjournment

Minutes of Meeting
Perkasie Planning Commission
September 25, 2025

620 W. Chestnut Street
Perkasie, PA 18944

Attendance:
Planning Commission

Maureen Knouse
Heather Nunn
Mairi Schuler
Mary McKay (Absent)
Dave Weaver
Dale Schlegel
Kim Bartells
Kelly Laustsen
Quinten Baker

Borough of Perkasie:

Cassandra L. Grillo, Borough Zoning Officer
Adrienne Blank, R.L.A., Borough Planner
Timothy Wallace, Borough Engineer
Attorney Brendan Callahan, Borough Solicitor

Call to Order

Chairperson Maureen Knouse called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A quorum was present, and business before the Commission was acknowledged.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mari Schuler, seconded by Dale Schlegel, the minutes of the August 25, 2025 Planning Commission meeting were unanimously approved.

Ordinance Discussion: Keeping of Chickens

The Commission reviewed the proposed "Keeping of Chickens" ordinance and discussed Borough Council's recommendation to change the Town Center Overlay setback to 25 feet (instead of 10 feet). The Commission considered whether setbacks should be universal Borough-wide or district-specific.

Motion: Approve the amended ordinance to allow chicken coops 10 feet from property lines Borough-wide, except within the Town Center Overlay where a 25-foot setback would apply. Motion by Ms. Nunn, second by Mr. Weaver.

Vote: In favor – Ms. Bartells, Ms. Lausten, Ms. Knouse, Mr. Weaver (4). Opposed – Mr. Baker, Mr. Schlegel, Ms. Schuler (3). Motion carried.

Ordinance Discussion: Roadside Stands

The Commission reviewed the proposed Roadside Stand ordinance. Borough Council had no comments.

Motion: Recommend Borough Council approve the proposed ordinance. Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation: Economic Development Plan Update

Adrienne Blank presented the Perkasio Borough Economic Development Plan Update and Draft Market Analysis, summarizing steps completed to date, including public feedback meetings, surveys, and monthly steering committee meetings (nine members). Key themes included promoting arts and culture, expanding recreation opportunities, supporting local businesses, and preserving the Borough's historic character—aiming to maintain small-town authenticity while enhancing downtown vibrancy.

Commission comments included:

- Ms. Schuler: Emphasized the need to address parking within the plan.
- Mr. Baker: Suggested additional signage for the recreational park system.
- Ms. Knouse: Asked about establishing a Historic District.
- Ms. Blank noted the next public meeting is planned for March.

Discussion: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Ms. Grillo presented a memo regarding establishing an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) use in the Zoning Ordinance. The Commission held a preliminary discussion on the need for affordable housing and appropriate guidance/regulations. Topics included whether to allow ADUs as rentals and what restrictions might apply, parking implications, and potential impacts on Borough infrastructure. Staff was asked to gather additional information for future discussion.

Public Comment

Linda Reid, 520 Arch St. – Requested clarification on chicken setback requirements and recommended consistent setbacks across the Borough.

Jackie Cornelious, 602 S. 4th St. – Shared her experience with the Economic Development Plan process in Bristol Township.

Adjournment : The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance Discussion Points **Planning Commission Discussion Framework**

1. Overview: Pros & Cons of ADUs in a Municipality: Discuss the general benefits and challenges of introducing ADUs before moving into ordinance specifics.

(Refer to detailed memo for full analysis.)

Pros:

- Expands local housing options and affordability.
- Supports aging in place and multigenerational living.
- Provides supplemental homeowner income.
- Promotes sustainable, small-scale infill development.

Cons:

- May affect neighborhood character and parking.
- Adds oversight and enforcement responsibilities.
- Potential strain on utilities and infrastructure.
- Risk of short-term rental misuse if not regulated.

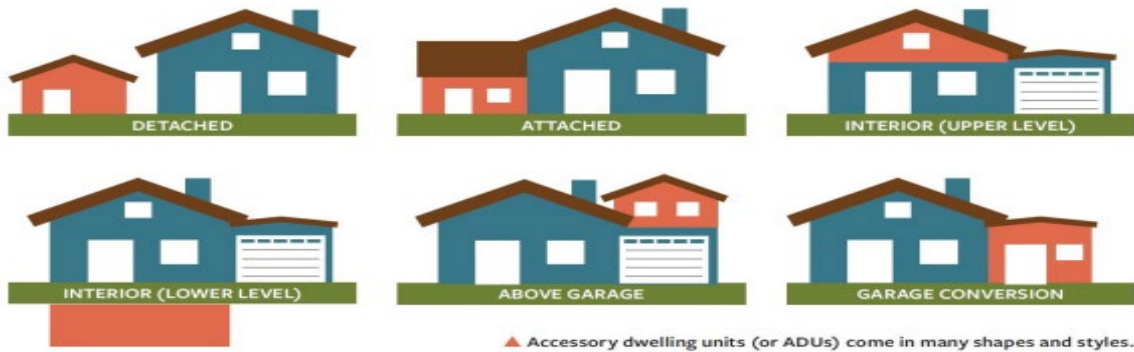
2. Eligibility & Applicability: Determine *where and for whom* ADUs should be allowed.

- Should ADUs be allowed in all residential zoning districts, or limited to select districts (e.g., R-1B, R-2)?
- Should ADUs be permitted:
 - By right, if all standards are met; or
 - By conditional use or special exception, requiring public hearing?
- Require zoning and building permits for all ADUs.
- Should ADUs be allowed only on lots containing single-family detached dwellings?
- Minimum lot size requirement (e.g., 9,000 sq. ft., or proportional to zoning district standards).
- Should there be a limit of one ADU per principal dwelling?
- Should non-conforming lots be eligible to add an ADU?

3. Type of ADUs Permitted: Identify the forms and construction methods allowed.

- Internal ADU: Created within the existing dwelling (e.g., basement, attic).
- Attached ADU: Built as an addition to the existing dwelling.
- Detached ADU: Separate structure (e.g., garage apartment, carriage house, tiny home).
- Should detached ADUs be allowed on all eligible lots or only when:
 - The lot meets a larger minimum size threshold.
 - Accessory structure already exists. (Currently regulated under Residential Conversion as long as exterior structure does not change)

- Sample of ADUs:



4. Dimensional & Design Standards

Ensure new units remain compatible with neighborhood character.

- Maximum ADU floor area (e.g., 600–800 sq. ft. or $\leq 35\%$ of principal dwelling).
- Minimum setback and separation requirements.
- Maximum building height (e.g., 24 ft. for detached units).
- Require ADU architectural compatibility (roof pitch, siding, windows, etc.).
- Restrict entrance orientation — e.g., no street-facing separate entry for attached units.
- Require single-family appearance to preserve streetscape character.

5. Occupancy & Ownership

Clarify who can live in an ADU and under what conditions.

- Should owner occupancy of either the principal or accessory dwelling be required?
- Should ADUs be limited to family members (“in-law suites”) or open to non-family tenants?
- Should there be a maximum occupancy limit (e.g., 2 persons per unit, one bedroom)?
- Should short-term or transient rentals (Airbnb/VRBO) be:
 - Prohibited entirely?
 - Allowed by special permit?
 - Treated separately from long-term ADUs?

6. Permitting & Administrative: Establish clear application and enforcement mechanisms.

- Require annual or biannual license renewal to confirm compliance.
- Should a deed restriction be recorded to maintain owner occupancy or prevent conversion to rentals?

- Require certificate of occupancy or U&O renewal every 1–3 years.
- Determine inspection schedule (e.g., annual, biannual, or complaint-driven).

7. Parking & Access: Prevent neighborhood parking congestion and ensure safe site design.

- Minimum of one additional off-street parking space per ADU.
- Allow shared or tandem where space permits.
- Require access via driveway or alley, where feasible.

8. Utility & Infrastructure Capacity: Coordinate ADUs with public systems and avoid overloading infrastructure.

- Require confirmation from Electric Department / Water / Sewer Authority that capacity exists.
- Require separate or shared utility connections as applicable?
- Stormwater compliance under Chapter 158 (if new impervious area added).
- Ensure adequate refuse collection and emergency access. Should the Fire Department have plans sent for review?
- Determine if IMPACT fees should be collected for an ADU?

9. Enforcement & Compliance: Create enforceable standards with realistic administrative expectations.

- Establish penalties for unpermitted or noncompliant ADUs. (Zoning Hearing Board Variances)
- Require property owners to maintain accurate occupancy documentation. (Year Affidavits, Deed Restrictions)
- Require removal of second kitchens if ADU use is discontinued (modeled after Lansdale).
- Establish clear reversion procedures when ADU is vacated or owner sells property.

10. Community Engagement & Implementation: Would the Commissions like to build public understanding and gather feedback before adoption?

- Should the Borough conduct a public workshop or community survey other than just conducting Public PC Meeting?

11. Reference Models & Resources (See attached Table and sample Ordinances)

12. Desired Outcomes for the Ordinance:

Did this meeting identify the policy priorities to guide drafting language.

- Preserve neighborhood character while promoting housing diversity.
- Provide clear, enforceable regulations.
- Offer property owners flexibility to accommodate family or generate supplemental income.
- Strengthen compliance and inspection processes.
- **Support Perkasio's long-term housing and sustainability goals.**

The next steps after tonight's Meeting.

- **Establish timeline and next steps:**
 - Planning Commission discussion & recommendations.
 - Draft ordinance review by Engineer and Solicitor.
 - Public hearing and Borough Council adoption.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – Pros and Cons Discussion

Overview

An **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)** is a smaller, independent residential unit located on the same lot as a single-family home. ADUs may be **attached** (e.g., basement or garage apartments) or **detached** (e.g., backyard cottages or converted outbuildings). Many municipalities are exploring ADUs as a tool to increase housing options and affordability while maintaining neighborhood character. However, opinions on their overall impact remain divided.

Pros of Allowing ADUs

1. Increases Affordable Housing Options

- Construction costs are generally lower than new single-family homes.
 - Detached ADUs typically cost between **\$90,000–\$350,000**, while attached ADUs average **\$30,000–\$75,000**.
- Provides smaller, lower-cost rental opportunities within established neighborhoods.
- Expands housing diversity and supports workforce and senior housing needs.

2. Provides Secondary Income for Homeowners

- Homeowners can rent ADUs to supplement their income or offset mortgage costs.
- Helps first-time homebuyers or fixed-income households remain in their homes.
- Offers flexibility — the unit can later be used for family members or caregivers.

3. Raises Property Values

- Homes with ADUs may be valued higher due to added living space and rental potential.
- One study found homes with ADUs are priced **up to 35% higher** than similar properties without one.
- Can increase local tax revenues without requiring new subdivisions or infrastructure expansions.

4. Supports Aging in Place and Multigenerational Living

- Families can create on-site housing for aging parents or adult children.
- Promotes intergenerational support — e.g., childcare help or elder care.
- ADUs can be designed with accessible layouts, single-story plans, or mobility-friendly features.

Cons of Allowing ADUs

1. Increased Residential Density

- Adds dwelling units to already developed neighborhoods (“infill” development).
- May gradually change neighborhood character, lot patterns, and privacy.
- Potential for reduced open space and increased impervious coverage.

2. Traffic, Noise, and Parking Concerns

- More residents can lead to additional **vehicles, parking congestion, and noise**.
- May place strain on street parking and public infrastructure.
- These impacts are particularly noticeable on smaller lots or narrow streets.

3. Pressure on Infrastructure and Services

- Additional households increase demand on **water, sewer, and stormwater systems**.
- Can affect refuse collection, emergency access, and overall service capacity.
- Smaller lots may not have sufficient space to accommodate these utilities safely.

4. Potential Impact on Housing Affordability (to Buy)

- While ADUs can create affordable rental options, they may **increase property values** — making it harder for new buyers to afford homes.
- May attract investors purchasing homes for rental purposes, reducing owner-occupied housing stock.

5. Enforcement and Regulatory Challenges

- Difficulty ensuring owner-occupancy if required by ordinance.
- Risk of unpermitted or short-term rentals (Airbnb-type use).
- Increases administrative oversight for zoning, code enforcement, and inspections.

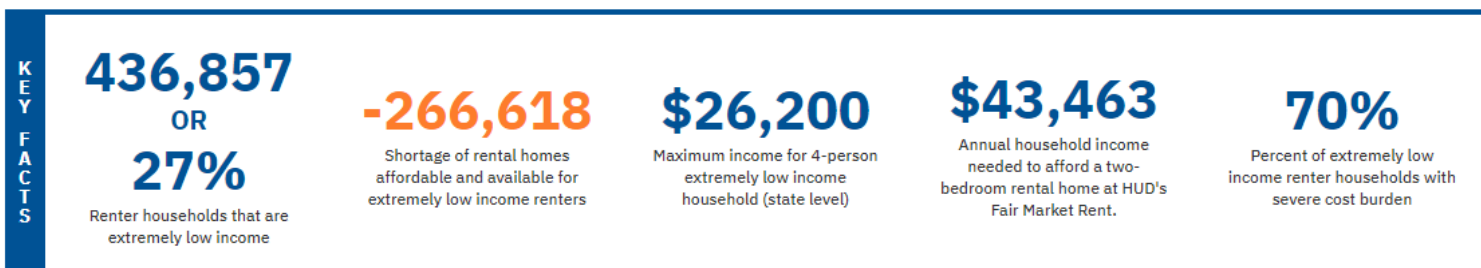


MEMORANDUM

Date: December 7, 2022, 2022
To: Andrea Coaxum, Perkasio Borough Manager
From: Judith Stern Goldstein, R.L.A., ASLA
Reference: Attainable Housing
G&A Project No. 22-01031PLN

Access to attainable housing has been a growing concern across the nation for decades. A 2020 report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition found that minimum wage workers cannot afford a two-bedroom rental in the nation and one-bedroom rentals are not attainable in 95% of counties. Multiple factors contribute to the lack of attainable housing including historic and current policies and wages not keeping pace with costs of housing.¹

Pennsylvania Housing Crisis Overview



Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition

Attainable housing is often considered synonymous with affordable housing. However, attainable housing is not the same as affordable housing or subsidized housing. Attainable housing refers to market rate housing for-sale that is unsubsidized, profitable and meet the needs of those with incomes between 80% and 120% of the Area Median Income. The price points for attainable housing vary by metro area depending on the Area Median Income, with FHA Loan Limits typically hovering around 115% of Area Median Income. Attainable Housing is sometimes called workforce housing because it is important to have teachers, firefighters, police officers and others who make up the workforce living in the community.

Historically, housing policy has been fraught with racial and economic disparities. The post-World War II economic boom brought a rise in housing development and suburban communities. The impacts of policies like restrictive covenants, red-lining, and block busting still play a significant role in limiting housing choices in communities across the country. During the same time, restrictive zoning laws led to an abundance of single-family homes and large multi-family apartment complexes resulting in a decrease of mixed density neighborhoods and Missing Middle Housing types such as row housing, duplexes, and smaller multi-family developments. The lack of housing types is often cited as a barrier to attainable housing and current restrictive zoning prevents developers from increasing the number of Missing Middle Housing types. The lack of diverse housing types and segregated land uses drives younger people away from suburbs in search of affordable options and walkable neighborhoods with diverse business types.

Existing housing stock plays a key role in addressing housing attainability. Maintaining the quality of existing housing is vital to preventing unhealthy, unsafe, and inadequate living conditions. However, existing housing is often incompatible with the needs of individuals with disabilities and those wishing to remain in their homes as they age. Building code can make it difficult and expensive to upgrade existing homes to accommodate all ages and abilities.

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition <https://nlihc.org/>

Housing affordability is important for several reasons. One, a sufficient supply of attainable and diverse housing types is critical for robust local economic growth. Two, access to safe and stable housing is the foundation for healthy communities and the well-being of individuals and families throughout the community. Finally, housing and transportation are inextricably linked, and encouraging attainable housing in locations connected to jobs, services, and other amenities is a key element of sustainable development and long-term success.

Some additional data and trends that support the need for attainable housing include:

- Population Growth – 1,040 new residents are anticipated in the borough by 2045, a 12.28% increase from 2015, requiring approximately 400 new homes.²
- Aging Population – As per the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the county's population over 65 years of age was 117,271. This is an increase of approximately 34% from the 2010 estimates. As per the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the borough's population over 65 years of age was 1,187. This is an increase of approximately 45% from the 2010 estimates. Senior households typically desire smaller homes with less maintenance.
- Housing Type – Perkasio provides a good mix of housing types. However, over 50% of housing units within the borough are single-family detached. Twenty-seven percent are single-family attached units, and the remainder can be categorized as multi-family residential units.
- Housing Cost – The median housing value in the borough, as of 2020, is \$263,100 which is less than the median housing value in the county (\$340,500).
- Income – The median income for Perkasio households is \$79,293; families is \$100,949; and nonfamily households is \$40,475.
 - Assuming a maximum of 28% of gross monthly income for housing, the median household in Perkasio Borough would have \$1,850.17 available for housing costs (either rent or mortgage including principal, interest, taxes, and insurance).
 - Assuming a maximum of 28% of gross monthly income for housing, the median nonfamily household would have \$944 available for housing costs per month.

Recommendations for improving the availability of attainable housing include:

- Review zoning districts and bulk standards to permit varying dwelling types. Consider form-based zoning regulations in downtown areas.
- Amend the Future Land Use maps, Future Land Use elements and other portions of the Comprehensive Plan to encourage mixed use/residential units in appropriate commercial areas.
- Use off-site built homes to reduce the cost of construction.
- Use high-efficiency green technologies to lower the cost of ownership by minimizing utility bills.
- Amend land development regulations to encourage the use of innovative development alternatives, such as, but not limited to, container housing, micro houses, small houses on small lots, accessory dwelling units and alternative construction materials.
- Amend local government comprehensive plans and land development codes to provide for attainable housing initiatives that: (a) provide density bonuses to residential projects that provide a minimum of ten (10) percent of the total projects units within attainable housing price ranges; and, (b) provide additional density bonuses to residential projects that provide more than ten (10) percent of the total projects units within attainable housing prices. The resulting attainable housing can be built either on-site or off-site; either in new construction or rehabilitation of existing market rate housing stock.
- Consider development incentives such as density bonuses, expedited permitting, and/or fee waivers/reductions.
- Update zoning code to include provisions for reasonable accommodation. Providing reasonable accommodation is one way for local municipalities to provide relief from land use and zoning and building regulations and procedures that have the effect of discriminating against the development, siting and use of housing for individuals with disabilities.
- Revise local ordinances to encourage inclusionary zoning practices.
- Increase the supply of housing to drive prices down.
- Reduce lot sizes.
- Reduce/eliminate off-street parking requirements which adds to the cost of housing.
- Adopt performance zoning provisions which regulate land uses based on various natural features and promotes design innovation and flexibility (tie density to carrying capacity of the land).

² DVRPC County and Municipal-Level Population Forecasts, 2015-2045.

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2020



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- ☐ 508 Corporate Drive West | **Langhorne**, PA 19047 | P: 215.369.3955 | F: 610.968.1829
- ☒ 65 E. Butler Avenue, Suite 100 | **New Britain**, PA 18901 | P: 215.345.4330 | F: 215.948.9943
- ☐ 184 W. Main Street, Suite 300 | **Trappe**, PA 19426 | P: 610.489.4949 | F: 610.489.8447
- ☐ One Penn Center at Suburban Station, 1617 JFK Blvd., Suite 425 | **Philadelphia**, PA 19103 | P: 215.687.4246 | F: 215.564.1780

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 21, 2023

To: Zoning Ordinance Update Task Force

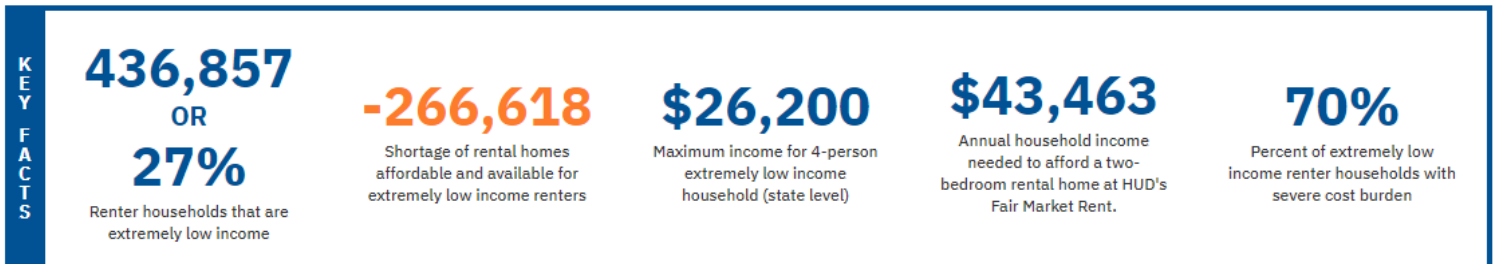
From: Stacy Yoder

cc: Adrienne Blank
Judith Stern Goldstein

Reference: Attainable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units

Access to attainable housing has been a growing concern across the nation for decades. A 2020 report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition found that minimum wage workers cannot afford a two-bedroom rental in the nation and one-bedroom rentals are not attainable in 95% of counties. Multiple factors contribute to the lack of attainable housing including historic and current policies and wages not keeping pace with costs of housing.¹

Pennsylvania Housing Crisis Overview



Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition

Attainable housing is often considered synonymous with affordable housing. However, attainable housing is not the same as affordable housing or subsidized housing. Attainable housing refers to market rate housing for-sale that is unsubsidized, profitable and meets the needs of those with incomes between 80% and 120% of the Area Median Income. The price points for attainable housing vary by metro area depending on the Area Median Income, with FHA Loan Limits typically hovering around 115% of Area Median Income. Attainable Housing is sometimes called workforce housing because it is important to have teachers, firefighters, police officers and others who make up the workforce living in the community.

Existing housing stock plays a key role in addressing housing attainability. Maintaining the quality of existing housing is vital to preventing unhealthy, unsafe, and inadequate living conditions. However, existing housing is often incompatible with the needs of individuals with disabilities and those wishing to remain in their homes as they age. Building code can make it difficult and expensive to upgrade existing homes to accommodate all ages and abilities.

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition <https://nlihc.org/>

Housing affordability is important for several reasons. One, a sufficient supply of attainable and diverse housing types is critical for robust local economic growth. Two, access to safe and stable housing is the foundation for healthy communities and the well-being of individuals and families throughout the community. Finally, housing and transportation are inextricably linked, and encouraging attainable housing in locations connected to jobs, services, and other amenities is a key element of sustainable development and long-term success.

Some additional data and trends that support the need for attainable housing include:

- Population Growth – 7,108 new residents are anticipated in the borough by 2045, a 38% increase from 2020, requiring approximately 3,000 new homes.²
- Aging Population – As per the 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the county's population over 65 years of age was 87,163. This is an increase of approximately 42% from the 2010 estimates. As per the 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the borough's population over 65 years of age was 2,032. This is an increase of approximately 9% from the 2010 estimates. Senior households typically desire smaller homes with less maintenance.
- Housing Type – Phoenixville provides a good mix of housing types. Approximately 24% of housing units within the borough are single-family detached. Almost 40% are single-family attached units, and the remainder can be categorized as multi-family residential units.
- Housing Cost – The median housing value in the borough, as of 2021, is \$270,900 which is less than the median housing value in the county (\$384,100).
- Income – The median income for Phoenixville households is \$86,747; families is \$104,177; and nonfamily households is \$72,561.
 - Assuming a maximum of 28%³ of gross monthly income for housing, the median household in Phoenixville Borough would have \$2,024.12 available for housing costs (either rent or mortgage including principal, interest, taxes, and insurance).
 - Assuming a maximum of 28% of gross monthly income for housing, the median nonfamily household would have \$1,693.09 available for housing costs per month.

Recommendations for improving the availability of attainable housing include:

- Use off-site built homes to reduce the cost of construction.
- Use high-efficiency green technologies to lower the cost of ownership by minimizing utility bills.
- **Amend land development regulations to encourage the use of innovative development alternatives**, such as, but not limited to, container housing, micro houses, small houses on small lots, **accessory dwelling units** and alternative construction materials.
- Amend local government comprehensive plans and land development codes to provide for attainable housing initiatives that: (a) provide density bonuses to residential projects that provide a minimum of ten (10) percent of the total projects units within attainable housing price ranges; and, (b) provide additional density bonuses to residential projects that provide more than ten (10) percent of the total projects units within attainable housing prices. The resulting attainable housing can be built either on-site or off-site; either in new construction or rehabilitation of existing market rate housing stock.
- Consider development incentives such as density bonuses, expedited permitting, and/or fee waivers/reductions.
- **Update zoning code to include provisions for reasonable accommodation. Providing reasonable accommodation is one way for local municipalities to provide relief from land use and zoning and building regulations and procedures that have the effect of discriminating against the development, siting and use of housing for individuals with disabilities.**
- Reduce lot sizes.
- Reduce/eliminate off-street parking requirements which adds to the cost of housing.

² DVRPC County and Municipal-Level Population Forecasts, 2015-2045.

U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 2020

³ The traditional percentage-of-income rule, also known as the 28/36 rule, says that no more than 28% of your gross income should go toward your monthly mortgage payment. When determining whether you qualify, most lenders consider a borrower's percentage of income as well as their debt-to-income ratio (DTI), which they prefer to be no higher than 36%.

In an effort to promote attainable housing, we recommend the Borough amend the zoning ordinance to include provisions for reasonable accommodation as follows:

Chapter 27, Zoning, Part 9, Zoning Hearing Board, Variances, Special Exceptions and Conditional Uses shall be amended to add the following:

§27-906 Reasonable Accommodation.

1. Purpose. It is the policy of the Borough, pursuant to the federal Fair Housing Act, to provide individuals with disabilities reasonable accommodation in rules, policies, practices and procedures to ensure equal access to housing and facilitate the development of housing for individuals with disabilities.
2. Applicability.
 - A. Reasonable accommodation, in the context of this ordinance means, providing individuals with disabilities or developers of housing for people with disabilities, flexibility in the application of land use and zoning and building regulations, policies, practices and procedures, or even waiving certain requirements, when it is necessary to eliminate barriers to housing opportunities.
 - B. An individual with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities; anyone who is regarded as having such impairment; or anyone with a record of such impairment.
 - C. A request for reasonable accommodation may be made by any individual with a disability, his or her representative, or a developer or provider of housing for individuals with disabilities, when the application of a land use, zoning or building regulation, policy, practice or procedure acts as a barrier to fair housing opportunities.
3. Requests for reasonable accommodation shall be in writing and provide the following information:
 - A. Name and address of the individual(s) requesting reasonable accommodation;
 - B. Name and address of the property owner(s);
 - C. Address of the property for which accommodation is requested;
 - D. Description of the requested accommodation and the regulation(s), policy or procedure for which accommodation is sought; and
 - E. Reason that the requested accommodation may be necessary for the individual(s) with the disability to use and enjoy the dwelling.
4. Any information identified by an applicant as confidential shall be retained in a manner so as to respect the privacy rights of the applicant and shall not be made available for public inspection.
5. A request for reasonable accommodation in regulations, policies, practices and procedures may be filed at any time that the accommodation may be necessary to ensure equal access to housing. A reasonable accommodation does not affect an individual's obligations to comply with other applicable regulations not at issue in the requested accommodation.
6. If an individual needs assistance in making the request for reasonable accommodation, the jurisdiction will provide assistance to ensure that the process is accessible.
7. The Zoning Hearing Board shall issue a written decision on a request for reasonable accommodation within thirty (30) days of the date of the application and may either grant, grant with modifications, or deny a request for reasonable accommodation.
8. In determining whether a requested accommodation is reasonable, the Zoning Hearing Board shall consider:
 - A. Whether the housing, which is the subject of the request for reasonable accommodation, will be used by an individual with disabilities protected under fair housing laws;
 - B. Whether the requested accommodation is necessary to make housing available to an individual with disabilities protected under the fair housing laws;
 - C. Whether the requested accommodation would impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the jurisdiction and;
 - D. Whether the requested accommodation would require a fundamental alteration in the nature of the jurisdiction's zoning ordinance.
9. The written decision on the request for reasonable accommodation shall explain in detail the basis of the decision. All written decisions shall give notice of the applicant's right to appeal and to request reasonable accommodation in the appeals process. The notice of decision shall be sent to the applicant by certified mail.

Additionally, the Borough may wish to consider amending the ordinance to include provisions for accessory dwelling units and/or residential conversions. An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e., detached) single-family home. ADUs go by many different names throughout the U.S., including accessory apartments, secondary suites, and granny flats. ADUs can be converted portions of existing homes (i.e., internal ADUs), additions to new or existing homes (i.e., attached ADUs), or new stand-alone accessory structures or converted portions of existing stand-alone accessory structures (i.e., detached ADUs).

Internal, attached, and detached ADUs all have the potential to increase housing affordability (both for homeowners and tenants), create a wider range of housing options within the community, enable seniors to stay near family as they age, and facilitate better use of the existing housing fabric in established neighborhoods.

Typically, ADUs are permitted in residential zoning districts by right, subject to use-specific standards. Common provisions include an owner-occupancy requirement (for one of the two dwellings), dimensional and design standards to ensure neighborhood compatibility, and off-street parking requirements. Other relatively common provisions include minimum lot sizes and limits on the number of occupants or bedrooms. While some codes also include occupancy restrictions that stipulate that ADUs can only house family members or domestic employees, this type of restriction can severely limit the potential for ADUs to address a shortage of rental housing.

Due to the Borough's smaller lot sizes, it is unlikely that ADUs would be a separate accessory structure unless such use is built into an existing accessory structure, i.e., above a garage or a garage conversion. The Borough zoning ordinance does not currently contain provisions for ADUs or residential conversions. Some example provisions for a residential conversion are as follows:



Figure 1: Example of ADUs, American Planning Association

- A residential conversion is the conversion of an existing building into two or more dwelling units. A residential conversion is permitted when authorized by the *Zoning Hearing Board/Borough Council* as a *special exception/conditional use/by right*.
- A residential conversion shall only be permitted in the following zoning districts *specify appropriate zoning districts*.
- The minimum lot area per dwelling unit shall not be reduced below the minimum lot area required for single-family detached dwellings for the district in which such lot is located.
- The following minimum floor area requirements shall be met:

Type of Unit	Minimum Floor Area (square feet)
Efficiency	400
1 bedroom	500
2 bedrooms	650
3 bedrooms	800

- Detached dwellings which are converted must maintain the appearance of a detached dwelling with a single front entrance. Additional entrances may be placed on the side or rear of the structure. The dwelling units may share the single front entrance. Exterior stairways and fire escapes shall be located on the rear wall in preference to either side wall and in no case on a front or side wall facing a street.
- Except as may be necessary for purposes of safety in accordance with the preceding subsection, there shall be no major structural change in the exterior of the building in connection with the conversion. After conversion, the building shall retain substantially the same structural appearance it had before such conversion.
- Separate cooking and sanitary facilities shall be provided for each dwelling unit.
- Parking requirements (?)

The following table summarizes the key provisions of Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Accessory In-Law Dwelling ordinances from nearby municipalities. This comparison is provided to assist the Planning Commission in evaluating which regulatory model best fits Perkasio Borough’s housing goals, zoning structure, and neighborhood character.

ADU / In-Law Suite Ordinance Comparison Table (See Attached Table)

Summary Observations

- **Owner Occupancy:** Required by all municipalities reviewed.
- **Family-Only Restrictions:** Found in Warminster, Lower Southampton, and Lansdale; West Chester and Phoenixville allow broader rental use.
- **Detached Units:** Only West Chester and Phoenixville explicitly permit them.
- **Size Limits:** Typically capped at 600–800 sq ft or ≤ 35% of the main dwelling.
- **Rental Licensing:** Only West Chester and Phoenixville allow rental ADUs under licensing and inspection programs.
- **Inspections:** Annual (Lansdale, Lower Southampton) or triannual (West Chester); required to ensure compliance with occupancy conditions.
- **Design Controls:** Commonly require single-family appearance, compatible materials, and concealed secondary entrances.

Municipality	Where Permitted	Structure Type	Occupancy / Ownership	Size Limit	Detached Units	Permitted Use Type	Rental / Lease	Permitting & Renewal	Parking Requirements	Utility Requirements	Design & Appearance
Warminster Township (§27-1793 Use 91)	Single-family detached dwellings	Must be part of principal dwelling or in existing accessory structure	Limited to family members of principal dwelling occupants	Not specified; lot must be ≥ 9,000 sq ft	Allowed only if lot ≥ 1.5 × minimum district size	Accessory use only	Rentals prohibited	Health Department permit required prior to zoning approval	Not specified	Allows either public sewer or private on-lot septic , depending on lot capacity; requires health permit confirmation before zoning permit issuance.	No exterior changes suggesting multi-family use
Lower Southampton Township (§27-Use 78)	Single-family detached dwellings	Internal only (must be part of principal residence)	Family relationship affidavit required annually; owner occupancy required	Max. 600 sq ft	Not permitted	Accessory use only	Rentals prohibited	Township permit required; annual renewal with affidavit	1 space per bedroom		Exterior must retain single-family appearance
Lansdale Borough (§405-1913)	Single-family detached dwellings	Attached or within primary structure only	Family members only; owner occupancy required	Not specified	Not permitted	Accessory use only	Rentals prohibited	Annual ADU license; biannual inspection; recorded deed restriction required	1 additional off-street space required	Requires shared utility routing through the primary structure; no separate hookups permitted.	Secondary entrance may not face street; single-family look required
West Chester Borough (Ord. No. 11-2023)	Single-family detached, semi-detached, and attached dwellings in NC-1, NC-2 & Town Center districts	Internal, attached, or detached	One unit must be owner-occupied	Max. 800 sq ft and 1 bedroom (max 2 occupants)	Permitted (must meet design standards)	Accessory use allowed in mixed residential zones	Rentals allowed with rental license and inspection	Standard building permit; rental license renewed every 3 years	1 additional off-street space required	Requires sewer/wastewater approval before building permit issuance. Does not specify water or electric connections, but expects compliance with Borough service regulations.	Detached units → rear- or alley-facing façade; compatible design required
Phoenixville Borough (2025 Zoning Update)	Single-family dwellings borough-wide	Internal, attached, or detached	Owner occupancy required for one unit	Not specified (typically ≤ 800 sq ft or ≤ 35% of main dwelling)	Permitted (subject to setbacks and height ≤ 24 ft)	Accessory use permitted by right in residential districts	Rentals allowed with rental license and compliance	Building & zoning permits; U&O renewal every 3 years	1 additional off-street space per unit (minimum)	Requires use of existing principal dwelling systems (shared utilities). No mention of separate meters.	Must match principal dwelling's character and roofline

§ 405-1913. Accessory dwelling units. [Added 2-21-2018 by Ord. No. 2018-1907]

- A. Deed restriction. A property owner who wishes to establish an accessory dwelling unit shall prepare and record, with the Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds, a deed restriction in a form acceptable to the Borough Solicitor, containing the conditions set forth in this § 405-1913, Subsections A through L, which shall reflect that the property is encumbered with those specific conditions. The deed restriction must run with the land.
- B. Accessory use. Accessory dwelling units shall be permitted by right attached to or contained within single-family detached homes only. An accessory dwelling unit shall have neither a separate address nor a separate mailbox from that of the principal dwelling.
- C. The addition of an accessory dwelling unit to a principal dwelling unit shall not violate any of the dimensional requirements of this chapter with which the principal dwelling unit must comply.
- D. Separate entrance. Accessory dwelling units shall have a separate entrance than the principal dwelling's main entrance. The separate entrance for the accessory dwelling unit shall not face the street. If the property is a corner lot, the separate entrance for the accessory dwelling unit shall not face the same street that the principal dwelling's main entrance faces.
- E. Configuration. The principal and accessory dwellings must be attached and interconnected. The use of a connecting door is permitted, but shall remain accessible from both dwelling units at all times. The accessory dwelling unit shall not be located in a separate freestanding building joined to the principal dwelling by a corridor or breezeway. Any exterior changes to the principal dwelling to incorporate an accessory dwelling unit shall not detract from its appearance as a single-family detached dwelling as viewed from a street or another property.
- F. Ownership. The principal dwelling unit shall owner-occupied, and shall be the primary residence of the owner of the property.
- G. Limited occupancy.
 - (1) Occupants of an accessory dwelling unit shall be limited to the following family members of the occupants of the principal dwelling: parents, grandparents, step-parents, step-grandparents, and/or the spouse, sibling, or partner of one of those relatives.
 - (2) No more than two people shall occupy an accessory dwelling unit.
- H. Kitchen. A second kitchen with cooking facilities is permitted in the accessory dwelling unit portion of the principal dwelling when an accessory dwelling unit is established. However, the cooking facilities of the second kitchen shall be removed within six months after the living quarters is no longer occupied by the person(s) for whom the ADU was initially approved.
- I. Renting prohibited. The owner of the property shall not lease or rent an accessory dwelling unit as an apartment or separate dwelling unit.
- J. Permit. An accessory dwelling unit license to operate shall be required in order to use an accessory dwelling unit. Once the license is granted, it shall be renewed every year the occupant(s) reside(s) in the accessory dwelling unit. Such a permit runs with the owner of the

property.

- (1) The property owner shall submit an application and obtain an accessory dwelling unit license to operate by January 1 of every calendar year the accessory dwelling unit exists. The application shall certify whether the person(s) identified as the person(s) for whom the accessory dwelling unit was initially approved continues to occupy the accessory dwelling unit.
 - (2) The application must include names and family relationship of each resident of an accessory dwelling unit, as well as other information required by the Lansdale Department of Code Enforcement to ensure compliance.
 - (3) The property owner shall pay all Borough permit fees and County Recorder of Deeds recording fees at the time of issuance of the permit. Fees to the Borough must be paid as adopted by Borough resolution.
 - (4) The owner of the property on which an accessory dwelling unit is established shall reimburse the Borough for any expenses related to code enforcement related to the accessory dwelling unit.
 - (5) Biannual inspections are required to ensure compliance with this § 405-1913 and the International Property Maintenance Code, as adopted by the Borough.
 - (6) The property owner shall notify Lansdale Borough within 30 days of the date when the person(s) for whom the second kitchen with cooking facilities was installed discontinues full-time use of the accessory dwelling unit. The property owner shall surrender the license to operate issued by Lansdale Borough at the time of the owner's notification to the Borough that the premises are no longer occupied by the person(s) for whom the accessory dwelling unit license to operate was issued.
 - (7) Upon expiration of the license to operate, the premises shall revert back to its original status as a single-family dwelling unit without separate cooking facilities; the separate cooking facilities must be removed within six months after the living quarters is no longer occupied by the person(s) for whom the ADU was initially approved.
- K. **Parking.** An accessory dwelling unit requires one new, additional off-street parking space. However, creation of a new, off-street parking space is not required if the off-street parking available to the principal dwelling unit exceeds the number of spaces required for the principal dwelling unit by at least one space.
- L. **Utilities.** All utilities for the accessory dwelling unit must be routed through the principal dwelling.

I. Accessory dwelling units. **[Added 7-19-2023 by Ord. No. 11-2023]**

- (1) Specific intent. The purpose of this subsection is to allow accessory dwelling units on lots where single family dwellings are permitted. Council recognizes that allowing accessory dwelling units subject to the standards in this subsection may achieve some or all of the following benefits:
 - (a) Increase the supply of a more attainable and diverse type of housing not requiring government subsidies;
 - (b) Assist older homeowners, single parents, young home buyers, and renters seeking a wider range of homes, prices, rents and locations;
 - (c) Provide opportunities to reduce segregation of people by race, ethnicity, and income that resulted from decades of exclusionary zoning;
 - (d) Provide homeowners with extra income to help meet rising ownership costs;
 - (e) Create a convenient living arrangement that allows family members or other persons to provide care and support for someone in a semi-independent living arrangement while remaining in his or her community;
 - (f) Increase security, home care and companionship for older or other homeowners;
 - (g) Reduce burdens on taxpayers while enhancing the local property tax base by providing a cost-effective means of accommodating development without the cost of building, operating and maintaining new infrastructure;
 - (h) Promote more compact urban growth, which reduces the loss of natural areas and resources, while limiting increases in pollution that contributes to climate instability; and
 - (i) Enhance job opportunities for individuals by providing housing nearer to employment centers and public transportation.
- (2) Eligibility. An ADU may be permitted as an accessory use to a single-family detached dwelling, single-family semidetached dwelling and single-family attached dwelling in the NC-1, NC-2 and TC Town Center Districts as identified in § 112-304B, subject to the conditions set forth in this section and all other applicable provisions of this chapter.
- (3) Standards for accessory dwellings. All ADUs must be in compliance with the following standards:
 - (a) One of the two dwelling units shall be occupied by the owner of the lot on which both dwelling units are located.
 - (b) There shall be no more than one ADU built on each lot.
 - (c) The floor area of an ADU shall be limited to a maximum of 800 square feet and shall contain no more than one bedroom.

- (d) A maximum of two people may reside in the ADU.
 - (e) An ADU that is rented or leased shall obtain a rental license and comply with all requirements of Chapter 66.
- (4) Dimensional requirements.
- (a) An ADU proposed within or attached to an existing structure shall be subject to all applicable residential dimensional requirements for the principal structure, except minimum lot area.
 - (b) A detached ADU shall not be located within any front or side yard and shall be subject to all applicable residential dimensional requirements for accessory structures, except maximum building height.
 - (c) The maximum building height for a detached ADU shall not exceed 24 feet. If an ADU is proposed for an accessory structure existing at the time of adoption of this subsection that is in excess of 24 feet, the height of the existing structure is considered the maximum height permitted.
- (5) Parking.
- (a) One off-street parking space shall be required for an ADU, in addition to those required for the principal dwelling.
 - (b) The residents of the ADU shall not be eligible for any on street parking permits issued pursuant to the Borough's Residential Parking Program.
- (6) The owner of the proposed ADU must obtain all necessary permits and approvals from the Borough's Wastewater Department prior to issuance of any building permit.
- (7) If an ADU is located within an accessory structure, such structure must be located on the same lot as the principal dwelling.
- (8) If an ADU is located within an existing single-family detached dwelling or attached dwelling, it shall have an entrance separate from the entrance to the primary dwelling. This entrance may not be a part of the front facade of the primary dwelling.
- (9) If an ADU is built within an accessory structure that is on a lot adjacent to an alley, the following design standards must be met:
- (a) The area between the front facade of the ADU and the alley shall be embellished with landscaping in the form of planters, planting beds, river jack stones or similar features and be maintained in a mud-free condition.
 - (b) The area adjacent to the cartway of the alley shall have stabilized edges formed by river jack stones, brick or other nonerosive surfaces.
 - (c) The front facade shall be detailed with features such as a pent eave roof above the front door or garage doors, eave roof pilasters and other like type architectural embellishments.

- (d) The front facade must have vertically proportioned windows, aligned windows on the facade and proportional massing.
 - (e) All accessory structures to the ADA, such as generators and electrical/mechanical systems and trash receptacles, shall be screened by walls or fencing complimentary to the material of the principal dwelling.
 - (f) The ADA shall be constructed of materials that are compatible with the materials used on the principal dwelling and shall be traditional building materials such as brick, stone, painted wood and slate or metal roofing.
 - (g) No parking shall be permitted in front of the ADU.
 - (h) If the ADU is located in the Historic District, it shall comply with the standards and criteria in § 112-504.
- (10) To ensure compliance with this chapter, an architectural plan shall be submitted as part of a building permit application, accurately drawn to scale, indicating the relationship and size of the two dwelling units, as well as parking areas and any proposed exterior alterations.
- (11) A use and occupancy permit shall be required prior to the occupancy of an ADU. The permit form, as provided by the Borough, and accompanying required fee shall be submitted by the property owner. An application to renew the permit shall be submitted annually prior to the intended continuation of occupancy. It shall be unlawful for the ADU to be occupied beyond the operative period of a permit. The ADU shall be subject to inspection by the Zoning Officer prior to issuance of the initial use and occupancy permit, and then at least once every three years thereafter while the dwelling unit is occupied, on or about the date of initial occupancy.

§ 27-1793. Use 91, accessory in-law dwellings. [Ord. No. 762, 5/7/2020; Ord. No. 777, 9/5/2024]

1. Accessory in-law dwellings are permitted as accessory uses only for use in a single-family detached dwelling.
 - A. The minimum lot area of 9,000 square feet in which the dwelling is located is required for the principal dwelling in order to be eligible to add an accessory in-law dwelling.
 - B. A permit from the Bucks County Department of Health or other governmental agency with jurisdiction shall be required. Such permit shall indicate that the property can be served by either public sewers or by an adequate on-lot septic system prior to the issuance of a zoning permit.
 - C. Only one accessory in-law dwelling shall be allowed per lot. The accessory dwelling shall only be used as an in-law dwelling and shall not be used as a rental unit.
 - D. Accessory in-law dwellings shall be part of the principal residence or may be contained in an existing accessory structure such as a garage, provided that the garage or other structure is located within the building envelope for the district. No new separate structures on the same lot with the principal residence shall be permitted to be constructed for this use unless the principal use is located on a lot which has a lot size which is 1.5 times the minimum lot size required for that use in the district within which the principal residence is located.
 - E. Accessory in-law dwellings shall not be located in cellar or basement areas (an area having 1/2 or more of its floor-to-ceiling height below the average level of the adjoining ground), except where at least one wall of the accessory in-law dwelling is at grade level, with direct access to the outside from the accessory in-law dwelling.
 - F. There shall be no changes to the exterior of the residence which suggest that the dwelling unit is other than a single-family detached dwelling or which otherwise detract from the single-family character of the neighborhood.
 - G. The height of the accessory building to be used for the accessory in-law dwelling shall not exceed the height of the principal dwelling.
 - H. Occupancy of such use shall include only relatives of the family occupying the principal residence.

(11) Use 78, Accessory In-Law Dwellings. Accessory In-Law Dwellings are permitted as accessory uses only for single-family detached dwellings.

- (a) The minimum lot area for the use in the district in which the dwelling is located is required for the principal dwelling in order to be eligible to add an accessory in-law dwelling.
- (b) A permit from the Township shall be required, as well as an annual inspection.
- (c) Only one accessory in-law dwelling shall be allowed per lot.
- (d) Accessory in-law dwellings shall be part of the principal residence, provided that there is a door connecting the in-law suite to the remainder of the residence. No new separate structures on the same lot with the principal residence shall be permitted to be constructed for this use.
- (e) Accessory in-law dwellings shall not be located in cellar or basement areas (area having 1/2 or more of its floor-to-ceiling height below the average level of the adjoining ground), except where at least one wall of the accessory in-law dwelling is at grade level with direct access to the outside from the accessory in-law dwelling.
- (f) There shall be no changes to the exterior of the residence which suggest that the dwelling unit is other than a single-family detached dwelling or which otherwise detract from the single-family character of the neighborhood.
- (g) The height of the accessory building to be used for the accessory in-law dwelling shall not exceed the height of the principal dwelling.
- (h) Parking shall be provided for the in-law suite at the rate of one space per bedroom contained within the suite.
- (i) As a condition of the issuance of a permit from the Township for an accessory in-law dwelling, the owner of the property shall provide the Township with an affidavit confirming the relationship of the in-law dwelling tenant to the property owner and shall consent to an annual inspection by the Township as a part of the issuance of a permit. Failure to comply with this provision shall result in the denial/revocation of any requested or issued permit.
- (j) No accessory in-law dwelling shall exceed an aggregate of 600 square feet.