

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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October 17, 2022

Jordan Klein, Director
Planning and Development Department
1947 Center Street, 3rd Floor
City of Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear Jordan Klein:

RE: Review of Berkeley's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance under State ADU Law (Gov. Code, § 65852.2)

Thank you for submitting the City of Berkeley's (City) accessory dwelling unit (ADU) Ordinance Nos. 7,797-N.S. and 7,799-N.S. (collectively, Ordinances), both adopted on February 8, 2022, to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Ordinances were received on February 23, 2022. HCD has reviewed the Ordinances and submits these written findings pursuant to Government Code section 65852.2, subdivision (h). HCD finds that the Ordinances do not comply with section 65852.2 in the manner noted below. Under that statute, the City has up to 30 days to respond to these findings. Accordingly, the City must provide a written response to these findings no later than November 17, 2022.

The Ordinances address many statutory requirements; however, HCD finds that the Ordinances do not comply with State ADU Law in the following respects:

Ordinance No. 7,797-N.S.

- Section 23.502.020.E.1 and J.1 – *Efficiency Kitchen* – The Ordinance defines efficiency kitchen as including a sink and having a working refrigerator. However, the sink requirement, previously specified in Government Code section 65862.22, subdivision (a)(6), was removed and statute does not specify any type of appliances, thereby creating more options to satisfy the appliance requirement. Efficiency kitchen is now defined as “[a] cooking facility with appliances.” (Gov. Code, § 65852.22, subd. (a)(6)(A).) It shall include “[a] food preparation counter and storage cabinets that are in reasonable size in relation to the size of the junior accessory dwelling unit.” (Gov. Code, § 65852.22, subd. (a)(6)(B).) The City must remove the sink requirement as well as the reference to a working refrigerator to comply with existing statute.

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Ordinance No. 7,799-N.S.

- Section 12.99 – *Wildfire Hazard Evacuation Risk Mitigation Ordinance* – To restrict ADUs and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs) in the Hillside Overlay District, the Ordinance relies on a local agency’s ability to designate areas where ADUs may be permitted based on the impact on traffic flow and public safety per Government Code 65852.2, subdivision (a)(1)(A). The Ordinance provides general information regarding the Hillside Overlay District and its topography and location within Berkeley’s Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). In addition, the Ordinance refers to a study published by UC Berkeley, and upon further communication by HCD with the City on March 4, 2022, the City provided information regarding a traffic simulation study (*Developing Transportation Response Strategies for Wildfire Evacuations via an Empirically Supported Traffic Simulation of Berkeley, California, Wong, 2021*) conducted within the Hillside Overlay District.

However, while HCD is sympathetic to concerns about fire safety and the need to ensure adequate evacuation in the event of a fire, the City has not adequately demonstrated that new ADUs will actually impact public safety in the VHFHSZ. The traffic simulation study is not specific to ADUs and JADUs, and therefore its information and conclusions do not adequately justify the restriction of ADUs in the Hillside Overlay District per Government Code 65852.2, subdivision (a)(1)(A). Specifically, the City relies on the study, which looks at total vehicular use, to conclude that additional ADUs will create an evacuation hazard. This study, however, does not provide data on how many lots are likely to add ADUs or what specific impact new ADUs might have on evacuations. Moreover, the City does not account for the potential for ADUs to be excluded from requiring a parking space given the availability of public transit in the Hillside Overlay District. HCD is aware that AC Transit serves the Berkeley Hills location, exempting many, if not all, potential lots from parking space requirements for new ADUs.

Furthermore, even if the City would provide adequate justification for this restriction on ADUs under this subdivision, the City may not justify such a restriction on ADUs that fall under subdivision (e), as local development standards (such as an area restriction based on VHFHSZ designation) provided by the Ordinance pursuant to Government Code section 65852.2, subdivisions (a) through (d), do not apply to ADUs created under Government Code section 65852.2, subdivision (e).

In summary, the City must remove these restrictions and permit applications pursuant to Government Code 65852.2, subdivisions (a) and (e).

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- Section 12.99.030 – *Total Number of Units Permitted* – The Ordinance limits the number of units allowed per lot in the Hillside Overlay District to one ADU or JADU. However, this limitation conflicts with the Government Code section 65852.2, subdivisions (e)(1)(A) and (B), requirement to allow for both an ADU and JADU on a lot with a proposed or existing single-family dwelling, should certain conditions be met. In addition, this limitation conflicts with Government Code section 65852.2, subdivisions (e)(1)(C) and (D), for lots with existing multifamily structures. The City must amend this prohibition to explicitly permit applications per Government Code 65852.2, subdivision (e).

In response to the findings in this letter, and pursuant to Government Code section 65852.2, subdivision (h)(2)(B), the City must either amend the Ordinances to comply with State ADU Law or adopt the Ordinances without changes. Should the City choose to adopt the Ordinances without the changes specified by HCD, the City must include findings in its resolution that explain the reasons the City finds that the Ordinances comply with State ADU Law despite the findings made by HCD. Accordingly, the City's response should provide a plan and timeline to bring the Ordinances into compliance.

Please note that, pursuant to Government Code section 65852.2, subdivision (h)(3)(A), if the City fails to take either course of action and bring the Ordinances into compliance with State ADU Law, HCD may notify the City and the California Office of the Attorney General that the City is in violation of State ADU Law.

HCD appreciates the City's efforts in the preparation and adoption of the Ordinances and welcomes the opportunity to assist the City in fully complying with State ADU Law. Please feel free to contact Mike Van Gorder, of our staff, at (916) 916-776-7541 or at mike.vangorder@hcd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Zisser', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Zisser
Assistant Deputy Director
Local Government Relations and Accountability

