



PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT POLICY

EXEMPTION FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT STAIRS

Description:

This policy provides administrative direction to clarify the purpose and intent of Bainbridge Island Municipal Code (BIMC) 18.09.030(l)(5) addressing Use-specific standards, Accessory Dwelling Units. Specifically, this policy is to provide clarification regarding the exemption for stair construction within accessory dwelling units.

Background:

The BIMC isn't as clear as intended regarding stair requirements related to accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Pursuant to BIMC 18.09.030(l)(5)(f) and (g), ADUs may not exceed 900 square feet in size. Although constructed stairs utilized for ADUs which are enclosed within the exterior vertical walls of the building have been exempted from this square feet calculation, the amount of exempted space for stair landings, open stairs, landings, and similar stair associated improvements has been unclear. BIMC 18.09.030(l)(5)(j) provides: "When stairs utilized for the ADU are enclosed within the exterior vertical walls of the building, they shall not count towards the floor area of the ADU."

Implementation:

It is the policy of the Department of Planning and Community Development, pursuant to BIMC 18.09.030(l)(5)(j), to measure and apply the square foot calculated area for ADU stairs as follows:

1. The ADU stairs must be fully enclosed within vertical walls to qualify for the exemption from the 900-square feet limitation. Stairs that are open to the elements or not fully enclosed within vertical walls are not subject to the 900 square feet limitation.
2. To remain exempt from the 900-square foot maximum calculation, the ADU stairs area, enclosed within the exterior vertical walls of the building, may not exceed a maximum of 144 square feet of stair area per floor, including open areas, landings, treads, under stair storage, mezzanines, pop outs, and/or other constructed area, measured outside wall to outside wall.
3. The ADU must comply with all other regulations and requirements, including those in BIMC 18.09.030(l)(5).
4. The ADU and associated stairs must be constructed to meet current International Building Code and International Residential Code requirements adopted as part of the BIMC (see, e.g., Chapter 15.04 BIMC).

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gary R. Christensen', is written over a horizontal line.

Gary R. Christensen, AICP, Director

Date: July 25, 2017

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