

Chattanooga May Return To "Simple, Old Idea" Of ADUs

Chattanooga is looking into returning to what proponents say is a "really simple and old idea" - allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Emily Wood of the Regional Planning Agency told members of the City Council that ADUs of 700 square feet or less are already allowed in the Form Based Code district.

She said the proposal is to take the next step and allow it "by right" in the broader Urban Overlay area that stretches from Lookout Mountain to Missionary Ridge to North Chattanooga and to the state line.

Councilman Chip Henderson had the idea of making it even more broader - aligning it with the large area where Short Term Vacation Rentals are allowed.

Ms. Wood said in earlier days that families often built a small dwelling on their lot for extra income or for a place relatives could live. Others converted a basement or a garage to a small abode.

She said zoning laws in the 1950s mainly limited individual owners to one dwelling per lot.

Ms. Wood said the concept helps concentrate residences on built lots rather than developing natural areas.

She said six ADUs have been built since the Form Based Code went into effect in 2016, and there was no opposition to any of the projects.

The Urban Overlay District includes 29 Chattanooga neighborhoods, including older areas like St. Elmo and Fort Wood where ADUs already exist.

Districts included are 2, 7, 8 and 9.

Councilwoman Demetrus Coonrod said, "I would love to have the pilot in Eastdale." She said it would be "a great way to earn extra money and I would not have to worry about my constituents being displaced."

Councilwoman Carol Berz had some concerns, saying it might have "unintended consequences."

She said adding a second unit within a house makes it "a duplex." She said neighborhoods in her district had fought for single-family homes rather than duplexes.