



AVERAGE UNIT-SIZE DENSITY PROGRAM (AUD)

INFORMATIONAL PACKET

QUESTIONS?

Additional information regarding the planning process can be obtained at the Planning Counter at 630 Garden Street (805) 564-5578, PlanningCounter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov



WHAT IS THE AUD PROGRAM?

The City's Average Unit-Size Density (AUD) Incentive Program, SBMC [Chapter 30.150](#), was adopted in 2013 as a trial program to facilitate the construction of smaller housing units by allowing increased density that could not be achieved through existing development standards. The AUD Program includes additional development incentives, such as reductions to parking, setbacks, and open yard, to increase the city's workforce housing stock and address Santa Barbara's housing shortage.

WHEN DOES IT EXPIRE?

The AUD Program is set to expire on February 15, 2024. In absence of City Council action before the expiration date, the program will end and the allowed residential density will revert to as it previously existed – Base Density according to the specific [Zone Regulations](#), or Variable Density where it is applicable, SBMC [§30.140.220](#). However, the city is currently working on amendments to make it into a permanent Multi-Unit Housing Ordinance.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Applicants interested in developing a project using the *current* AUD Program are encouraged to submit a [Preliminary Housing Development Pre-Application](#). Upon submittal of this preliminary application and payment of the permit processing fee, a housing developer is allowed to “freeze” the applicable fees and development standards that apply to their project for **180 days** while they assemble the rest of the material necessary for a full application submittal. Applicants will then be able to continue to be processed under the current AUD Program, or can choose to follow the new multi-unit housing standards that will take the place of the AUD Program.

WHERE IS THE AUD PROGRAM PERMITTED?

The AUD Program applies to both mixed-use development (a development that contains both nonresidential and residential uses on the same lot) or residential-only development. It allows both ownership units (condominiums) and rental units. It is permitted in the following multi-unit and nonresidential zones: R-M, R-MH, O-R, C-R, C-G, and M-C. Please note that lots located in the Upper State Street (USS) Overlay Zone may be developed in accordance with the AUD Program, but not all development incentives may apply.

The AUD Program does not apply to properties located in the Coastal Zone (S-D-3) Coastal Overlay Zone). However, applicants wanting to develop projects with residential densities and incentives allowed by the AUD Program may apply for Modifications to allow an equivalent level of development.

WHAT ARE THE DENSITY TIERS?

The AUD Program consists of three density tiers based on the General Plan Land Use Designation for the lot: **Medium-High Density** (15-27 dwelling units per acre); **High Density** (28-36 dwelling units per acre) and the **Priority Housing Overlay** (37-63 dwelling units per acre). The maximum average unit size for the dwelling units will depend on the number of dwelling units per acre (du/ac) being developed.

TABLE A: AUD PROGRAM TABLE

MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY		HIGH DENSITY		PRIORITY HOUSING OVERLAY	
<i>Average Unit Size (sq.ft.)</i>	<i>Density (du/ac)</i>	<i>Average Unit Size (sq.ft.)</i>	<i>Density (du/ac)</i>	<i>Average Unit Size (sq.ft.)</i>	<i>Density (du/ac)</i>
1,450	15	1,245	28	970	37 - 48
1,360	16	1,200	29	969	49
1,280	17	1,160	30	960	50
1,210	18	1,125	31	941	51
1,145	19	1,090	32	935	52
1,090	20	1,055	33	917	53
1,040	21	1,025	34	901	54
1,005	22	995	35	896	55
985	23	970	36	880	56
965	24	—	—	874	57
945	25	—	—	859	58
925	26	—	—	845	59
905	27	—	—	840	60
—	—	—	—	827	61
—	—	—	—	825	62
—	—	—	—	811	63

HOW DO I CALCULATE DENSITY?

To calculate the maximum number of units, find the average unit size on the AUD Program Density Tier Table under the property's General Plan Land Use designation (Medium-High, High, Priority). Multiply the maximum dwelling units per acre by the lot area. The resulting area is divided by 43,560 (square feet in an acre).

AUD Density Calculation Example:

Lot Size: 12,000 sq. ft. Zone: R-M or R-3

General Plan Land Use: Medium-High Density

Average Unit Size: 1,000 sq.ft. per unit

$[22 \text{ du/ac} \times 12,000 \text{ sq.ft.} = 264,000] \div 43,560 = 6.06$ (rounded) to 6 units

HOW DO I CALCULATE AVERAGE UNIT SIZE?

The average unit size is calculated by taking the total net floor area of each residential unit in a project and dividing it by the number of residential units in that project. Common areas not controlled by the occupant of an individual unit are excluded from the average unit size.

Example: An AUD project with five dwelling units includes one 2,000 sq. ft. 3-bedroom unit; three 1-bedroom units of 1,100 sq. ft.; and one 850 sq. ft. studio unit. Total square feet = 6,150 sq. ft. and is divided by five units = 1,230 square feet is the average unit size

CAN DENSITY BE LESS THAN THE DENSITY TIER?

Yes, however there are some considerations for projects proposed with a density less than what is specified in the density tier assigned to the lot by its General Plan land use designation. To qualify for AUD development incentives, the residential density **must be greater than the base density** for the zone, and the average unit size may not exceed the maximum in the AUD Table.

CAN AVERAGE UNIT SIZE BE LESS THAN THE MAXIMUM?

Yes, AUD projects may not exceed the *maximum* average unit size based on the number of dwelling units per acre (du/ac) being developed, however projects may be developed with an average unit size that is **less than** the maximum size. Note that the City's zoning ordinance requires a **minimum unit size** for a studio unit of 220 square feet and 400 square feet for all other units, unless the unit is an "affordable efficiency unit" with a minimum size of 150 square feet, see SBMC [§30.140.150](#).

Example: An AUD project at 20 dwelling units per acre, cannot exceed a maximum average unit size of 1,090 sq. ft., but would be permitted with an average unit size of 800 sq. ft. (i.e., any amount between the maximum of 1,090 sq. ft. and the minimum unit size of 400 sq. ft.)

WHAT ARE MY OTHER OPTIONS?

New projects choosing not to develop under the AUD Program can develop at base density standards. The **base density** for multi-unit and commercial zones (where residential use is allowed) is a range of 12-18 dwelling units per acre based on the Zoning Ordinance standards. Projects electing to use base density must comply with SBMC Table [30.20.030.B](#), as applicable, and AUD development incentives will not apply.

IS VARIABLE DENSITY STILL ALLOWED?

No, while the AUD Program is in effect, the variable density provisions in SBMC §[30.140.220](#), Variable Density in Certain Zones, are suspended. However, alterations and additions to existing variable density projects will be permitted. If an existing, permitted development conforms to the variable density requirements, additions (including bedrooms) may be added, if the project does not result in additional units and the project continues to conform to all variable density provisions. During this time, **new residential units will not be allowed** on existing development UNLESS the entire property is revised to comply with the AUD Program requirements.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED PRIORITY HOUSING?

Priority Housing includes three categories of housing: 1) Rental Housing; 2) Employer-Sponsored Housing; and 3) Limited-Equity Housing Cooperatives. To qualify for the Priority Housing Overlay density tier, the following requirements must be met:

- **Rental Housing** – A covenant must be recorded, by which the owner agrees to maintain the rental housing use for as long as the property is developed and maintained at the densities allowed by the AUD Program.
- **Employer-Sponsored Housing** – The project should contain a range of rents or purchase prices, some of which are affordable to households earning up to 200% of the Area Median Income at the time of initial occupancy. A covenant must be recorded, by which the owner agrees to limit the occupancy of each unit as a primary residence, and which includes at least one person per household employed within the south coast region of Santa Barbara County.
- **Limited-Equity Housing Cooperatives** – The units must be affordable to households earning up to 250% of the Area Median Income at the time of purchase.

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING

New multi-unit housing projects may be subject to Inclusionary Housing requirements. See SBMC Chapters 30.160 / 28.43 (ownership) or Section 30.150.110 (rental).

- **Rental Units.** Rental housing projects developed under the AUD Program proposed with ten units or more will be required to provide at least 10% of the units at rental rates affordable to households at the Moderate-Income level (80% to 120% of Area Median Income). AUD Program projects with five to nine units will be required to either build a unit affordable to households at the Moderate-Income level or pay a \$25 per square foot in-lieu fee.
- **Ownership Units.** Ownership (condominium/subdivision) housing projects proposed with ten units or more will be required to provide at least 15% of the units restricted for owner-occupancy by Middle-Income Households (120% to 160% of Area Median Income) or the applicant will pay an in-lieu fee. For projects of less than ten units, the applicant shall either provide at least one unit as an owner-occupied Middle-Income restricted unit or pay to the City an in-lieu fee.

WHAT ARE THE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES?

To further encourage the construction of units that achieve the objectives of the AUD Program, development incentives for height, setbacks, open yard, and parking are allowed, see below. If there are discrepancies between this information and the Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Ordinance prevails.

TABLE B: AUD PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Title 30 Zoning Designations	R-M	R-MH	O-R	C-R	C-G	M-C
BUILDING HEIGHT						
Main Buildings	45 ft		45 ft	45 ft 48 ft in the Central Business District, in the Priority Housing Overlay 60 ft for Community Benefit Housing Project (§30.140.100.B)		
SETBACKS						
Front Setback	1st and 2nd Story: 10 ft Portions of structure above 2nd story: 20 ft Covered parking: 10 ft Covered parking, street-facing: 20 ft		State Street and first blocks of cross streets: 0 ft All other lots: 5 ft variable setback			
Front Setback – Upper State Street (USS) Overlay Zone			Market-rate ownership (condominium) units in medium-high density tier: • Portions of structures 15 ft in height or less: 10 ft • Portions > 15 feet in height: 20 ft All other projects: 10 ft			
Interior Setback	1st and 2nd Story: 6 ft Portions of structures above 2nd story: 10 ft <u>Covered Parking:</u> • Interior: 6 ft • Rear: 3 ft • See code on lots < 55 ft		Adjacent to residential zone: 6 ft variable Adjacent to nonresidential zone: 0 ft			
Interior Setback – Upper State Street (USS) Overlay Zone and Market-Rate Ownership Units in Medium-High Density Tier			Residential use only: Same as R-M Zone Mixed-use adjacent to nonresidential zone: Same as R-M Zone See code for mixed-use buildings adjacent to residential zone		Residential use only: Same as R-M Zone Mixed-use adjacent to nonresidential zone: 0 ft See code for mixed-use buildings adjacent to residential zone	
Uncovered Parking	Same as covered parking. Uncovered parking must be screened in front yard. See code for setback reductions with a 3 ft landscape buffer					
Encroachments	See §30.140.090 for encroachments in setbacks and open yards					

TABLE B: AUD PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Title 30 Zoning Designations	R-M	R-MH	O-R	C-R	C-G	M-C
OPEN YARD						
See code for standards on the location of open yard: SBMC § 30.140.140						
General Open Yard	Area: 15% of lot area; includes interior setbacks Dimensions: 10 ft x 10 ft Optional common open yard with one 20 ft x 20 ft area, see code for details		1 to 4 Units: None <u>4 or more Units:</u> Open yard may be located on the ground or upper stories (roof decks) Option A – one common area 15 ft x 15 ft; or Option B – 15% of lot area, plus one common area 20 ft x 20 ft, see code for details Market Rate Ownership Units in USS Overlay Zone: Same as R-M Zone			
Private Open Yard – Per Unit	GROUND LEVEL			UPPER STORY		
	Studio unit: 100 sq.ft. 1-Bedroom unit: 120 sq.ft. 2-Bedroom unit: 140 sq.ft. 3 or more Bedroom unit: 160 sq.ft. Minimum Dimensions: 10 ft x 10 ft.			Studio unit: 60 sq.ft. 1 Bedroom unit: 72 sq.ft. 2 Bedroom unit: 84 sq.ft. 3 or more Bedroom unit: 96 sq.ft. Minimum Dimensions: 6 ft x 6 ft		
PARKING						
Average-Unit Size Density	Central Business District 0 spaces required, maximum 1 space allowed					
	<u>Outside Central Business District:</u> Two or fewer Bedrooms 1 space per unit Three or more Bedrooms 2 spaces per unit Guest Parking 0 spaces required Bicycle Parking1 per unit					
	<u>Market Rate Ownership Units in USS Overlay Zone:</u> Studio 1.25 spaces per unit* One-bedroom 1.5 spaces per unit* Two or more bedrooms 2 spaces per unit Guest Parking 1 space per 4 units Bicycle Parking1 per unit * 600 sq.ft. or Less 1 per unit					
Affordable Housing	1 space per unit, which may be further reduced on State Density Bonus projects, see Government Code § 65915					

WHAT IS A VARIABLE SETBACK?

In nonresidential zones, some AUD Projects are allowed to provide either a uniform setback or a “variable setback” (SBMC §[30.150.090.E](#)). A variable setback is when the building footprint intrudes *into* the uniform setback, an equal compensating area is provided that is *outside* the uniform setback.

How to Show Compliance with the Variable Setback

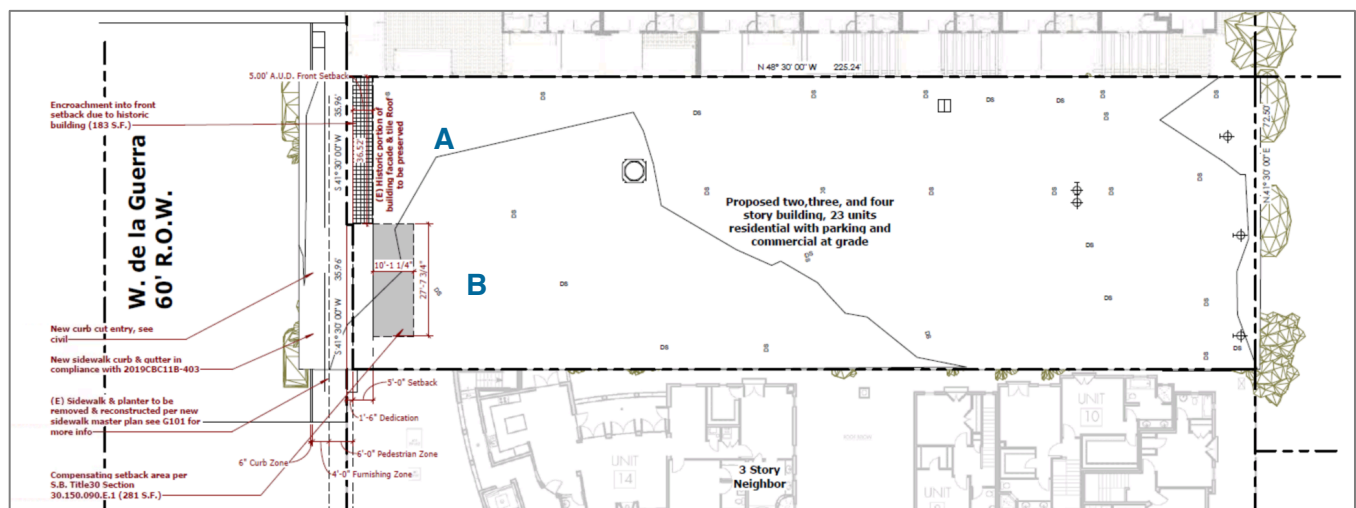
1. Show the **5-foot or 6-foot Setback Area** on the Site Plan.
2. Show the **building footprint of all floors** on the Site Plan. Calculate the total of all areas of the building that encroach into the setback. (*e.g., Area "A" = 183 sq.ft.*)
3. Show a **Compensating Setback Area** that extends past the minimum setback line and is at least as large as the encroachment area calculated in Step 2. (*e.g., Area "B" = 281 sq.ft.*)

Compensating Setback Area Location

Although all floors of a multi-story building may encroach into the variable setback, the compensating setback area must be provided **on the ground floor**. The compensating setback area must be unobstructed by all parking, buildings, and structures from the ground up. Note that the compensating setback area is the area of the building **footprint** that encroaches into the setback, not the total amount of floor area that encroaches into the setback. In other words, if Area A extends three stories high and is 150 sq.ft. total, the compensating areas is still only 50 sq.ft., which is the building footprint.

If the variable setback is the front setback, the additional compensating setback area must be in the front yard, and not located farther from the adjacent front lot line than one half (½) of the depth of the lot. For example, *if the depth of the lot is 200 feet; the compensating setback area shall not be located farther than 100 feet from the front lot line.*

Example Site Plan



Credit: Edward de Vicente, Architect



HOW DO I FIND MY LAND USE DESIGNATION?

Finding the General Plan or Local Coastal Program land use designations and density tiers (dwelling units per acre) can be found in a few ways. The easiest method, is to find your parcel on the [General Plan Map](#) or [Coastal Land Use Plan Map](#). Use the map legend to find the maximum dwelling units per acre (du/ac). These maps are not parcel-specific, so if you can't tell exactly where your property is, you can also look up the designation using the property search function in the City's [Accela Citizen Access \(ACA\) Portal](#) or by searching the address through [MAPS](#) (Mapping Analysis & Printing System). In MAPS, select the "Planning" layer to find the Land Use Designations and Priority Housing Overlay.

CITY'S GENERAL PLAN MAP

