



MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

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Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

Proposed Text Amendments

Application Information

REQUEST NUMBER:	CPA 25-04, Accessory Dwelling Units	
Report Issuance Date:	November 10, 2025	
APPLICANT:	Board of County Commissioners 2401 SE Monterey Road Stuart, FL 34996	
REPRESENTED BY:	Paul Schilling, Growth Management Department Director	
PLANNER-IN-CHARGE:	Amy Offenbach, Planner Growth Management Department	
PUBLIC HEARINGS:	Local Planning Agency (LPA):	12/04/2025
	Board of County Commission Transmittal:	12/09/2025
	Board of County Commission Adoption:	TBD

Applicant Request

This request, initiated by the Board of County Commissioners, is to amend the text of Chapter 2, Overall Goals and Definitions, and Chapter 4, Future Land Use Element, of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (CGMP), regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). A description of the proposed amendments can be found in Sections 1 and 2 of this report. These amendments are concurrent with proposed text amendments to Article 3, Land Development Regulations (LDRs), Martin County Code, which will be presented in a separate public hearing.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendments to Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan regarding Accessory Dwelling Units.

Executive Summary

On August 26, 2025, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved a Resolution to initiate amendments to the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (CGMP) and Land Development Regulations (LDRs) regarding the subject of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in furtherance of providing affordable housing. As a result, staff has proposed amendments to the CGMP regarding ADUs. The proposed amendments will standardize definitions, reorganize criteria and update policies for ADUs.

Section 1. Proposed Text Amendments

The full text of the affected Sections and Policies, including the strike and underline, are presented as Exhibits in the Draft Ordinance attached at the end of this report. Please also see the staff analysis in Section 2 of this report, which describes the basis for the recommended changes. The following list describes the proposed changes to the CGMP.

- **Section 2.4, Definitions.** The existing term, “Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)” will be updated for consistency with Florida Statutes. The new term, “Employee Dwelling Units (EDUs)” will be added to describe living quarters on non-residential properties (currently permitted by the CGMP and LDRs).
- **Policy 4.9B.2, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).** This policy will be added and will contain the criteria, currently existing in the CGMP, for ADUs on residential properties.
- **Policy 4.9B.3, Employee Dwelling Units (EDUs).** This policy will be added to provide direction, not currently found in the CGMP, for EDUs on non-residential properties.
- **Policy 4.13A.1. Intent of agricultural designation.** A line of text will be added to permit one ADU as an accessory to a single-family dwelling.
- **Policy 4.13A.3. Agricultural Ranchette development.** A line of text will be added to permit one ADU as an accessory to a single-family dwelling.
- The existing ADU criteria will be stricken from the following policies, and a line of text will be added to permit one ADU as an accessory to a single-family dwelling.

- **Policy 4.13A.5(1), Rural density (one unit per two acres).**
- **Policy 4.13A.5(2), Residential Estate densities (one unit per acre).**
- **Policy 4.13A.6, Rural Heritage designation.**
- **Policy 4.13A.7(1)(d), Residential development.** The existing ADU criteria will be stricken, and a line of text will be added to permit one ADU as an accessory to a single-family dwelling in all residential future land use designations, excluding mobile home.
- **Policy 4.13A.8. Commercial development.** Text will be added in the Commercial Office/Residential and Marine Waterfront Commercial future land use designations to permit one ADU as an accessory to a single-family dwelling and permit EDUs on properties developed with nonresidential uses.
- **Policy 4.13A.10. Industrial development.** Text will be added to permit EDUs on properties developed with nonresidential uses.

Section 2. Staff Analysis

The CGMP, by definition, intends for ADUs to be located on lots developed with single-family dwelling units. Please see the existing definition of ADUs, from Section 2.4 of the CGMP below.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs): Also referred to as accessory apartments, second units, or granny flats — are additional living quarters on single-family lots that are independent of the primary dwelling unit. The separate living spaces are equipped with kitchen and bathroom facilities, and can be either attached or detached from the main residence.

Pursuant to Florida Statutes (FS) 163.31771, “Accessory dwelling unit means an ancillary or secondary living unit, that has a separate kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area, existing either within the same structure, or on the same lot, as the primary dwelling unit.” Additionally, the statute encourages “the permitting of accessory dwelling units in single-family residential areas in order to increase the availability of affordable rentals”, and states that, “A local government may adopt an ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units in any area zoned for single-family residential use.”

The existing text of the CGMP allows ADUs within most residential future land use designations. However, some future land use designations that permit development of single-

family dwelling units, such as the agriculture designations, Commercial Office/Residential and Marine Waterfront Commercial, do not include references to ADUs for residential development. The proposed text amendments will remove the criteria for ADUs under specific future land use designations and add text in a more appropriate place to allow ADUs in all future land use designations that permit single-family dwelling units. In most cases, the proposed amendments permit ADUs where Land Development Regulations (LDRs) have permitted Guest houses since 1967. The proposed amendments to Article 3, of the LDRs will further discuss Guest houses in a concurrent staff report.

There are some future land use designations that have historically allowed living quarters on nonresidential properties. The existing text of the CGMP permits “watchman’s quarters” in the Marine Waterfront Commercial and Industrial designations. The term, Employee Dwelling Units (EDUs), will be used to describe the living quarters on nonresidential properties and will be added to the permitted use tables of the LDRs in concurrent amendments. Additionally, the LDRs have historically permitted living quarters on nonresidential properties in some of the zoning districts that implement the Commercial Office/Residential, Marine Waterfront Commercial and Industrial future land use designations. The proposed amendments to Article 3, of the LDRs will further discuss Employee Dwelling Units in a concurrent staff report.

Conclusion

Based on staff’s analysis of the subject matter and consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendments to the CGMP regarding ADUs. The basis for staff’s recommendation is outlined below.

- The proposed amendments are consistent with the existing criteria for ADUs within the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and Florida State Statutes.
- The proposed amendments do not impose more restrictive or burdensome requirements before October 1, 2027, in compliance with State Statutes amended by Senate Bill 180.
- The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee supported the proposed amendments presented on November 12, 2025.

Attachments

- Draft Ordinance including proposed amendments indicated by strike and underline.
- Resolution to initiate amendments, dated August 26, 2025.
- Public Comments.
- Staff presentation.