



Affordable Dwelling Unit (AfDU) Ordinance

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: 2/13/2026

General Information

What is the Affordable Dwelling Unit (AfDU) Ordinance?

The AfDU Ordinance is a voluntary incentive program that allows developers to request density bonuses (more units) in exchange for providing affordable housing units to very-low to low-income residents (at or below 80% of the Area Median Income within a development, which helps create more residential market-rate units as well as affordable dwelling units.

Is participation mandatory?

No, Participation in the AfDU program is voluntary. Developers may choose whether to utilize the ordinance as part of their development or rezoning proposal.

What are the affordability levels of the AfDU?

Affordable units must be targeted at households earning up to 80% (low-income) and/or 50% (very-low income) of the Area Median Income (AMI), as defined annually by HUD. The density bonus varies based on the affordability level provided.

What incentives are available for developers?

The primary incentive is a density bonus that allows additional residential units beyond what zoning would otherwise permit. Additional incentives may include expedited application processing, and flexibility in development standards, subject to county review and approval.

Are affordable units rentals or for sale?

The ordinance allows for both rental and for-sale affordable units, subject to applicable program requirements, affordability term restrictions/controls, and long-term public mechanisms.

What is the difference between the Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance (AfDU) Density Bonus and the Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan?

Section 290 of Prince William County's Code of Ordinances Zoning Text Amendment provides two additional pathways to affordable housing in Prince William County, outlined below:

- Affordable Housing via the AfDU Ordinance
 - By-Right Affordable Dwelling Units (AfDUs) utilizing the density bonuses and incentives outlined in the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA)
 - Residential Rezoning/Special Use Permits (SUP) applications utilizing the density bonus table of the ZTA
- Affordable Housing via the 2040 Comprehensive Plan
 - Residential Rezoning/SUP applications utilizing the Housing Chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan



What is By-Right Zoning?

By right use shall mean a use that is permitted in a zoning district upon approval of a site or subdivision plan, without special conditions approved by the Board of County Supervisors.

What Zoning Types are Eligible for By-Right Residential Development?

Any affordable dwelling unit development with a density greater than one dwelling unit for every one acre of gross land area, regardless of the applicable zoning district that is the subject of an application for rezoning, special use permit, site plan review, or subdivision approval, shall be eligible for the bonus density incentives.

Who is eligible to develop AfDU's via the AfDU Ordinance?

Any applicant (typically a private sector developer) is eligible if their proposed development meets several criteria related to project scale, density, and application type. The ordinance is voluntary, allowing developers to receive benefits like density bonuses in exchange for including units for households at or below 80% or 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Who is the primary point of contact for questions regarding the new Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance and related programming?

There are varying contacts depending on the nature of the question you have.

Please see below for a point of reference:

- **Team:** Department of Development Services (DDS)
Email: afdu@pwcgov.org
Topics: Affordable Dwelling Unit (AfDU) Ordinance density bonus calculations, By-Right AfDU site/subdivision plan submissions, and AfDU waivers

- **Team:** Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD)
Email: affordablehousing@pwcgov.org
Topics: Affordable Housing Fund inquiries including but not limited to funding sources and allocations, funding eligibility, and application submission and processing

- **Team:** Department of Planning
Email: planning@pwcgov.org
Topics: Rezoning/Special Use Permit applications requesting density bonus according to the density bonus table in **Chapter 32, Sec. 32-290.03** of Prince William County's Code of Ordinances, Zoning Text Amendment, or density bonus according to the Housing Chapter of Prince William County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Process and Procedures

What is the turnaround time for AfDU application processing?

- AfDU Density Bonus Application
 - 30 days from receipt of the completed Density Bonus Application and receipt of Quality Control Fee (QC) Payment



- By-Right Site/Subdivision Plan Submissions
 - 280 days from receipt of the completed site/submission application. This total number of days includes active county review time only. Time for applicant edits to the site plan does not count toward this turnaround time.

How will developers calculate the average number of bedrooms required to comply with Chapter 32, Sec. 32-290.04 of Prince William County's Code of Ordinances Zoning Text Amendment for projects proposing multiple unit types?

In an affordable dwelling unit development with multiple unit types, e.g., single-family dwellings and townhouses, the affordable dwelling units in the development must match at least one of the market rate types.

Example - If you have 2-3-bedroom townhouses at market rate, the average number of bedrooms must be comparable between the market-rate units and the affordable dwelling units of the same type.

Do deeper proposed affordability unit commitments allow for additional waiver of development standards?

No. Waiver requests are evaluated based on the specific characteristics and constraints of each development proposal, rather than the depth of affordability commitments.

What documentation/information satisfies the justification on a waiver application?

Waiver approval is determined on a case-by-case basis. However, there is fundamental information that should be included on each waiver form submitted. Such information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Applicable application details
 - Applicant Contact Name, Title, Organization, Phone, Email Address, and Physical Address
 - AfDU Density Bonus Application Number
 - GPIN
- Clear notation of the Design and Construction Standard Manual (DCSM) section requesting to be waived
 - DCSM Number Reference
 - Detailed relative DCSM description
- Justification
 - Detailed summary that outlines why the relative DCSM cannot be met. Identify projected affected parties/land, contributing factors/barriers to achieving the DCSM requirement, and provide a concise statement requesting what alternatively should be considered as acceptable, or a statement affirming that the specified barrier justifies the waiver request.



What are the application steps?

- By-Right AfDU Density Bonus Applications
 - Step 1: Pre-Application Preparation
 - Gather all required documents/materials
 - Pre-Application submission meeting recommended
 - Step 2: Submit Density Bonus Application via the ePortal [online](#)
 - Incomplete applications will be denied
 - Step 3: Written Determination will be issued within 30 days of application submission
 - Step 4: Following Density Bonus Application approval, the applicant will need to submit their site/subdivision plan to the Land Development Division [online](#)
- By-Right AfDU Site/Subdivision Applications
 - Step 1: Pre-Application Preparation
 - Gather all required documents/materials
 - Pre-Application submission meeting recommended
 - Step 2: Submit Site/Subdivision Application via the ePortal [online](#)
 - Approved density bonus application required
 - Step 3: Review and determination will be issued within 280 days of application submission
- Rezoning/SUP AfDU Applications (Eligible residential rezoning applications intending to utilize the density table in the AfDU Ordinance)
 - Step 1: Complete the relevant Rezoning/SUP application process with the Planning Department
 - *Please note, that the density bonus application is required at the time of the initial application submission to Planning*
 - Step 2: Following Rezoning/SUP approval, Development Services will process the density bonus application
 - Step 3: Review and determination will be issued

Is resource support available for the AfDU application submission process?

Yes. In addition to the comprehensive resources published online [here](#), pre-submission meetings are recommended to support seamless application processing. Pre-submission meeting options are outlined below:

- Meetings with the Department of Development Services (DDS) AfDU Project Manager for
 - AfDU Density Bonus Application submissions
 - By-Right site/subdivision plan submissions
- Joint Meeting with the DDS AfDU Project Manager and Planning Department for
 - Rezoning/SUP Application submissions seeking to utilize the AfDU Ordinance density bonus table