



"We are a welcoming, active and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history."

Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

Prepared By: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services
Jay Roberts, Code Enforcement Official

PROJECT INFORMATION SUMMARY

Case File: Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 25-01 – Accessory Dwelling Unit 2026 Update

Request: Public Hearing and Recommendation to City Council on Proposed Amendments to Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 12 of the Placerville Municipal Code Regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs)

Summary Recommendation:

1. Conduct a public hearing to receive public input on the proposed amendments.
2. Determine that the proposed amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (General Rule Exemption), as the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
3. Forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council for Ordinance No. 2025-XX amending Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 12 of the Placerville Municipal Code to update standards for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs) for consistency with State law changes effective January 1, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The City's ADU and JADU regulations in Section 10-4-12 were last comprehensively updated in 2024. State ADU law continues to evolve, with several bills enacted in 2025 taking effect on January 1, 2026 (e.g., SB 543, AB 1154, SB 9 (2025), and others) (see Attachment C). These changes further streamline approvals, clarify standards, and strengthen enforcement to promote housing production.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) released the updated 2025 ADU Handbook in January 2025, incorporating prior changes (including permanent elimination of owner-occupancy requirements for ADUs via AB 976). HCD has announced a webinar on January 30, 2026, for an Addendum to the 2025 Handbook addressing the latest 2026-effective laws.

To ensure ongoing compliance and avoid risks such as Housing Element decertification or enforcement actions, the proposed amendments proactively align the City's ordinance with these

impending State requirements while retaining objective local standards for design, safety, and infrastructure.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In direct response to the HCD Letter of Technical Assistance dated October 8, 2025 (Attachment D), and to ensure compliance with State law changes effective January 1, 2026—including AB 1154, SB 9 (2025), and SB 543—the proposed ordinance amends the City's ADU and JADU regulations. These bills streamline ministerial approval processes (e.g., 15-day completeness review), limit owner-occupancy requirements for certain JADUs, prohibit short-term rentals for JADUs, clarify square footage as interior livable space, and strengthen HCD enforcement over local ordinances.

The amendments incorporate guidance from the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) 2025 ADU Handbook (updated January 2025) and prepare for clarifications in the Addendum to the 2025 Handbook, to be discussed at HCD's January 30, 2026 webinar (registration at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/building-standards/adu>).

The redlined text (Attachment A, Exhibit A) removes or modifies provisions that conflict with State law post-January 1, 2026, while retaining objective local standards permitted under State law (e.g., design matching, privacy measures, and 4-ft setbacks). No new discretionary requirements are added, promoting housing production without compromising public health, safety, or infrastructure capacity.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Key Proposed Amendments for Compliance with State Law Effective January 1, 2026:

- Application Processing: Requires a 15-day determination of application completeness, with specific feedback on deficiencies (SB 543).
- Owner-Occupancy for JADUs: Limits owner-occupancy requirements to JADUs sharing sanitation facilities with the primary dwelling (AB 1154).
- Enforcement and HCD Review: Extends mandatory HCD review to JADU ordinances; strengthens nullification of non-compliant local provisions (SB 9, 2025).
- Other Alignments: Maintains no owner-occupancy for ADUs (permanent per prior law); up to 1,200 sq. ft. for detached ADUs; 4-ft side/rear setbacks; no additional parking; proportional impact fees; and fire/solar requirements per State codes. Retains local design and historic resource protections where allowed.

These updates facilitate ADU/JADU production, supporting the City's Housing Element goals and RHNA obligations.

General Plan and Housing Element Consistency:

The amendments advance Housing Element programs promoting ADU's as a key strategy for affordable housing supply.

Environmental Review:

The project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3); no potential for significant environmental effects.

Public Communications:

A public notice was published in the Mountain Democrat on December 17, 2025, as shown on the proof of publication (Attachment E). As of the preparation of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comments. Any comments submitted before the scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be presented to the Commission during the public hearing.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

The **Planning Commission's** authority to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council on proposed amendments to Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 12 of the Placerville Municipal Code (regarding Accessory Dwelling Units and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units) comes from the following sources:

- **City of Placerville Practices and Descriptions:** The official City website and related documents describe the Planning Commission as responsible for reviewing land use proposals and making recommendations to the City Council on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (Title 10 of the Municipal Code), rezoning requests, General Plan amendments, and other planning matters. This includes preparing and reviewing ordinance amendments for consistency with the General Plan and State law.
- **Standard California Local Government Structure:** Under California law (Government Code Sections 65100 et seq. and 65800 et seq.), local planning commissions serve in an advisory capacity to the legislative body (City Council). They typically conduct public hearings on zoning ordinance amendments and forward recommendations to the Council, which holds final adoption authority. This process aligns with Placerville's practices, as evidenced by historical examples where the Commission has reviewed and recommended zoning text amendments to the Council.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

Hold a public meeting; and,

The Planning Commission may take one of the following actions based on the analysis provided:

1. Forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council
2. Forward a recommendation of approval with modifications to the City Council
3. Continue the item for further review following HCD's January 30, 2026, webinar
4. Recommend denial

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Ordinance No. XX – Draft
 - a. Redlined Zoning Code
- B. Planning Commission Resolution No. XX - Draft
- C. Addendum No. 1 to the 2025 HCD ADU Handbook
- D. HCD Technical Assistance Letter dated October 8, 2025
- E. Proof of Publication

INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

City of Placerville General Plan
City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance
City of Placerville 6th Cycle Housing Element
California Government Code §§ 66310–66342 (consolidated ADU law)
SB 543, AB 1154, SB 9 (2025) bill texts and analyses
Government Code § 66326(d), as amended
SB 543 amendments to Gov. Code §§ 66317, 66335
AB 1154 amendment to Gov. Code § 66333(b)
SB 9 (2025) amendments
HCD Accessory Dwelling Unit Handbook (Updated January 2025)
HCD technical assistance letter to Placerville (October 8, 2025)