



Overview of Incentives for Developing Affordable Dwelling Units

Updated: December 2024

The following statement summarizes incentives available for qualifying residential development proposals, including mixed use developments, that provide affordable housing to Very-Low and Low Income Households for the following types of categories:

- **Multi-family Development:** Market rate and deed restricted affordable units
- **Senior Rental Housing**
- **Housing Units for Large Families (three or more bedrooms):** Market rate and deed restricted affordable for-sale and/or rental units

These incentives are intended to help implement General Plan objectives, policies, goals, and implementation programs which aim to encouraging and minimizing obstacles to the production of housing for lower income levels, and to set forth specific qualifying criteria for obtaining incentives.

Both the City of Visalia and the Visalia City Council recognize the value of providing adequate housing opportunities for all segments of the community.

Density Bonuses

The State of California allows increased densities, reduced parking, and incentives, concessions, and exemptions/waivers from local development standards and guidelines, as requested by the developer, in exchange for building affordable units. These incentives may be used in addition to the City of Visalia's local incentives. Details can be found in [Visalia Municipal Code Chapter 17.32 Article 2](#).

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

One or more ADUs are allowed "by-right" to any proposed or existing single-family, multi-family, and mixed use housing site. ADUs are smaller housing units located on the same property with an existing dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities, including a kitchen with cooking facilities, bathroom, and sleeping area.

The City's plan check and impact fees generally are less than those which apply to the development of the primary dwelling unit on the site. Such fees are assessed proportionately to

the size of the property's primary residence. Impact fees are waived for any ADU being less than 750 square feet in area.

More information on ADUs can be found on the [City of Visalia website](#) pertaining to ADUs.

Permit-Ready Accessory Dwelling Units

The City of Visalia's Permit-Ready (i.e., Pre-Approved) Accessory Dwelling Unit Program allows residents to utilize one of three building plans at no cost to the property owner. The plans, which include a studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom and range between 490 and 918 square feet, have been prepared exclusively for Visalia property owners through a partnership with a local architect firm. The permit-ready ADUs are subject to a streamlined approval process. The property owner is responsible for securing a contractor, providing required materials (including solar and truss calculations), and paying construction and permit costs.

More information on the Permit-Ready ADUs can be found on the [City of Visalia website](#) pertaining to Permit-Ready ADUs.

Deferral of Impact Fees

The Building Safety Division is authorized to defer the payment of impact fees from the time of permit issuance to the time of final occupancy associated with the project's building permit. For more information, contact the City of Visalia Building Division at (559) 713-4444, or visit the [City of Visalia Building Safety Division website](#).

Transportation Impact Fee Reduction

The City of Visalia's Affordable Housing Infill Incentive Program provides a percentage reduction in the amount of Transportation Impact Fees for developments in eligible locations. Developments which contain affordable household units are eligible for the largest possible reduction, up to 60 percent of the base fee. Fee credits are given based on the site's prior use.

Affordable household units, for purposes of the fee reduction program, are defined as having as households earning 120% or below of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Tulare County. The qualify project must have at least 50% of the units affordable to households earning 120% or below of the AMI, or at least 20% of the units affordable to households earning 80% or below of the AMI.

The qualifying project must be a Residential project or a Mixed Use project with a residential component. Qualifying projects must also have their adjacent public street travel lanes paved, must be within the City's Tier 1 Urban Development Boundary, and must be at least 75% surrounded by existing development that has been in place an average of 15 or more years.

Details regarding this program can be found on the [Affordable Housing Infill Incentive Program informational sheet](#) posted on the City of Visalia website.

Multi-family & Mixed Use Housing Development allowed by-right in Overlay zones

Certain opportunity sites throughout the City limits are eligible for a waiver of a Conditional Use Permit entitlement and permitted by-right if the development includes 20% or more of its dwelling units as affordable to lower income households. The City of Visalia has 19 opportunity sites. These sites have a zoning designation of either Multi-family Residential (R-M-3), Commercial Mixed Use (C-MU), or Downtown Mixed Use (D-MU), and the sites may be either vacant or non-vacant and suitable for redevelopment. A list of the sites and the base development standards can be found in the Visalia Municipal Code, Chapter 17.06 Article 2 (effective February 20, 2025) at the following [posting on the City of Visalia website](#).

Reasonable Accommodation

The City of Visalia has adopted a regulation for the purpose of facilitating accommodation for persons with physical or non-physical disabilities. This reasonable accommodation regulation (i.e., [Visalia Municipal Code Section 17.42.050\(C\)](#)) allows for a waiver of one or more development standards, if necessary, to accommodate a structure or devise that is necessary to facilitate reasonable access to a building or accommodation. Under this regulation, no variance shall be required, and no processing fee shall be required. This ensures that such persons can obtain building permits without the need to obtain a variance entitlement before the construction permit is issued.

City planning staff is available to assist those with disabilities regarding the process and in filing and having plans reviewed by the City. For additional assistance or questions please contact the Visalia Planning Division at (559) 713-4359 or come to City Hall to speak with a Planning Division staff member.

For additional information on any of the above incentives, please contact us:

City of Visalia Planning Division

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