Garages and Cars or Houses and People

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Overview

• Backyard cottages as adaptable affordable housing
• Parking reform
• Potential for housing
accessory dwelling units

second units

mother-in-law units

garage conversions

backyard cottage

granny flats
Garage conversions: untapped affordable housing

Benefits

• Increase affordable housing stock
• More flexible housing
• Generate revenue for homeowners and cities
• Preserve neighborhood character
• Geographically diverse

Source: Raleigh Accessory Dwellings
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Barriers
• Neighbor opposition
• Floor area restrictions for the second unit
• Height, setbacks, lot size, and lot coverage limits
• Architectural & design review
• Safety, site development, structural, subsurface, and environmental review requirements
• Off-street parking requirements
Parking as a barrier to legal garage conversions

1. Covered off-street parking requirements
Parking as a barrier to legal garage conversions

1. Covered off-street parking requirements
2. Fear of on-street parking congestion
   1. ¾ of backyard cottage residents own cars (Chapple et al., 2011)
Require off-street parking

Better manage on-street parking
The Promise of Parking Reform

1. Limit the number of on-street parking permits
   • Residential parking permit district
   • Restrict number of permits by either frontage or per house

2. Remove the requirement for *covered* off-street parking
   • Allow tandem parking
   • Can keep all other building code standards
The Potential for Reform

- Parking is political
- Increase legal affordable housing supply
- How much new housing?

Los Angeles has 1.6 million single-family homes of households tried to build, plan to build, or would consider building a backyard cottage.

In San Francisco, 31 percent of households tried to build, plan to build, or would consider building a backyard cottage.

\[ \text{1.6 million} \times \text{31 percent} = 496,000 \text{ new garage housing units} \]
Thank you

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Sources

• Chapple, K., J. Wegmann, A. Nemirow, and C. Dentel-Post. Yes in My Backyard: Mobilizing the Market for Secondary Units. 2011.


• Durning, A. Unlocking Home: Three Keys to Affordable Communities. In, Sightline Institute, 2013.


• U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Sruvey (2013) 1-Year Estimates. Table S2504 - Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units.