

City of Sierra Madre

Development Services Department 232 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard, Sierra Madre, CA 91024 phone 626.355.7138 fax 626.355.2251

September 14, 2012

RE: Sierra Madre Second Unit Survey and Amnesty Program

Dear Property Owner:

The City of Sierra Madre is in the process of updating the Housing Element in our General Plan. The provision of second units have been identified as a means of helping the City to provide its share of affordable housing units identified in the State-mandated regional housing needs allocation (RHNA), while preserving the low density character of our neighborhoods and limiting multi-family new construction. Second units, commonly known as "granny flats", are essentially guest houses with a kitchen, and can provide an affordable rental alternative for smaller households.

In order to document the contribution second units make towards providing affordable housing in Sierra Madre, we are requesting all residential property owners with a second unit to please complete the enclosed survey. The survey results will allow us to determine the actual number of second units in the community, their affordability, and the populations they serve, and will help us meet the number of affordable housing units required by RHNA in the Housing Element. The survey is to be completed anonymously and no identifying information is required. Please return the survey in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope no later than October 18, 2012.

As part of this effort, a second unit amnesty program will also be available for those second units that may have been constructed without building permits. The City would like to legalize these units so that they can contribute towards the RHNA requirements. The amnesty program will enable property owners to register these units with the City without facing fines for non-permitted construction. In addition, legalizing an unpermitted second unit can increase a property's value upon sale. *Property owners will not be subject to code enforcement action when applying for amnesty of their second unit, unless there is a clear and imminent danger to public safety and/or environmental health. The enclosed "Second Unit Amnesty Program Summary Sheet" provides details on the program and outlines the steps involved in applying for an amnesty permit.*

Thank you very much for your participation in this important process. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Danny Castro, Director of Development Services at (626) 355-7138.

Sincerely,

Danny Castro

Director of Development Services

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Attachments – Second Unit Survey, Second Unit Amnesty Program Summary Sheet



SECOND UNIT SURVEY SIERRA MADRE 2008-2014 HOUSING ELEMENT

An important component of the Housing Element update is planning for future housing needs, including the provision of affordable housing. In Sierra Madre, second units, or "granny flats", provide an opportunity to address affordable housing requirements while maintaining the quality and character of existing neighborhoods. For this reason, Sierra Madre is collecting information on existing second units to assess their affordability and the populations they serve.

Please be advised that this survey is to be completed anonymously and that no identifying information is required or requested from the person completing the survey.

A second unit, as defined by the State, is a self-contained residential dwelling either attached to the main house or in a separate structure on the property. The unit shall include <u>all</u> of the following:

- A bedroom
- A full bathroom
- A separate cooking facility

If you have a second unit, please complete the survey and return to City Hall in the enclosed postage paid envelope by October 18, 2012. If you do not have a second unit, you do not need to complete the survey. However, if you have any thoughts you'd like to share with the City on second units, we welcome your comments on the last page of the survey.

1.	Is the s a) b) c)	second unit: Attached to your main house Detached from the main house Located above a garage		5.	About a) b) c) d)	how old is your second unit? Built before 1960 Built between 1960 and 1989 Built between 1990 and 1999 After 1999
2.	Does the second unit have its own outside entry?					
	a) b)	Yes No		6.	Is the s a) b)	second unit occupied? Yes (answer questions 6 to 9) No (skip to question 11)
3.	Type of second unit:					
	a)	Studio	6.	7.	How m	any people live in the unit?
	b)	1 bedroom			a)	1 person
	c)	2 bedrooms			b)	2 people
					c)	3 people
4.	What i	is the size of your second unit?				
	a)	Under 600 square feet	8.	8.	What a	are the age groups of the current
	b) Between 600 to 800 square feet				occupa	ants of your unit?
	c)	Greater than 800 square feet			a)	Under 16 years
					b)	16-30 years
					c)	31-55 years

d)

Over 55 years

	What are the occupations of the current second unit residents?		What is the monthly rent of your unit (in not currently occupied, please estimate
a)	Student		what you would charge if/when rented)?
b)	Caretaker/household employee		a) No rent is charged
c)	Retired		b) Under \$400
d)	Professional		c) \$400 to \$700
e)	Other		d) \$701 to \$1,100
f)	Don't know		e) \$1,101 to \$1,300
.,	Bontanov		g) \$1,301 to \$1,500
			h) Over \$1,501
How	many cars do the current occupants own?		, στοι φι,σσι
a)	Zero		
b)	One	12.	What is the overall condition of your unit?
c)	Two		a) Just redone
,			b) In good condition
			c) Needs repairs
			d) Needs major renovation
		13.	Would you potentially be interested in
			participating in Sierra Madre's Second
			Unit Amnesty Program?
			a) Yes (Please contact the City a
			the number below)
			b) No
Addi	tional Comments Regarding Second Uni	ts:	

The City of Sierra Madre thanks you for your participation in this survey. Questions? Contact Danny Castro at 355-7138 or dcastro@cityofsierramadre.com



SECOND UNIT AMNESTY PROGRAM SUMMARY

Purpose

Sierra Madre is initiating a Second Unit Amnesty Program for a six month period, from October 2012 to March 2013. Second units have been identified as a means of helping the City to provide its share of affordable housing units identified in the Statemandated regional housing needs allocation (RHNA). The program will offer incentives to property owners to register existing, non-permitted second units by demonstrating safe and habitable conditions.

The City's goals in establishing the amnesty program are:

- 1) To encourage healthy and safe conditions in existing housing units.
- 2) To meet the City's share of affordable housing units (RHNA) required by the State.
- 3) To reduce or eliminate the requirement to establish zoning for higher density multifamily housing.

A "second unit" is a self-contained residential dwelling either attached to the main house or in a separate structure on the property. To qualify as a second unit, the unit must include <u>all</u> of the following:

- ❖ A bedroom
- ❖ A full bathroom
- A separate cooking facility

Why Would I Want A Second Unit Amnesty Permit?

- A legal second unit can increase your property value and make it more attractive to potential buyers.
- Provides an opportunity to register existing second units with the City.
- Allows for the relaxation of development standards during the amnesty period, such as reduced setbacks, and increased height and square feet limits.

What Are The Basic Eligibility Requirements For An Amnesty Permit?

- Property owner must document that the existing second unit did not have an individual address as of the 2000 census, does not have a building permit of record, AND was constructed prior to January 1, 2006. Acceptable documentation includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - Written affidavits from former and/or current owners, tenants, or neighbors, signed and notarized under penalty of perjury
 - County Assessor records

- o Rental contracts and/or receipts
- o Income tax records
- Utility bills
- Property owner must maintain either the residence or the second unit as a primary residence.

What Standards Does a Second Unit Need to Meet?

- Second unit must not exceed 800 square feet in size.
- Height must not exceed 15 feet, or up to 25 feet if built above a garage.
- Side and rear yard setbacks may be reduced to zero where privacy and environmental considerations are not compromised.
- Must undergo an inspection performed by the City's Building Official; property owner must be willing to upgrade to health and safety codes to be granted an amnesty permit.

<u>Please Note</u>: The City stresses that applicants will <u>not</u> be penalized for inquiring about the amnesty program. Information applicants provide on the Amnesty Permit application will not be used as the basis for enforcement action unless there is a clear and imminent danger to public safety and/or environmental health.

What Are The Necessary Steps To Receive An Amnesty Permit?

- 1. Property owner submits complete application to the Development Services Department.
- 2. An appointment is scheduled for the Building Official to inspect the second unit.
- 3. Given the Building Official's findings of any necessary upgrades to bring the unit up to code, the property owner decides whether they want to pursue the Amnesty Permit.
- 4. If the applicant chooses to pursue the Amnesty Permit, neighbors within 100' of the property will be noticed of the request to legalize the existing second unit. If no neighbor appeals within 7 days, the permit is granted. If an appeal is received, the request for the amnesty permit will go before the Planning Commission for review at a public hearing. If the request is denied, the existing second unit will continue to be allowed as a nonconforming unit.
- 5. Once the Amnesty Permit is approved, the property owner has one year to complete any necessary improvements to bring the unit into compliance with the Uniform Building Code and California Health and Safety Code. Once the unit has received a final inspection by the Building Department, notice will be sent to Los Angeles County to legalize the second unit.

City staff will provide assistance to potential applicants in completing the amnesty application.

For additional information please contact the Sierra Madre Development Services Department at (626) 355-7138.

Danny Castro, Director of Development Services Leticia Cardoso, Senior Planner