

Local

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Planners want 'granny unit' restrictions eased

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Watsonville's Planning Commission is recommending that the City Council change an ordinance to encourage building "granny units" in the city.

As it stands, the ordinance allows such units on lots of 12,000

square feet or more and requires four parking spaces, two of which must be covered, for both the granny unit and the house in front.

Maureen Owens, the city's planning director, said few single-family lots meet the minimum square footage. She said

her department gets inquiries all the time from people who are building and want to include a granny unit, or who want to add a unit for a family member, but don't have the required space.

Owens said only one such unit has been legally constructed in

the city, although many more exist.

"It's a great resource for housing for seniors citizens," she said.

The commission's new recommendation is a minimum of 6,500 square feet and three parking spaces, none of which

need to be covered.

If the council approves the change, people who have constructed the units without a permit would be able to obtain permits and legalize the units.

The city's ordinance, does, however, stipulate that the resident of the back unit be 60 or

older, or one of two residents be over 60. The changes recommended by the Planning Commission won't change that.

Owens said she had no idea how many of the city's granny units house younger people.

She said she expects the council to take the matter up at its second meeting in March.