

Limitations to dwellings on property zoned for Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) in Hood River County (HRC)

Article 3 of the HRC zoning regulations is titled “Definitions” and includes the following:

Sec 3.00 - defines a Dwelling Unit as “one or more rooms designed for occupancy by one family and not having more than one (1) cooking facility.”

Sec 3.00 - defines Accessory Building or Use as “a building or use which (1) is subordinate to and serves a principle building or principle use; (2) is subordinate in area, extent or purpose to the principle building or principle use served; (3) contributes to the comfort, convenience, or necessity of the occupants of the principle building or principle use; and (4) is located on the same zoning parcel or lot as the principle building or principle use. Examples of accessory uses are private garages, storage sheds, carports or patio covers.”

Article 7 of the HRC zoning regulations is titled “Exclusive Farm Use Zone” (EFU).

It is the policy of Hood River County to preserve and maintain the county’s agricultural lands for agricultural uses, consistent with existing and future farm practices. To accomplish this policy, the EFU is intended to designate, preserve, stabilize and enhance agricultural and farm use areas within the county for food, fiber and livestock production. It is the purpose of this zone to insure the orderly use of agricultural and farm land and protect it from inappropriate development. The zone is intended to meet the requirements of State law and regulations.

Allowable uses in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan as they pertain to dwellings in the EFU include: dwellings or housing customarily provided in conjunction with farm use (farm operator dwellings, additional farm worker housing) and non-farm dwellings. Under certain circumstances, a temporary hardship dwelling for a relative may also be allowed.

For planning purposes the zoning ordinance as it pertains to EFU, generally allows for only one single family dwelling unit, buildings accessory to a dwelling, and permitted agricultural buildings for animals and equipment as necessary to operate a farm.

The zone does not allow any additional residential dwellings unrelated to farm use to be created out of space within a primary dwelling or inside accessory buildings or other non-qualifying structure.

In instances where the HRC Planning Department becomes aware that additional, unpermitted dwellings have been created on property zoned EFU, an order to decommission the unpermitted residential dwelling will be issued to the property owner.

The property owner may seek to convert an unpermitted dwelling into a detached accessory building for allowable uses by applying for a land use permit, subject to the following standards:

- A. As part of a complete application, a detailed decommissioning plan must be submitted that outlines how the former dwelling will be converted into an allowable accessory building. The decommissioning plan shall also describe how the building is proposed to be used after it is decommissioned and floor plans showing the proposed layout of the building in compliance with the requirements of this Section.

- B. Within the timelines prescribed in the decommissioning order, the following improvements shall be removed from the former unpermitted dwelling:
- 1) All kitchen appliances and associated hardware and 220v electrical components;
 - 2) All kitchen sinks and associated plumbing, unless allowed to remain in order to accommodate an allowed use of the building;
 - 3) All plumbing or electrical needing to be removed shall be capped below the floor or cut into the wall and covered.
- C. At the discretion of the Planning Director, the property owner may be required to record a deed restriction (*available at the Planning Department*) indicating that the former dwelling is no longer allowed to be used as a residence and is permitted only for use as an accessory building or other permissible structure.
- D. At the discretion of the planning director, the property owner may be required to execute an agreement with the County agreeing to properly decommission the former dwelling within the required timelines and agreeing to pay enforcement costs should the owner fail to meet the terms of the agreement. The agreement shall be signed by all owners of the property.
- E. An existing manufactured dwelling or mobile home may not be retained on a lot or parcel and converted into an accessory building.