



# Pre-approved or Pre-reviewed Building Plans

LOCAL  
IMPLEMENTATION

Implemented on Cape Cod

## OVERVIEW

Pre-approved or pre-reviewed building plans can expedite the building process and reduce costs (like permitting fees) since they have already been deemed compliant with local regulations. Municipalities or other governmental entities may work with consultants to develop building plans that are provided for free or at a significantly reduced cost for a variety of housing types, that are compliant with local regulations. Communities across the country are using pre-approved or pre-reviewed plans to stimulate housing development. The plans may require minor administrative review to ensure the proposed building meets standards like setbacks and lot coverage, but the review period can be drastically shorter for pre-reviewed or approved plans and can reinforce development of housing that fits into the community's context and addresses its needs.

### CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

-  Not Allowed to Build Multi-family Housing
-  Too Expensive to Build New Housing
-  Too Expensive to Secure or Maintain Housing
-  Hard to Find Year-round Housing

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Having already undergone a thorough review process by the local permitting body, the time and uncertainty associated with obtaining building permits can be reduced
- Universal design standards can be integrated
- Pre-approved building plans can ensure a development is responsive to and complements the local architectural context, though they may require adaptation to align with the specific needs or characteristics of a particular site
- It is important they provide enough variety that they do not create a cookie-cutter feel
- Time and resources, often including consultants, are required to develop the plans

## RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

**Pre-approved Plans** - The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) provides an overview of pre-approved plans as well as multiple examples from around the country.

**Pattern Book Homes for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Michigan** - This publication by the Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation includes building concepts, sample interior layouts, and open-source construction documents focused on multi-unit infill development.

**ADU Fast Track Gallery** - Raleigh's (NC) Fast Track Program makes constructing an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) a more accessible process for residents. Fast Track plans have been reviewed for Building Code compliance.

### CASE STUDY: COTTAGE HOME PROGRAM

This program offered by the City of Clovis, CA, offers residents the opportunity to construct one of three streamlined plans on their property with a rear yard facing an alley. It was originally created to encourage infill development in certain areas of the City where properties have access to alleys but is now made available to qualifying properties city-wide.

See more about the program [here](#).

