



Kent County

Department of Planning Services Division of Planning

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL OF ECHO UNIT (Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity)

Purpose:

ECHO housing allows you to provide a small temporary residence on your property for your aging parent who is in need of support, or your relative who has a serious health problem or physical disability. By submitting a completed application, you are requesting administrative approval from the Director of Planning Services to install a small **removable** home on the same lot as your single-family dwelling within the AC, AR, RS1 or RMH zoning district.

Conditions for Approval:

- Minimum area of an ECHO unit for one occupant is 280 SF, or for two occupants is 400 SF.
- Maximum area of an ECHO unit is 1200 square feet.
- Maximum height of an ECHO unit is 16 feet, or one story.
- Coverage of the rear lot by the ECHO unit may not exceed 30%; Coverage of the entire lot by both the ECHO unit and principal residence may not exceed 30%.
- The ECHO unit should be placed so that yard space remains as usable as possible.
- Access must be provided to the ECHO unit without going through the principal residence.
- Walls of the ECHO unit containing large windows may not be placed near lot lines or overlooking any abutting property.
- The foundation of the ECHO unit must be constructed of easily removable materials such as timber pilings or cement block piers, so that the lot may be restored to its original use after removal with as little expense as possible.
- No permanent fencing, walls or other structures may be installed that will hinder the removal of the ECHO unit from the lot.
- At least one owner of the principal residence and lot must live in one of the dwelling units on the lot.
- At least one occupant of the principal residence and at least one occupant of the ECHO unit must be related by blood, marriage or adoption.
- In no case may there be more than two occupants of an ECHO unit.
- At least one occupant of the ECHO unit must be over 62, or unable to live independently because of mental or physical illness or disability.

- Adequate parking must be provided for any vehicles owned by the occupants of the ECHO unit. The number of spaces required will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Planning Services, taking into account existing parking availability. In some cases, the Director of Planning may request a list of vehicles owned and operated by the property owners, qualifying relative, and additional ECHO occupant, if any.
- All walkways from parking areas and the principal residence to the ECHO unit should be suitable for wheelchair and stretcher access, as determined by the Director of Planning Services.
- The exterior of the ECHO unit must be compatible with the principal residence in terms of color, siding, roof pitch, window detailing, roofing materials and foundation or skirting appearance, as determined by the Director of Planning Services.
- ECHO units must meet the minimum setbacks required for a principal structure within the zoning district in which it is located.
- Note that other appropriate or more stringent conditions may be added where deemed necessary by the Director of Planning Services to protect public health, safety and welfare, and the single-family characteristic of the neighborhood.

Supporting Documentation:

In addition to completing the application in its entirety and submitting the required nonrefundable processing fee of \$400, you must also submit the following supporting documentation before your application will be considered for administrative approval:

1. PLOT PLAN:

All applications must include a plot plan of your lot showing all of the following:

- The location of all structures on the property.
- The dimensions of all structures on the property.
- The square footage of both dwellings.
- The location of parking for occupants of the principal residence.
- The location of parking for occupants of the ECHO unit.
- The location of any septic system and/or well.

2. FLOOR PLAN:

All applications must include a floor plan for the ECHO unit. (You may use the manufacturer's or builder's brochure if available.)

3. SKETCH OR WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF COMPATIBILITY:

All applications must include a sketch or detailed written description showing the compatibility of the exterior of the ECHO unit design and landscaping with that of the main house, including the following:

- Attachment of the ECHO unit to the principal residence, if applicable.
- The appearance of the foundation for the ECHO unit.
- The location of major ECHO unit windows in relation to abutting properties.
- Adaptations for access by physically handicapped or disabled persons.

4. PHOTOGRAPHS:

All applications must include at least one photograph of each dwelling. Label the photograph of the existing home as "Primary Residence", and the photograph of the proposed ECHO Unit as "ECHO".

5. PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY:

All applications must include one of the following:

- Satisfactory proof of age of your qualifying relative. A current State-issued photo ID or birth certificate meets this requirement.
- A signed letter from the physician of your qualifying relative confirming that the individual has a serious illness or physical disability. The letter must include the patient's full name and date of birth, as well as the physician's contact information.

6. LETTERS OF NO OBJECTION:

All applications must include a Letter of No Objection (or signature on the application) from each owner of adjoining property that has a dwelling within 300 feet of the proposed site of the ECHO unit.

IMPORTANT: If you do not obtain all Letters of No Objection (or signatures) required with this application, and you wish to proceed, then you must apply for approval of a Conditional Use from Kent County Levy Court and meet all applicable conditions. There is a separate application form and processing fee for the Conditional Use public hearing process.

7. PROOF OF OWNERSHIP:

All applications must include a copy of a document showing ownership of the ECHO unit, such as a Bill of Sale or title. In addition to the current owner's name, acceptable documentation will include all of the following information:

- Manufacturer Model Number Serial Number or VIN Size
- Roof Pitch Color(s) Year

8. ADEQUATE WATER AND WASTEWATER:

If your property uses private (well) water and/or a septic system, submit the following:

- A description of the facilities for the ECHO unit.
- Copies of any necessary approval letters from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC).

9. REMOVAL PLAN:

If the ECHO unit will be attached in any way to the principal residence, submit the following:

- A plan showing how the ECHO unit can be removed without permanently defacing the exterior of the principal residence.

After Approval:

If your ECHO application is approved, Kent County Division of Planning will issue a form to you titled, *Notice of Decision*. You will present the *Notice of Decision* to the Kent County Division of Inspections & Enforcement to apply for either a placement permit or a building permit, and a Certificate of Occupancy.

***IMPORTANT: You must submit a copy of your Certificate of Occupancy to Kent County Division of Planning for your file. If the Certificate of Occupancy is not received by the first date of re-establishment, then the approval of the ECHO unit will be revoked and you will be notified to remove the unit immediately.**