Accessory Dwelling Units

Implementing New Zoning for ADUs

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**Single Family Home Sales Prices**

The median sales price for a single family home in Newton has nearly doubled since 2003. Source: The Warren Group

**Median Single Family Home Selling Price in Thousands, City of Newton 2003-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$638</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>$755</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>$855</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>$1.1M</td>
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Loss of Low and Middle Income Households

Between 2000 and 2013 Newton gained 4,200 households earning $200,000 or more, while at the same time losing 4,700 households earning $125,000 or less.

Source: Housing Strategy Report, pg. 12
Why sell that ‘happy old house’?

They looked into creating an accessory apartment—a small unit that typically has its own kitchen and bathroom, either inside or on the same property—but their lot wasn’t big enough to meet the city’s requirements for such a dwelling. Instead, they decided to set off two rooms and a bathroom to make a caregiver suite for tenants.

Virginia and Bill Robinson created a caregiver suite in their Newton home.
ADU Zoning Prior to 2017

- 1991 Ordinance
- Tied to minimum lot & house sizes – 20% of lots eligible
- Special Permits required for most
  - City Council process
  - Public Hearing, abutter mailing
  - Approx. 25+ hours/project of Planning Dept. Staff time
- Numerous amendments over time adding additional requirements.
  - No condo-ization
  - Owner occupied
Why ADUs

- Low-impact approach to expanding housing choices/opportunities.
  - Help to keep seniors in community.
    - As place to live
    - As income stream & addressing isolation issues
  - Lower cost housing option for employees / younger adults
  - More sustainable use of existing land/buildings
The Supporters

- Housing Advocates
- Council on Aging
- Green Newton & Other Environmental Groups
- Inspectional Services Department
- Historic Commission
2017 Zoning for All Accessory Apartments

- Allows an Accessory Apartment in all single and two-family homes.

- Detached accessory apartments require a special permit.

- Incentives for the Preservation of Historic Carriage Houses
1 Family & up to 3 unrelated individuals

Acc. Apt.

1 Family & up to 3 unrelated individuals
2017 Zoning for All Accessory Apartments

- No parking required
- The principal dwelling unit must be at least 4 years old
- No short term rentals
- Design Consistency - criteria for maintaining integrity of the structure & neighborhood
- Reporting, recording, inspections, and tracking
Rules for Internal

- Min - 250 sq ft / Max – lesser of 1000 sq ft or 33% of principal dwelling
Rules for Detached

- Min – 250 sq ft / Max – lesser of 1200 sq ft or 40% of principal dwelling
- Must meet the setback requirements of the principal dwelling unit & be 6 feet from the principal dwelling
How many ADUs permitted?

- 2012: 2
- 2013: 3
- 2014: 3
- 2015: 6
- 2016: 5
- 2017: 10
- 2018: 11
- 2019: 2

New Ordinance

20,800 eligible properties
Accessory Dwelling Units
Zoning Provisions in Ipswich
ADUs in Ipswich

☐ 1999 Town Meeting adopted in-law apartment zoning provision for residential districts

☐ Limited to families of owner-occupied single-family houses

☐ Approval conditions/restrictions:
  ☐ ZBA special permit
  ☐ no footprint expansion
  ☐ applied only to existing houses
  ☐ permit terminates if property sold/tenant leaves

☐ 7 in-law apartments created between 7/99 and 12/01; nominal opposition
ADUs in Ipswich

2001 Town Meeting removed requirement that apartment be contained within existing house; production increased by 50% over next 3 years.

In 2004, PB proposed several changes to increase provision’s applicability.

Most significant change: removing requirement that tenants be family-relations.

To address neighbor concerns, PB proposed new limits on lot area, apartment size, and expansion of footprint.
**ADUs in Ipswich**

Since 2005, Town has revised zoning provision 5 times, mostly to encourage use.

Since adoption of provision 20 years ago, Town has approved 79 accessory apartments, an average of 4 per year.

Despite removal of family member requirement, 60% of apartments subsequently created were for family members.

2018 Town Meeting removed area limitation on accessory apartments based on % of house’s total area, as well as limit on footprint expansion.

Nearly 60% of accessory apartments are located within footprint of principal dwelling.

2011 town meeting voted to allow accessory apartments in new houses; 1/3 of approved apartments have been created in that manner since then.
Town of Ipswich Accessory Apartments

Average # of approved accessory apartments:

- 1999-2001: 2.3
- 2002-2004: 3.7
- 2005-2011: 5.9
- 2012-2015: 1.75
- 2016-2018: 4.3
Accessory Apartments comparison by physical configuration 1999-2019

- ADU's fully contained within footprint of dwelling:
  - 66%
  - 42%

Accessory Apartments comparison by occupancy 1999-2019

- ADU's occupied by family members: 34%
- ADU's occupied by non-family members: 58%
Approved 2003 zoning article allowed conversion of non-resident accessory buildings (e.g., barns, carriage houses) into independent dwelling units.

Because of greater potential impact to neighbors, approval threshold set high.

Applicant must demonstrate community benefit, e.g., long-term affordability, family member housing, in-lieu affordable housing payment, preserving historically/architecturally significant building.

26 accessory buildings have been converted into independent dwellings since 2004, or 7 new dwelling units every 4 years.
• Strategy to slowly integrate Accessory Apartments into housing stock was politically successful.
• Residents benefited and feared impacts did not materialize, allowing applicability to broaden with minimal opposition.
• Accessory apartments/accessory building conversions have been effective way of increasing inventory of low/moderate cost rental housing.
ADUs in Ipswich

- ADUs: straightforward and minimally controversial way of increasing/maintaining diversity of housing stock
- ADUs: important component of larger community strategy for preserving/creating housing affordability
- Town continues to explore ways of increasing ADU production
- Future options include: providing financial assistance to owners who renovate their homes or offer long-term restrictions on ADUs; allowing some ADUs by-right.