

ADU Overview

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What is an ADU?

- An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is an independent, secondary residential living space located on the same lot as a single-family home
- ADUs can take many forms, including:
 - Within a primary residence (e.g., a basement conversion)
 - attached to a primary residence as a new construction addition
 - completely detached (e.g., a cottage or converted detached garage)



▲ Accessory dwelling units (or ADUs) come in many shapes and styles.

New Massachusetts ADU Law: Overview

- In August 2024, the Affordable Homes Act (AHA) was signed into law
- Previously, many municipalities in Massachusetts had ADU zoning in place, but various restrictions resulted in limited new units
- The AHA included new measures to facilitate the implementation of ADUs across Massachusetts, and allowed ADUs meeting certain criteria to be built by-right in single-family zoning districts
- The ADU provisions in the AHA went into effect February 2, 2025

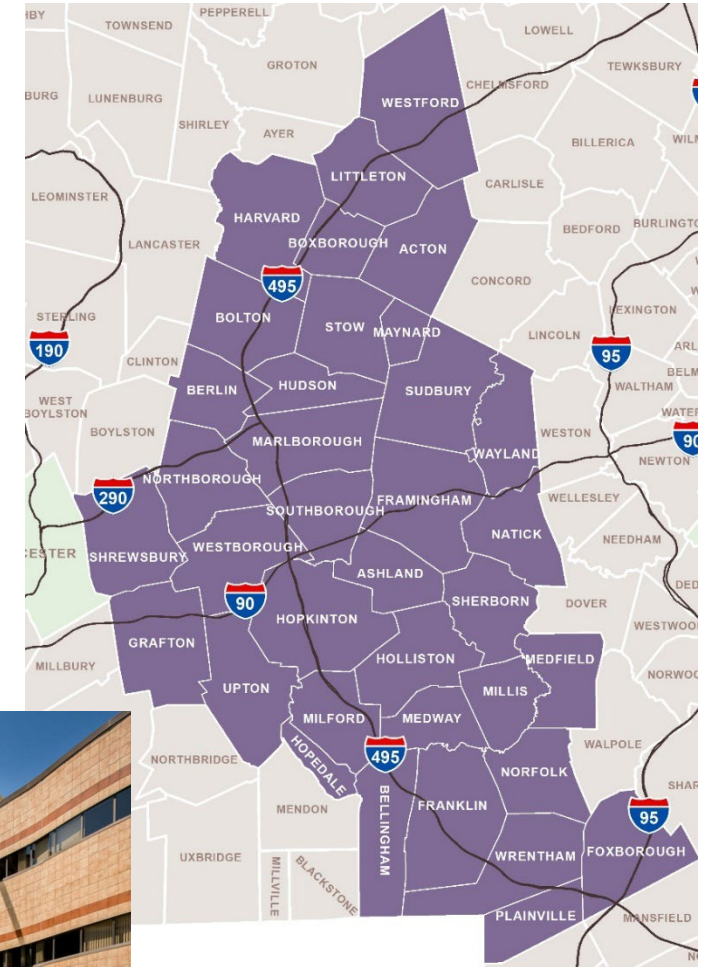


New Massachusetts ADU Law: Highlights

- The AHA contained a number of new regulations around ADUs, including:
 - ADUs must meet certain criteria to be protected from local regulation, such as:
 - Maintain a separate entrance from outside or through the entry hall of the primary dwelling unit
 - Be no larger than 900 square feet
 - Meet other municipal restrictions (e.g., prohibitions on short term rentals)
 - ADUs are allowed to be built by-right in any district where single-family homes are allowed by-right or by special permit
 - Can be located on the same lot as any primary dwelling in a single-family zoning district (including duplexes, triple-deckers, and multi-units)
 - Dimensions cannot be more restrictive than the principal dwelling or a single-family home
 - ADUs are not required to have more than 1 parking space if they are located outside 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, or any parking space if they are located within 0.5 miles

ADUs in the 495/MetroWest

- According to figures from a survey sent to municipalities in 2025, our region has seen gradual ADU interest since the AHA was signed into law
- Across our 37 communities:
 - 137 ADUs applications have been submitted
 - 104 ADUs have been approved
 - Of the ADUs approved an average of 55% have been detached units
- *It is worth noting that these numbers don't reflect any ADU applications/approvals in 2026, and several 495/MetroWest communities did not respond to the survey*



Thank you!

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