

Accessory Dwelling Units

1

Implementing New Zoning for ADUs

James Freas

City of Newton, Dept. Planning and Development

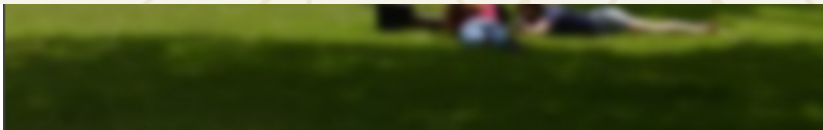
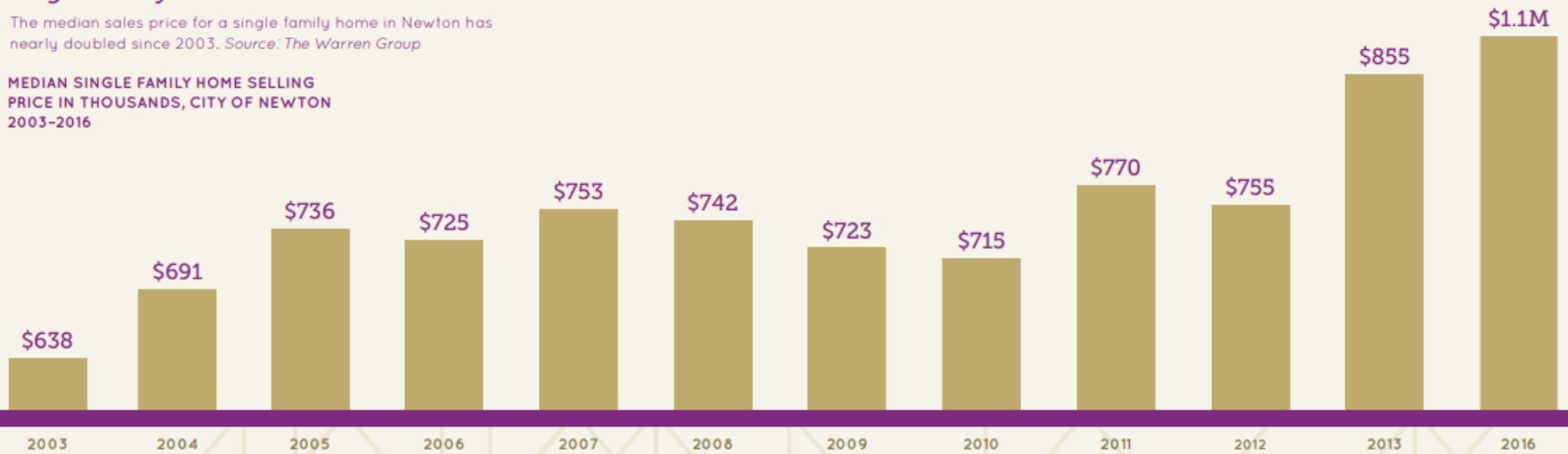




Single Family Home Sales Prices

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

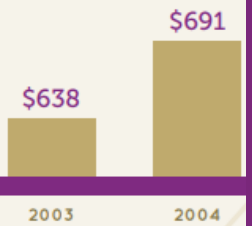
MEDIAN SINGLE FAMILY HOME SELLING
PRICE IN THOUSANDS, CITY OF NEWTON
2003-2016



Single Family Home

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

MEDIAN SINGLE FAMILY HOME PRICE IN THOUSANDS, CITY OF NEWTON, 2003-2016



BETWEEN 2000-2013

+4,200

HOUSEHOLDS
MAKING \$200K
OR MORE

-4,700

HOUSEHOLDS
MAKING \$125K
OR LESS

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



The Boston Globe

Why sell that 'happy old house'?



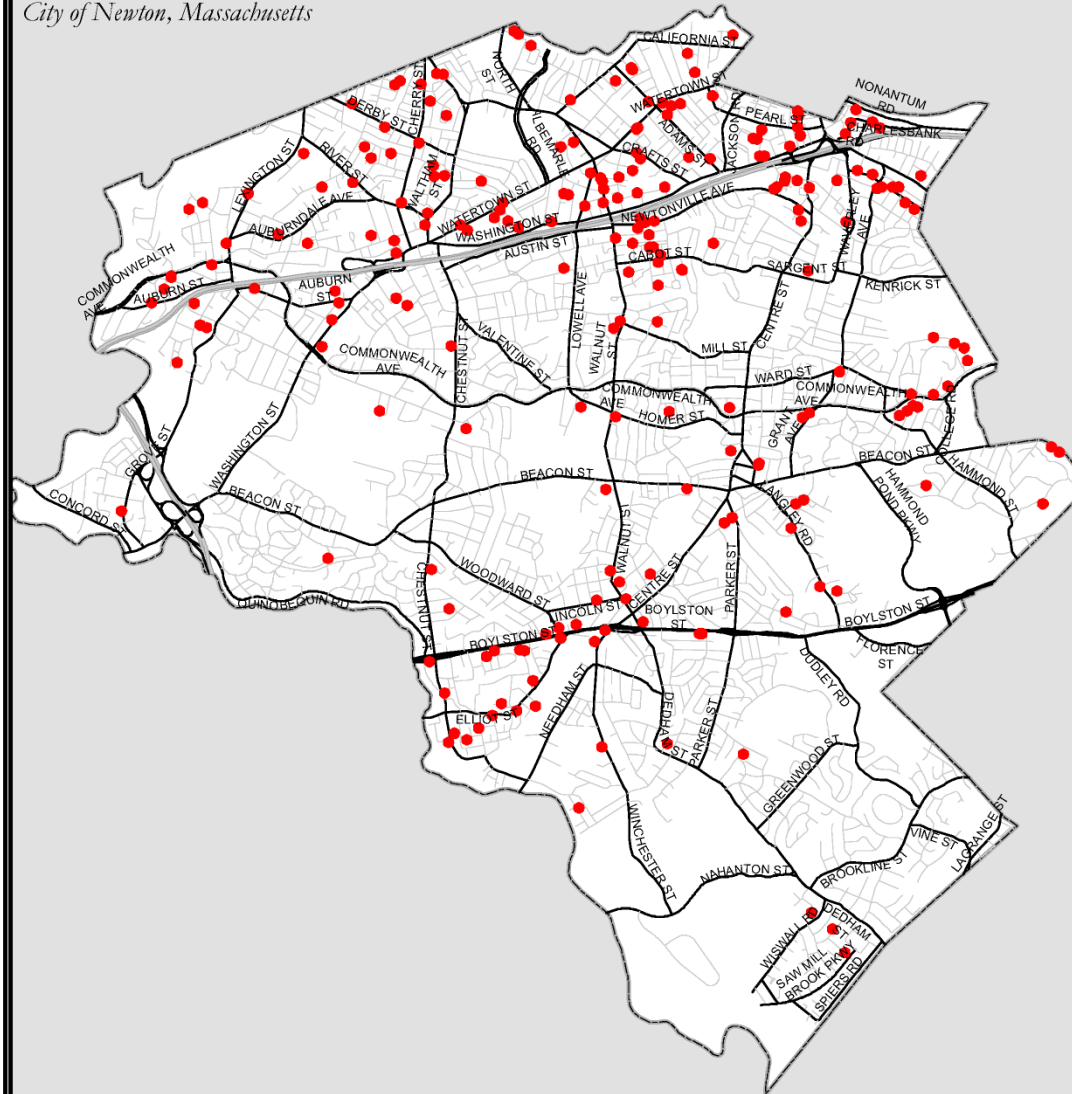
They looked into creating an accessory apartment — a small unit that typically has its own kitchen and bathroom, either inside or on the same property — but their lot wasn't big enough to meet the city's requirements for such a dwelling. Instead, they decided to set off two rooms and a bathroom to make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

Virginia and Bill Robinson created a caregiver suite in their Newton home.

JUSTIN SAGLIO FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Illegal Apartments

City of Newton, Massachusetts



ADU Zoning Prior to 2017

7

- 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

8

- 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

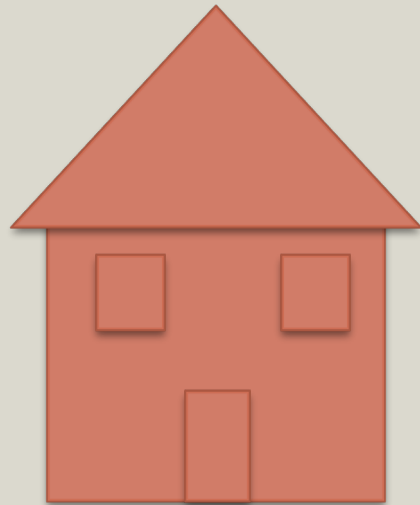
9

- Housing Advocates
- Council on Aging
- Green Newton & Other Environmental Groups
- Inspectional Services Department
- Historic Commission

2017 Zoning for All Accessory Apartments

11

- 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



1 Family &
up to 3
unrelated
individuals

2017 Zoning for All Accessory Apartments

13

- 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

14

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

Rules for Detached

15

- 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?

18

- 2012: 2
- 2013: 3
- 2014: 3
- 2015: 6
- 2016: 5

New Ordinance

- 2017: 10
- 2018: 11
- 2019: 2

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

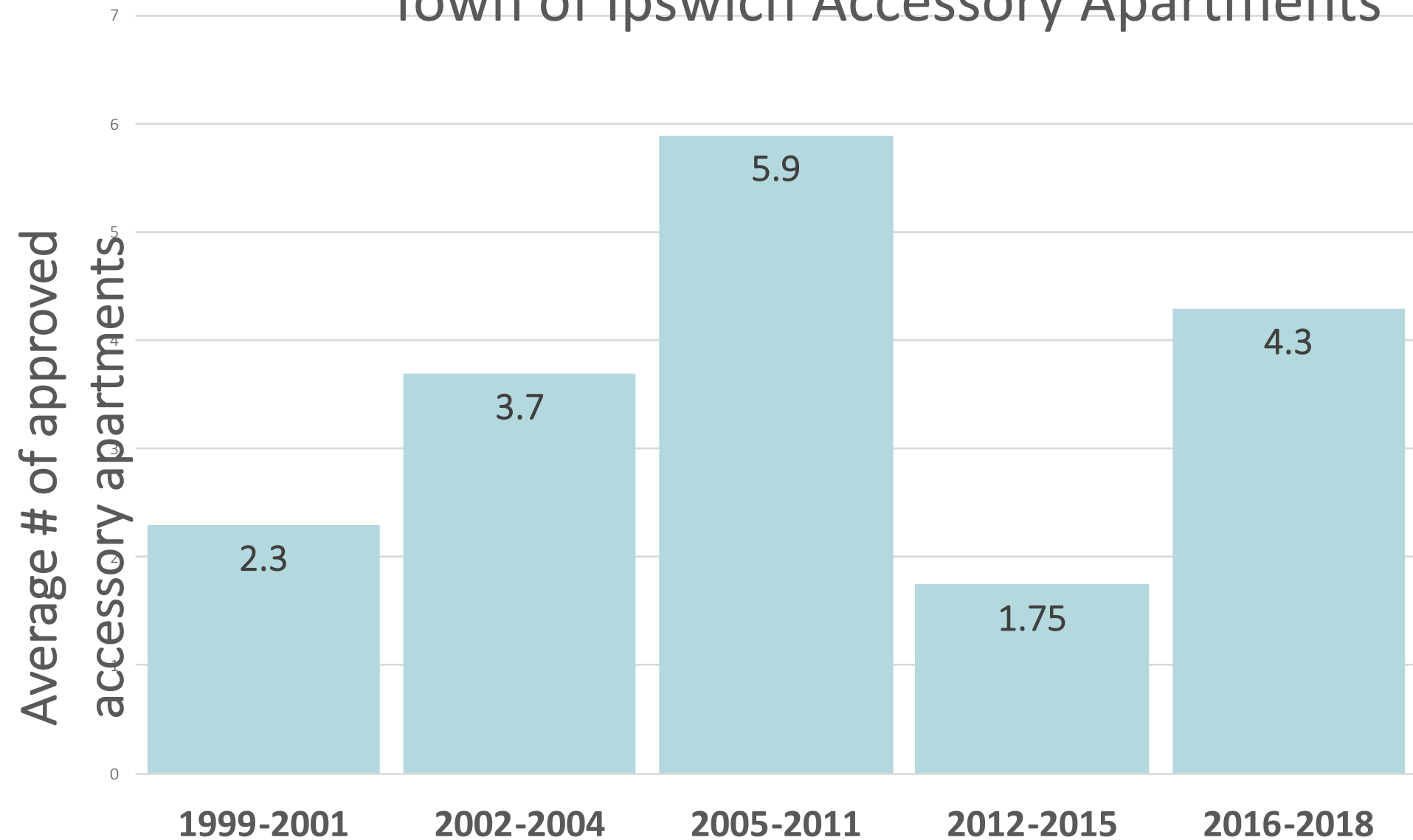
Despite removal of family member requirement, 60% of apartments subsequently created were for family members

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

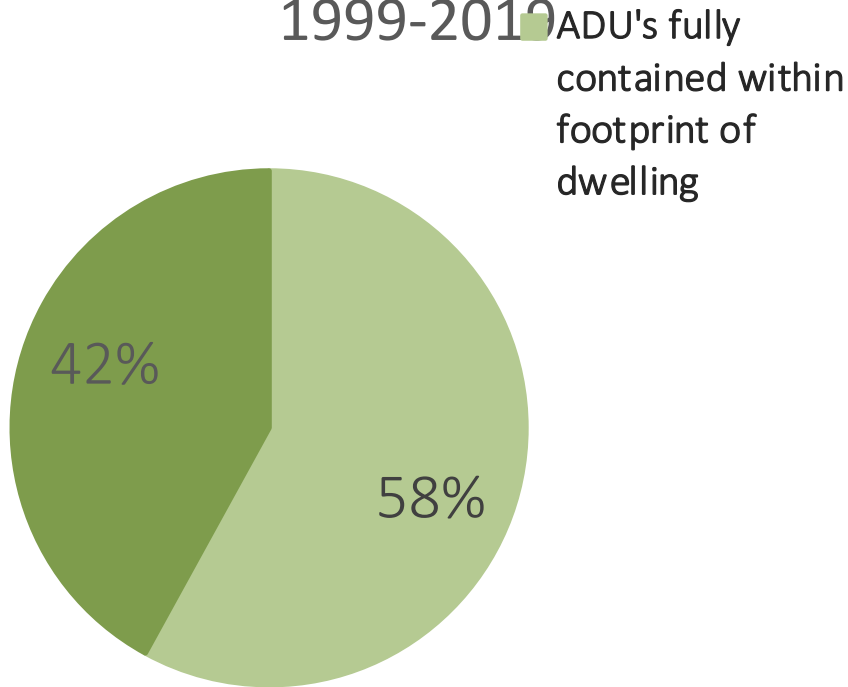
2011 town meeting voted to allow accessory apartments in new houses; 1/3 of approved apartments have been created in that manner since then

Town of Ipswich Accessory Apartments

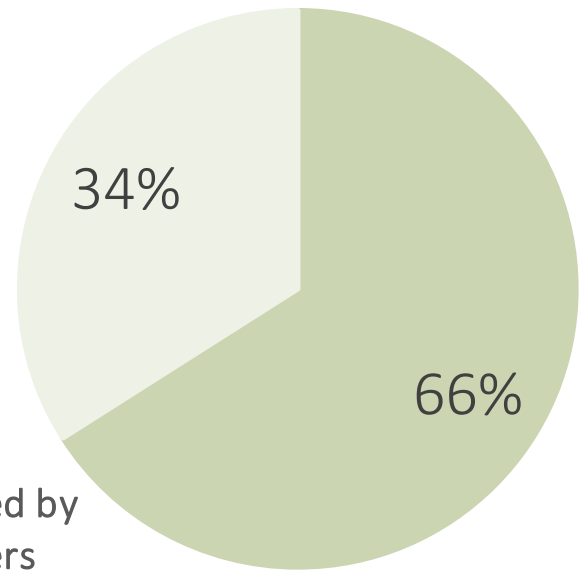


Accessory Apartments comparison by physical configuration

1999-2019



- ADU's occupied by family members
- ADU's occupied by non-family members



Accessory Apartments comparison by occupancy 1999-2019

- 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.

ADUs in Ipswich - Conversion of Accessory Buildings

- 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 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.