

**To: Jennifer Gay Smith, Emily Wentworth, Michael Silveira**  
**From: Beth Rouleau, Member ADU Committee**  
**Date: November 14, 2022**  
**Re: Accessory Dwelling Unit relating planning**

Dear Jenn, Emily, and Mike,

In advance of tonight's Planning Board meeting and follow up to the 11.7.22 joint Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Study Committee and Planning Board meeting, I am sharing the document below with reflections and data related to ADU planning efforts underway. I appreciate the time, dedication, and insights of fellow ADU Committee members and the Planning Board throughout consideration of potential ADU bylaw changes in Hingham. Thank you, Beth

As background for the continuing conversations related to detached and attached accessory dwelling units (D)ADUs I've included excerpts below from Hingham's 2022 Community Needs Assessment. The report was commissioned by the Town of Hingham's Department of Elder Services & Council on Aging and conducted by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston (link is included below). Substantial growth in the number of older Hingham residents has occurred and is projected; data related to the number of older residents living alone and with a disability is also highlighted, all prompting consideration related to future housing features and community support needs.

While (D)ADUs, by nature, have historically had limited impact on increased housing inventory the (D)ADU model offers an opportunity to a limited number of eligible householders to consider the creation of this housing model. Community impact and overburdening community resources have been recognized as concerns related to this housing model; however, there are a number of pre-existing property features and comprehensive eligibility requirements in place to ensure that this model exists as a valued and innovative housing option. (Lot size, zoning setbacks, small footprint, septic, and other requirements have been documented by the ADU committee.) Additionally, historical data reflects limited interest in creating an ADU and detrimental consequences associated with the creation of (D)ADUs are rarely acknowledged. ADUs offer an opportunity to leverage existing property infrastructure and reduce impact on the environment. Alongside supportive legislation in neighboring communities and states, policy makers are building funding opportunities that facilitate access to planning, permitting, and creating ADUs.

As a housing option, (D)ADUs provide beneficial impact at the individual level and offer (a limited) opportunity for the Town to ensure that Hingham's housing stock is diverse and provides accessible, suitable, and affordable options. With recognition of the value in this model, and enthusiasm for its potential, advocacy has grown in support this housing option which offers residents (many of whom are longtime residents seeking continuity associated with aging in place) an opportunity to remain in their homes by the

introduction of caregiver support; companionship; property maintenance support; or rental income (with rental period restrictions and other requirements, including that the homeowner reside on the property).

I also want to highlight data that supports the need for the elimination of the familial requirement. According to a first time US Census Bureau report in 2018 (in part sponsored by the National Institute on Aging), approximately 22 million adults 55 years and older were living alone. The report recognizes multiple reasons that solo aging is common, and increasing, among the large and growing population of adults including: 50% increase in unmarried adults since 1980; and fewer individuals having children. For this growing cohort, consideration and focus on health and housing related planning will be essential. Additionally, the familial restriction creates a barrier for those who do not want to rely on an extended family home configuration and increases financial investment risk due to potential family configuration changes over time.

***Excerpts below are from the 2022 Needs Assessment report conducted by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston; full report can be found here:***

<https://www.hingham-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16088/Aging-in-Hingham-2022-PDF---A-Needs-Assessment-of-Hingham-residents-45-and-Older>

- *Currently, more than 1 out of 4 residents of Hingham is age 60 or older. Future estimates suggest that by the year 2035, older residents will make up 39% of the community's population. This central overarching observation—that the older population of Hingham is already large and will continue to expand—makes clear the importance of considering how well features of the Town, the services and amenities available, and virtually every aspect of the community align with the age demographic moving forward.*
- *Of survey respondents, age 70+ @ 70% shared it is very important to remain in Hingham as they age. (42% have lived in Hingham 35+ years)*
- *34% of residents age 65+ live alone; Among 53 % of 9,121 households there is at least one person age 60+.*
- *Aging cohort has increased likelihood of having or acquiring a disability.*
  - *Of those age 65 and over in Hingham: 9% report 1 disability; 19% report 2 disabilities including vision, hearing, cognitive, mobility, self-care, and independent living limitations.*
  - *Many Hingham residents need support due to physical or cognitive conditions, and many caregivers need help.*
  - *Thirty percent of survey respondents stated that they currently or have in the past 12 months provided care or assistance to a person who was disabled or frail and that number is highest among those age 45-59 (35%). Among caregivers age 45-70, at least 70% reported that providing this*

*care and maintaining their daily responsibilities was very or somewhat challenging. The number one condition prompting care was Alzheimer's or dementia, as well the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative reports that rates of dementia in Hingham (16%) are higher than rates of the state as a whole (14%).*

- Economic insecurity is a concern for many older adults in Hingham.
  - *The number one concern for being able to remain in Hingham as they age is being able to afford the increasing property tax amounts and overall costs of living in the Town.*
  - *The increasing financial gap is a concern that was noted by Hingham leaders when it comes to residents, many of whom have spent their lives in Hingham, aging in their community.*
  - *According to American Community Survey (2016-2020) estimates, a substantial share of households headed by someone age 65 and older (24%) report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with just 7% of households headed by individuals aged 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000.*