



# CITY OF WATERTOWN

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617 972 6417  
Fax: 617 972 6484  
[www.watertown-ma.gov](http://www.watertown-ma.gov)

### Minutes of Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Meeting April 15, 2025 6:00 PM

#### **Attendance**

Members present: Cliff Cook, David Leon, Leo Patterson, Zoe Weinrobe, George Proakis and Helen Oliver. Members not present: Jill Hyde. Non-members present in person or remotely: Larry Field and Gideon Schreiber (staff), Alisa Gardner-Todres, Sam Gilardi, Clyde Younger, Joselyn Hager, Jamie Gordon, Robert Bryant, Rita Colafella, Libby Shaw, Donald McDonald, and Jacky VanLeeuwen.

#### **I. Minutes of March 18, 2025 meeting**

Minutes of the March 18, 2025 meeting were unanimously accepted.

#### **II. Accessory Dwelling Units**

Cliff noted that the city needs to adopt a comprehensive accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance because of the 2024 state law mandate, that the city passed interim language in November 2024, and that the public process started with the Community Dialogue event on March 24, 2025. The purpose of tonight's discussion, he said, is to take the next step by discussing an overall framework for such an ordinance. From that point, staff will draft ordinance language for submission to the City Council.

Before asking the Trustees to discuss the staff's framework document (attached), Cliff invited public comments. Joselyn Hager said that the city's climate goals required all ADUs to be net-zero, not disturb trees, and provide green space. Sam Gilardi, representing Housing for All Watertown, presented a series of recommendations including: eliminate site plan review, provide pre-approved ADU plans, provide flexibility in dimensional requirements, and provide incentives for affordable ADUs. He requested that the group's paper be included in the record. Clyde Younger said that ADUs represented "spot zoning," would impinge on neighbors and required parking,

There was lively discussion about staff's recommendation that site plan review should not be required for "protected use" ADUs (i.e., those that are by right under state law). Most Trustees agreed that a simple process was better and that ADUs could be approved by the Building Department as are single- and two-family homes. The counter-argument is that site plan review requires public notice.

Trustees generally agreed with the idea that existing dimensional requirements should be loosened so that ADUs were more feasible to create. There was conceptual support, for example, for allowing detached ADUs to be more than one story.

Several ideas for ‘local use’ ADUs (those not fitting within the state’s protected use category) were discussed. There were mixed views on allowing ADUs larger than 900 square feet, with comments indicating this would make sense for large houses/large lots but that it might be appropriate to keep this as a future option. There was consensus that multiple ADUs on a lot should not be permitted, at least until the impact of the ADU ordinance became clear over time. There was support for allowing ADUs in mixed-use zoning districts if confined to single- and two-family structures. There are few such structures and, as they are not protected use ADUs, could be special permit. There was also general agreement that incentives for affordable ADUs should not be pursued at this time.

### **III. Other Business**

Larry noted that the Trust and Human Rights Commission will be jointly hosting a fair housing event on April 30 at 6 PM (remote only).

### **VI. Executive Session**

Cliff said there were no matters to discuss in executive session. A motion to adjourn passed unanimously at approximately 7:39 PM.

# Brief: Maximizing The Benefits of ADU Legalization in Watertown

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Watertown Benefits From ADU Legalization...

On February 2, Massachusetts state law expands accessory dwelling unit (ADU) construction beyond the limits in Watertown's current ADU zoning ordinance. ADU expansion can provide several benefits to Watertown including:

1. **More homes.** Massachusetts ADU regulations are based on national best practices from California and Seattle. With similar production levels, Watertown can add 25 to 50 more homes a year, a 17-35% increase over the current housing production rate. Each ADU built is a home that prevents the displacement a current resident, and creates space for new residents. The accessibility of ADU construction to homeowners also provides residents with flexible housing options, creating places for college students to return to, starter homes for couples to establish their families in, and accessible homes for older residents to retire to. The rent from ADUs can also help homeowners weather uncertain economic times while providing more affordable apartments to renters.
2. **More affordable homes.** ADUs can be built at 12-50% of the cost of a multi-family unit and these cost savings are passed on to tenants. Surveys across multiple states found that ADU rents are more affordable than the average unit, and many are affordable at 80% and 60% Area Median Income (AMI), without any deed-restrictions or incentives. There are also popular Affordable ADU programs that use bonus incentives to promote the creation of deed-restricted affordable ADUs, which Watertown could use as a model.
3. **A more diverse and resilient housing pipeline.** Watertown currently adds housing through large, multi-family projects that are susceptible to commercial real estate market trends, as demonstrated by the recent lab boom and bust. ADUs complement multifamily projects. They are built by homeowners and are separate from commercial real estate, protecting Watertown's housing pipeline against swings in the commercial real estate market.

### ... But only if we get the details right

While the state has set minimum ADU standards, they have given cities and towns discretion to regulate the details, and these details are critical to ensuring ADUs are actually built. In this brief, we highlight key areas of regulation and provide policy recommendations that will encourage ADU construction.

**To reap the benefits of ADU legalization, Watertown must make ADU construction as accessible as possible to homeowners by: simplifying and streamlining permitting process, using dimensional standards that allow ADUs on as many lots as possible, and charging as few fees as possible.**

# Benefits of ADUs to Watertown

## Building More Housing

Massachusetts ADU regulations are based on national best practices from California and Seattle; creating a strong baseline for ADU production. With similar ADU zoning, **Watertown could produce between 25-50 additional homes per year**, a 17-35% increase in annual housing production compared to the average of 143 homes produced annually between 2010 and 2023. By virtue of being tied to neighborhood scale zoning (single and two family homes), ADUs open up nearly two thirds of the city that had previously been closed off for new housing. ADUs also provide housing flexibility to help residents meet life’s challenges and remain in Watertown: they can provide a separate unit for a new couple to start a life in, or for an older family member to independently age in place.

## Building More Affordable Housing

ADUs cost less to build per unit than multi-family housing. The City of Boston estimates an ADU to cost between \$75,000 - \$350,000 depending on the type, compared to \$500,000 - \$600,000 cost per unit in a new multi-family development. These cost savings are often passed on as lower rents. As a result, ADUs generate a disproportionate number of naturally occurring affordable housing units:

- A survey of Seattle ADU owners and tenants found that the **median rent for an ADU was 25% cheaper than a standard one bedroom apartment**. Overall, more than 80% of units rented at or below the median rent for a one bedroom unit, including at least half of the surveyed 2-3 bedroom ADUs.
- Estimates by the Southern California Association of Governments found that between **34-50% of ADUs** rented in their 6 county region (including Los Angeles), had rents that were **affordable in the 50-80% AMI range**.
- A survey from the UC Berkeley Center for Community Innovation found that more than **half the ADUs** rented in the Bay Area had rents that were **affordable at or below the 80% AMI level**.

In addition to naturally occurring affordable ADUs, there are opportunities for affordable housing bonuses to incentivize both deed restricted affordable ADUs and ADUs built to green energy standards, beyond what Watertown's stretch energy code requires.

## Creating a More Diverse and Resilient Housing Pipeline

Over the last decade, nearly 90% of homes in Watertown have been built as part of big multi-family developments. These developments are built by larger development firms and require significant amounts of capital from national finance markets. As a result, multi-family projects are subject to larger forces in commercial real estate and their production can suddenly switch depending on what trend is the most profitable. We have observed this over the last few years in Watertown, as new land went from being developed as multi-family to lab space, and in some cases (such as 100 Forge at Arsenal Yards), developers pivoted mid-project.

In contrast, ADUs are mainly built by homeowners or small landlords. They use separate financing methods from multi-family projects and are not susceptible to commercial real estate trends. While ADUs alone cannot deliver homes at the same scale as multi-family developments, the combination of two distinct housing construction pipelines ensures that some housing is always under construction, making the city more resilient to downturns in either residential or commercial real estate.

Watertown Housing Production 2010-2023		
Structure Type	Units Produced	% of Total
Single Family	153	7.1%
Two Family	72	3.3%
Three and Four Family	7	0.3%
Five or more units	1,935	89.3%
Total	2,167	100%

Data source: "MHP Datatown"

# Policy Recommendations to Encourage ADU Construction

The Commonwealth has set minimum standards for ADUs state-wide, but has left some areas of regulation to cities and towns. In this section, we highlight the changes needed to comply with state regulations and provide policy recommendations based on national best practices to achieve Watertown's ADU goals.

## The ADU Approval Process

### **AHA Requirements and EOHLC regulations**

- **Allow a single ADU by-right.** The Affordable Homes Act requires that a single ADU be allowed by-right in every single family zoning district. Site Plan Review (SPR) must be clear and objective, and comply with state provisions for as-of-right processes.
- **Requires a special permit for more than one ADU:** The Affordable Homes Act requires a Special Permit for more than one ADU in a single family zoning district

### **Required changes to Watertown Zoning Ordinance to Comply with State Law.**

- **Removal of site plan review requirement.** Watertown's SPR criteria is intended for large developments in Watertown Square, not neighborhood construction. SPR is not required for a single family home or any accessory use. Several SPR criteria have non-objective standards and the noise mitigation criteria (§9.03(c)(5)) impose a unique burden on ADUs compared to other residential structures. Therefore Watertown's existing SPR criteria would likely violate the objective standards and meet the definition of unreasonable in EOHLC's SPR regulations, so the existing SPR requirement should be removed and replaced by objective dimensional standards for siting an ADU.
- **Removal of single family only limitation.** EOHLC regulations define the principle dwelling for a protected ADU in a **single family zoning district** to include both single family and multi-family homes. Therefore, the city cannot limit ADU production to single family homes, and must remove this requirement.

## **Opportunities for Housing and Climate Leadership**

1. **Watertown should develop standard detached ADU Plans.** Areas with the highest rate of ADU uptake, like Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle, and Portland, all developed standard ADU plans that homeowners can use for free or at minimal cost. These pre-approved plans reduce the upfront costs of ADU construction. They can also reduce city review time. In Seattle, standard plans are approved 40% faster than non-standard plans, and spend 12 fewer days under city review. From the City's perspective, releasing free plans can advance the City's climate goals by promoting ADUs that go beyond the minimum stretch energy code requirements. Free plans can also be released in a number of prevalent architectural styles to match Watertown's neighborhoods. Lastly, these plans can stimulate professional interest in ADU design. Seattle received more than 160 submissions from local architects for their design competition RFP.
2. **Watertown should create a Pre-Approval mechanism for detached ADU Plans.** Beyond city-funded-ADU Plans, Los Angeles and Seattle also provide a process for architects and builders to have their plans pre-approved by the city's building department. This provides more ADU options for residents, provides a new revenue stream for local architects and builders, and creates a one stop shop to connect residents interested in building an ADU with local professionals. In Los Angeles, more than 60 designs have been pre-approved by the city. Watertown should take advantage of the state-wide building code and partner with neighboring cities and towns to develop a regional pool of pre-approved ADU plans, further increasing the number of designs available.
3. **Watertown Should Develop Educational Resources for Homeowners.** ADU construction has been most successful in areas that make the ADU construction and permitting process as accessible as possible to individual homeowners. For example, Seattle has a step by step guide detailing how to design, finance, and build an ADU. Watertown should create a similar guide for residents aiming to build an ADU.

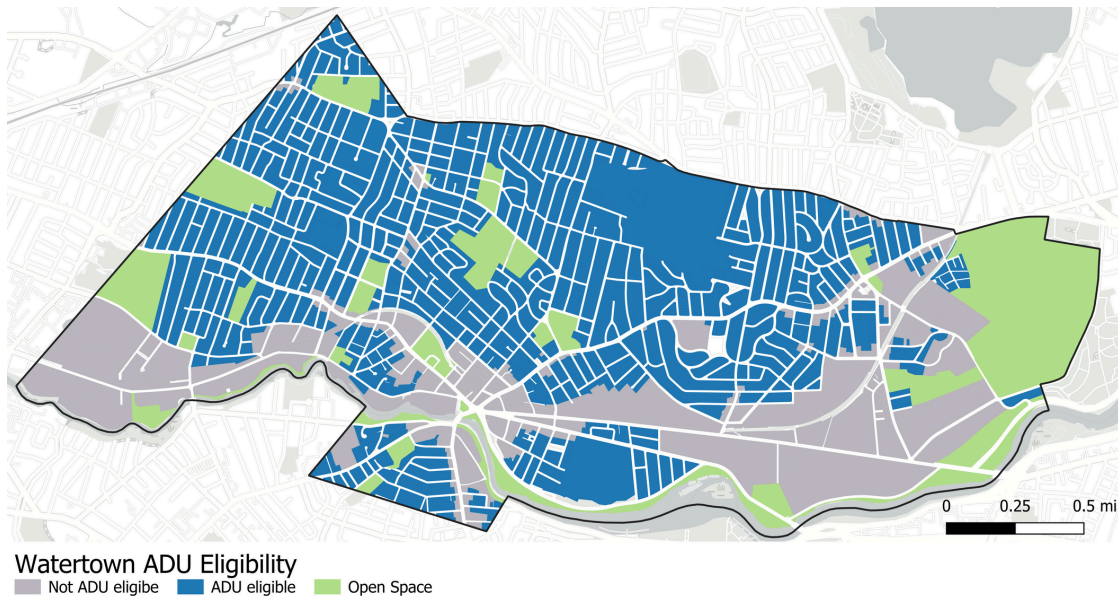
## Districts That Allow ADUs

### AHA Requirements and EOHLC regulations

- The Affordable Homes Act requires that ADUs be allowed by right in a single-family residential zoning district. EOHLC regulations defines a “single family zoning district” as “Any Zoning District where Single-family Residential Dwellings are a permitted or an allowable use, including any Zoning District where Single-family Residential Dwellings are allowed as-of-right or by Special Permit.”

### Required changes to Watertown Zoning Ordinance to Comply with State Law.

- **None.** The current ADU zoning district regulations are in line with state regulations by allowing ADUs in the 7 zones where single family residential dwellings are allowed. The map below shows where ADUs are required to be allowed in Watertown.



### Opportunities for Housing and Climate Leadership

1. **Watertown Should simplify additional ADU permitting for two family condominium homes.** Watertown has a number of townhome-style two families that have been converted into condominiums. These two families look and operate like single family homes, including exclusive deeded use of a portion of the yard, but legally exist on one lot. Since the state requires a special permit for more than one ADU per lot, only one out of two units would be able to build an ADU by right. In the short term, Watertown should define the special permit criteria for the second unit of a two family such that if the proposed ADU meets the same dimensional criteria as a protected ADU, the ZBA must grant the special permit. In the long term, Watertown should submit a home rule petition removing the required special permit for more than one ADU on a lot.
2. **Watertown should allow ADUs in the NMU zone.** The Neighborhood Mixed Use zone (NMU) was created as part of the Watertown Square Area Plan to serve as a mixed-use transition zone between the denser Watertown Square zones and existing neighborhoods. The NMU contains a number of two family homes, and has dimensional requirements at a similar scale as existing neighborhood buildings, discouraging redevelopment. The NMU does not allow single family homes by-right, so it is not required to allow ADUs under state law. Since the NMU is designed to keep the existing two family uses as is, the city should consider allowing ADUs by-right in the NMU so that they too can take advantage of the ADU law, just like a two family in the T-zone.

## **Dimensional Standards**

### **AHA Requirements and EOHLC regulations**

- The Affordable Homes Act allows cities and towns to apply reasonable regulations for the dimensional setbacks and the bulk and height of ADUs. EOHLC regulations define an unreasonable dimensional standard to be *“Any requirement concerning dimensional standards, such as dimensional setbacks, lot coverage, open space, bulk and height, and number of stories, that are more restrictive than is required for the Principal Dwelling, or a Single-family Residential Dwelling or accessory structure in the Zoning District in which the Protected Use ADU is located, whichever results in more permissive regulation, provided that a Municipality may not require a minimum Lot size for a Protected Use ADU.”*

### **Required changes to Watertown Zoning Ordinance to Comply with State Law.**

- **Clarify that ADU dimensional standards follow either the principal use or accessory use, depending on which is more permissive.** Watertown applies different dimensional standards to principal and accessory uses. The zoning code needs to be amended to clarify that ADUs can follow the more permissive dimensional standard, potentially with a separate ADU specific table of dimensional standards.
- **Clarify that ADUs can still be built in non-conforming structures without a special permit.** Due to our old housing stock, most homes in Watertown do not conform to our current zoning standards, and trigger a special permit requirements when making major changes. EOHLC regulations don't allow municipalities to ban ADU construction in non-conforming structures. Since most homes are non-conforming, the special permit requirement nullifies the by-right construction of attached ADUs, violating EOHLC's regulations.

### **Opportunities for Climate and Housing Leadership**

1. **Allow detached ADUs to ignore existing building coverage, frontage, and FAR requirements.** In many cases, existing lots and structures already violate these standards, so enforcing them on ADUs will only serve to diminish housing production during a housing shortage. Enforcing building coverage limits will encourage the construction of taller ADUs, which may not fit in with the existing neighborhood context.
2. **Exempt ADU construction from triggering sidewalk replacement or curb installation.** City ordinance requires projects that build a new foundation to install new granite curbing and sidewalks, increasing detached ADU construction costs and increasing the ADU's rent. The City should waive this requirement for new ADUs.
3. **Allow internal ADUs to occupy the entire space of the building footprint by-right.** State law allows the size of a by-right ADUs to be the lesser of 900 square feet, or half the gross square footage of the principal dwelling. To promote the creation of family sized 3+ bedroom units, the the city should allow ADUs internal to a building (such as a basement conversion) to exceed this limit and occupy the entire building footprint. This will add needed family housing to the city with no visual impacts on the neighborhood.
4. **To preserve starter homes in two-family districts, allow the ADU to be the size of the principal dwelling.** A number of affordable starter homes in the T zones have been demolished and replaced with luxury townhomes. To preserve these starter homes, the city should allow the ADU on these lots to be the size of the principal dwelling, provided that the principal dwelling is preserved. This allows for the creation of a second starter-home sized unit, while preserving the existing starter home. Since the T zone already allows two units in a two family by-right, this would have minimal impact on the neighborhood.
5. **The Watertown Fire Department should develop standardized additional fire protection features for lots that do not meet the current fire code regulations for building a detached ADU.** As summarized in this [Boston Planning Department guide to ADUs and the fire code](#), under the strict interpretation of the state fire code, most residential lots in Watertown with an existing building will not meet the criteria to build a detached ADU. Watertown should follow Boston's lead, where the Fire Department worked with the Planning Department to develop a set of standardized additional fire protection requirements to allow the construction of detached ADUs behind a building on a typical lot.

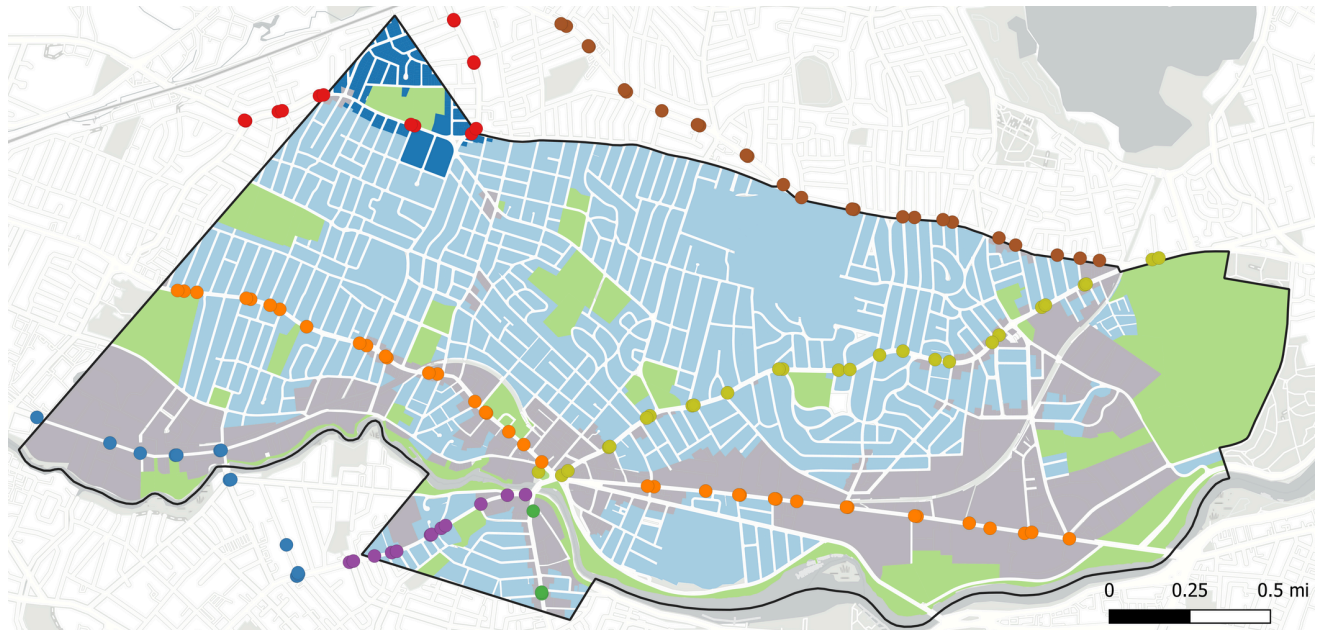
## Parking

### AHA Requirements and EOHLC regulations

- The Affordable Homes Act limits the amount of required ADU Parking. No parking can be required if the lot is within a half mile of a bus stop or commuter rail station. EOHLC's regulations defined a "bus station" as "A location serving as a point of embarkation for any bus operated by a Transit Authority" which applies to MBTA bus stops operated in or near Watertown.

### Required changes to Watertown Zoning Ordinance to Comply with State Law.

- Remove ADU parking requirements.** All of the lots in eligible ADU zones in Watertown are within 0.5 miles of either a bus stop or the Waverly Commuter rail stop, as shown in the map below. Therefore the city may not require parking for any protected ADU city-wide, and should remove the parking requirement.



Distance From Transit Station	Bus Stations in Watertown
Not ADU eligible	Route 57 Bus Stops
more than 1/2 mile of Transit Station	Route 59 Bus Stops
within 1/2 mile of Bus Station	Route 70 Bus Stops
Within 1/2 mile of Commuter Rail Station	Route 71 Bus Stops
Open Space	Route 73 Bus Stops
	Route 554 Bus Stops
	Route 558 Bus Stops

### Opportunities for Housing and Climate Leadership

#### 1. Watertown should not require replacement parking for ADUs that involve the demolition of a garage.

Many garages in Watertown are old and do not fit modern vehicles or are at the end of their lifespan. ADUs are an opportunity for homeowners to demolish their non-functional garages and replace them with new homes. Requiring a homeowner to replace garage parking would hamper the uptake of detached ADUs. It would also require homeowners to pave over more of their lot which is in direct conflict with the city's green stormwater practices. Moreover, 92% of the structures in ADU eligible zones were built before residential parking mandates were instituted in 1964, so most of the existing parking in ADU eligible districts was built by property owners to fit their own parking needs, rather than zoning requirements. Watertown should trust that homeowners know their parking needs when they decide to convert a garage into an ADU, rather than forcing them to build excess parking that they do not need.

## Occupancy Requirements

### **AHA Requirements and EOHLC regulations**

The AHA does not allow cities and towns to require owner occupancy of either the principal dwelling or the ADU. EOHLC regulations prohibit occupancy requirements related to “income, age, familial relationship, enrollment in an educational institution, or that limits the number of occupants beyond what is required by applicable state code.”

## Affordability and Green Building Standard Bonuses

Both Seattle and San Diego have an ADU bonus program that allows the construction of an additional ADU on a lot if the first ADU meets certain affordability or green building standard. The city specific criteria are summarized in the table below:

Community	Bonus Criteria	Bonus
<b>San Diego</b>	Deed Restricted Affordable Rents capped at: A) 30% of 50% AMI for 10 years, B) 30% of 60% AMI for 10 years, C) 30% of 110 AMI for 15 years	<p><b>Outside of transit areas:</b> one additional ADU</p> <p><b>Within of transit areas:</b> an additional ADU per affordable ADU up to FAR and lot coverage limits</p>
<b>Seattle</b>	<p><b>A) Deed Restricted Affordable rents capped at:</b> 30% of 80% AMI (no expiration)</p> <p><b>B) ADU certified to a green building standard:</b> a) LEED (GOLD or higher) b) Living Building Challenge, (LivingCertification, Petal Certification, or Zero Energy Standard) C) Passivhaus US (2018, Core, or Prescriptive)</p>	One additional ADU. No more than one detached ADU per lot

**In Seattle, these incentives are very successful, as nearly half of all ADUs in Seattle permitted in 2024 were permitted on multi-ADU lots, so at least 25% of ADUs produced were a result of the bonus program.**

## Implementation of ADU Bonus Programs in Watertown

As referenced in the Approval Process section, the AHA adds a procedural step when implementing a bonus ADU program by requiring a special permit for more than one ADU per lot. With this in mind, we recommend two steps to implementing ADU bonus programs in Watertown.

**First, Watertown should streamline the special permit process for affordable or green ADUs.** The challenge with a discretionary special permit is the uncertainty it adds to the permitting process. While larger developers have the financial resources to wade through a lengthy permitting process, the average homeowner does not. This is especially true for voluntary incentive programs like the one we are proposing. To minimize uncertainty, Watertown should develop simplified objective special permit criteria for second ADUs, so that a special permit for additional ADU that is either deed restricted affordable or built to a green standard and meets the same criteria as a protected ADU under state regulations must be approved by the Zoning Board of Appeal in one meeting. There is precedence in the Watertown Zoning Code for different special permit criteria in different districts, as § 9.06-§ 9.08 lay out different criteria for special permits in the Industrial zones compared to other zones in the city. While the homeowner still has to go through the formal special permit process, they have the certainty that as long as the ADU meets certain standards it will be approved in one ZBA meeting.

**Second, Watertown should submit a home rule petition to the General Court to remove the special permit criteria for multiple ADUs per lot.** While streamlined special permitting can help in the short term, there is no substitute for by-right permitting to maximize bonus usage. The legislative intent of the special permit provision was to give municipalities discretion over additional ADU permits. Therefore it is reasonable for Watertown, as a leader in both green energy and housing production, to use its discretion and seek state permission via home rule petition to allow an additional ADU by-right if it is affordable or built to a green energy standard. This will allow us to maximize the ADU as a tool to build desperately needed deed-restricted affordable housing, and in particular it would allow us to encourage more deed-restricted affordable housing in our neighborhoods, rather than just as part of inclusionary developments along major corridors.

## Additional Affordability Incentives

**Affordability deed restrictions in exchange for property tax credits, grants, low-interest loans, or larger ADUs.**

- **Grants for lower income residents and/or for deed restricted ADUs.** Modeled after programs in [California](#) and [Boston](#), the city should explore opportunities to provide ADU grants to homeowners who meet income limits, and/or are willing to put an affordability deed restriction on their ADU. The city could allocate a portion of its CPA funds for a pilot program to test the feasibility of the program.
- **Low interest and/or soft repayment loans for ADU construction.** The city should consider offering low interest and/or flexible loan programs for homeowners adding an ADU. Many banks don't yet have loan products for ADU construction, and their terms for general construction loans may not work for many homeowners. In the interim, the city should step into this gap and offer direct loans to residents while also encouraging the creation of ADU loan products by regional banks.
- **Tax credits.** Tax credits are an alternative to direct subsidy, but the city's [recent report](#) suggests credits may not be feasible for small residential homes. Therefore, we suggest the city pilot an additional square footage bonus program, whereby a resident can by-right increase the size of the ADU by a given amount (enough to add another bedroom), if they agree to rent the ADU at the 80% AMI rent for that size unit. An additional bedroom allowance could be added if they agree to rent the ADU at the 60% AMI rent. In these cases the homeowner should be allowed to use the market rate tenant selection process rather than an affordable housing lottery. This would produce more deed-restricted affordable housing than a no incentive alternative, even though these units would not count on the Subsidized Housing Inventory for Watertown.

## Appendix: Estimating ADU production Rates for Watertown

### The Affordable Homes Act and EOHLC ADU regulations are based on successful West Coast ADU ordinances.

As shown in the table below, communities on the West Coast permit ADUs at a much higher rate than the model Massachusetts communities used by the Watertown Housing Partnership (WHP) to develop a draft ADU ordinance for Watertown. Importantly, these rates have held constant or increased through the interest rate hikes from 2022 to 2023, indicating their zoning is resilient to changes in economic conditions, unlike multifamily projects, which faced headwinds in recent years.

Yearly ADU Permits per Thousand Eligible Lots							
	Los Angeles	Seattle	San Diego	Portland, OR	Newton, MA	Ipswich, MA	Lexington, MA
2020	4.62	2.78	1.56	0.96	0.82	0.23	0.38
2021	6.83	4.38	2.77	0.93	0.91	0.23	0.48
2022	9.65	5.61	2.11	1.24	0.38	0.94	0.10
2023	8.73	5.60	6.07	0.91	0.00	0.70	0.10
4 Year Average	7.46	4.59	3.13	1.01	0.53	0.53	0.26
Equivalent ADUs Permitted Annually in Watertown	49	30	21	7	3	3	2
					Pre-2024 AHA. Selected as Model Communities for WHP Draft ADU Ordinance		

Data source: Municipal & State websites, US Census Bureau

When comparing these ordinances, as shown in the table below, there are several provisions that can explain why the MA ADUs have low production rates. First, all three MA communities required a special permit for detached ADUs. Second, they had an owner occupancy requirement. Lastly, they were limited to single family zones and two of the three towns had parking requirements. The Affordable Homes Act and EOHLC ADU Regulations are based on successful West Coast ADU laws that banned these restrictive practices. Therefore, we can estimate that Watertown will have permitting rates closer to the west coast cities rather than the MA communities used as models for the WHP draft ordinance.

	ADU Type		Owner Occupancy Requirement	Zones where ADUs are allowed	Housing types where ADUs are allowed	Number of By-Right ADUs	Bonus ADU	Required Parking Spaces	Replace Parking for garage demolition?
	Attached ADU	Detached ADU							
Los Angeles	By-Right	By-Right	No	any residential zone	single family and multi-family	2 (single family) 3+ (multi-family)	no	1 per unit, none within 1/2 mile of transit	No
San Diego	By-Right	By-Right	No	any residential zone	single family and multi-family	1	yes; 1 additional if affordable for 15 years	1 per unit, none within 1/2 mile of transit	No
Seattle	By-Right	By-Right	No	single family or lowrise multifamily zone	single family, single unit row houses and town homes	1	yes; 1 additional if affordable or meets green building standard**	none	replace parking up to minimum required for primary dwelling
Portland, OR	By-Right	By-Right	No	any residential, zone	single family (attached and detached) and duplexes	2	no	none	replace parking up to minimum required for primary dwelling
Newton, MA*	By-Right	Special Permit	Yes	any residential zone	detached single family and two family	1	no	none	replace parking up to minimum required for primary dwelling
Ipswich, MA*	Special Permit	Special Permit	Yes	single family zones	single family	0	no	1.5-2 per unit	replace parking up to minimum required for primary dwelling
Lexington, MA*	By-Right	Special Permit	Yes	single family zones	single family	1	no	1 per unit	replace parking up to minimum required for primary dwelling
AHA and EOHL Regulation	By-Rightno site plan review unless required for single family homes	By-Right site plan review only allowed within certain parameters	No	Any zone where single family homes are allowed	any single family home	1	no. Special permit must be required for more than one ADU	no more than 1 per unit, none within 1/2 mile of transit	No standard
* Pre AHA standards. Model communities used by WHP to draft initial Watertown ADU ordinance									
**green building standard includes no fossil fuels and accreditation by green energy standard (e.g. LEED or passivehaus)									

At first glance, it may not seem like the zoning rules that apply to large urban West Coast cities would work in an older and smaller city like Watertown, but when we take a closer look at the ADU eligible lots in those cities, we see some striking similarities to lots and homes in Watertown. For example, while Seattle is obviously a much larger and more urban city than Watertown, the lot sizes that have had an ADU built on them follow the same distribution pattern as lot sizes in Watertown, with the most common lot size falling between 4,000 and 6,000 square feet. Therefore it is reasonable to think that the same dimensional rules that enable robust ADU growth in Seattle would work for lots here in Watertown.

