**Accessory Apartments FAQ**

***How will expanding the availability of accessory apartments across the City not lead to more people, traffic, and other problems?***

The absolute number of people who may live in a single family home would not change from the current rule. People may have boarders, household workers like nannies, extended family, and others living with them by-right, as long as the number of unrelated persons in a household does not exceed four. This ordinance would allow homeowners to create a more private and comfortable separate unit with the same maximum number of people who may currently reside on a property.

***Why should we consider expanding the availability of accessory apartments?***

There are lots of reasons, reflecting the diversity of people who live in Newton:

* To encourage legalization of existing accessory apartments, which must meet health and fire safety codes.
* To create a place for a caregiver or companion and/or a source of income for elderly residents to help preserve their option to stay in their homes.
* To allow families to invite elderly parents or adult children to live with them in a way that maintains individual privacy and dignity.
* To create more affordable housing options.

***How do we keep students out of these units?***

Of course we cannot exclude students but we can address the primary concerns raised about student housing, which is the disruption of the neighborhood. The Accessory Apartment Ordinance requires that the homeowner live in one of the units and it is in their interest to monitor and control the activities of those living there.

***What about enforcement?***

Newton’s Inspectional Services Department (ISD) is charged with enforcing Newton’s Zoning Ordinance, including the Accessory Apartment Ordinance. While the primary mechanism of all zoning enforcement has been resident generated complaints, ISD also has a proactive program for identifying illegal accessory apartments working with the Police and Fire Departments as well as the student housing offices of local colleges. Further, the ordinance has specific provisions requiring annual occupancy reporting and that the restrictions associated with accessory apartments in Newton be attached to the property deed, which helps to maintain compliance with ordinance requirements.

***What about parking?***

The proposed ordinance does not require additional parking for the accessory unit but does require that there be at least two off-street parking spaces currently for the home. This rule is consistent with the requirement that residents of an accessory apartment be counted within the maximum number of unrelated residents allowed in any home. Therefore no additional parking should be required. It also acknowledges that in some cases, the creation of new parking requires a new curb cut which thereby removes an on-street parking space so that there is no net overall gain in parking available.

***What about short term rentals like AirBnB?***

Regulating short term rentals is being taken up separately.

***What does this ordinance envision Accessory Apartments looking like?***

There are two types of Accessory Apartments that would be allowed under this ordinance – those internal to an existing single or two-family home and those in a detached building. An internal Accessory Apartment would be invisible to the casual observer. No separate door is allowed on the front of the building and any exterior alterations required to create the unit, such as a second egress, must be in keeping with the existing home design and material quality. An Accessory Apartment in a detached building could be in a small stand-alone cottage (maximum 1200 SF), above a garage or similar building, or in an existing historic accessory building such as a carriage house. A new detached building must be in keeping with the general design of the main home and be set back from the front of the house. The only exception is for the historic buildings, which must be restored according to conditions approved by the Historic Commission.