



# Littleton Proposed ADU Zoning

*Proposed Bylaw Overview*

*January 8th 2026*

# ADUs in Massachusetts Overview

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- The Affordable Homes Act was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in August of 2024, which made ADUs developable by right across the whole state.
- EOHLC released ADU regulations to accompany the law in December of 2024
- The law went into effect on February 2nd, 2025
- Now it is Littleton's turn to decide how you would like to implement the law



# Slide Overview

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*Orange boxes denote text required by state regulations*

**Green comments explain sections that are flexible for municipalities to alter**

**Orange comments explain sections that are set by the state**

# Massachusetts ADU Zoning Requirements

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ADUs must maintain a **separate entrance**, which must meet the requirements of the state building code for safe egress.

ADUs must be no larger than half the gross floor area of the principal dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller (unless the municipality sets a larger allowed square footage or ratio with the principal dwelling)

ADUs must meet **local municipal restrictions**, such as dimensional requirements, limiting short-term rentals etc.

**This is flexible for municipalities to make more lenient!**

**This gives you local discretion to implement and regulate ADUs.**

# Littleton ADU Bylaw

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# 1. Statement Purpose

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The purpose of this section is to **encourage the production of accessory dwelling units** throughout the town of Littleton with the goal of addressing housing needs for households of all income levels and at all stages of life.

The provision of accessory dwelling units is intended to:

- A. Increase the number of small rental dwelling units in Littleton;
- B. Increase the number of affordable rental units in Littleton;
- C. Diversify the range of housing types available in Littleton;
- D. Increase housing production while preserving the character of Littleton's neighborhoods and protecting property values.**

## 2. General Provisions for ADUs

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An ADU shall be a self-contained housing unit, inclusive of sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities on the same lot as a principal dwelling.

A "Principal Dwelling" is a structure that contains at least one dwelling unit, and is, or will be located on the same lot as a PUADU

The principal dwelling must be permitted prior to, or at the same time as the ADU is permitted.

**You cannot build an ADU without a primary dwelling**

## B. Code Compliance (within 2. General Provisions)

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ADUs shall maintain a separate entrance, either directly from the outside or through an entry hall or corridor shared with the Principal Dwelling sufficient to meet the requirements of safe egress under the Building Code and Fire Code.

ADU construction shall comply with 310 CMR 15.000: The State Environmental Code, Title 5 regulations for a Single-Family Residential Dwelling in the Single-Family Residential Zoning District in which the Protected Use ADU is located.

The Board of Health must determine that sewage disposal will be satisfactorily provided for, for all ADUs, including provision for an appropriate septic reserve area on site, or appropriate sewer service.

**Codes applied to ADUs are the same as those applied to single family homes**



# 3. Protected Use ADUs

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The Building Commissioner shall approve a Building Permit authorizing Protected Use ADU installation and use within, or on a Lot with, a Principal Dwelling in the following zoning Districts: **Residence R; Village Common VC; and Business B**, including within, or on a Lot with, a Pre-Existing Nonconforming Structure, if the following conditions are met:

These are the 3 zoning districts in Littleton that allow single family residences by right

ADUs must be allowed on nonconforming lots or with nonconforming principal dwelling units

# A. Dimensional Standards (within 3. Protected Use ADUs)

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Protected Use ADU shall not be larger than a Gross Floor Area of 1200 square feet or ½ the Gross Floor Area of the Principal Dwelling, whichever is smaller.

A Protected Use ADU shall be subject to the minimum setback requirements and maximum building height requirement applicable to the Principal Dwelling, to the Single-family Dwelling, or to an accessory structure in the zoning district in which the lot is located, whichever results in the more permissive dimensional regulation.

**Littleton's current  
ADU zoning  
allows for ADUs up to  
1200 SF**

**The most permissive  
dimensional  
regulations must  
apply**

# Littleton's Dimensional Standards for ADUs

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DISTRICT	Village Common (VC)	Residential (R)	Business (B)
Street Setback	10 ft (all)	30 ft (all)	30 ft (residential)
Rear and Side Setbacks	10 ft (all) (20 ft rear if abutting R)	10 ft (accessory)	10 ft (accessory) (25 ft if abutting residential)
Max Height	32 ft (all)	32 ft (all)	32 ft (all)
Lot Coverage	80% max	60% - Buildings plus paving	60% - Buildings plus paving

## B. Off Street Parking (within 3. Protected Use ADUs)

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Off-Street Parking. One additional off-street parking space shall be required for Protected Use ADUs located outside the ½-mile radius of the Foster Street MBTA Commuter Rail Station. No off-street parking is required for Protected Use ADUs located within a ½-mile radius of the Foster Street MBTA Commuter Rail Station. Parking spaces shall be constructed of materials consistent with the existing driveway and shall have vehicular access to driveway;

## C. Number of ADUs Per Lot (within 3. Protected Use ADUs)

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One (1) Protected Use ADU is allowed by right in the R, VC and B zoning districts, subject to the requirements of this §173-xx. There shall be no more than one Protected Use ADU per lot.

**Municipalities may allow more than one ADU per lot by special permit only.**

**Littleton has decided to only allow on ADU per lot**

# D. Common Ownership Model

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ADUs shall remain accessory to a Principal Dwelling, and therefore both must be sited on a single lot and the ADU must remain in common ownership with the associated Principal Dwelling.

**Allowing condo creation would allow for more homeowners in Littleton.**

**Homeownership is a key way to build generational wealth and create housing stability.**

**The state has determined that preventing condominium creation is not illegal to include in zoning, but they will not comment on if it is explicitly allowed in zoning**

# E. Short Term Rentals

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ADUs may not be used as Short-Term Rentals, as such term is defined in M.G.L. c.64G, §1.

**Municipalities are allowed to limit short-term rentals in ADUs.**

## 4. Nonconformance

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A Protected Use ADU shall be permitted within, or on a Lot with, a Pre-Existing Nonconforming Structure so long as the Protected Use ADU can be developed in conformance with the Building Code, 760 CMR 71.00, and state law.

All ADUs, including those on nonconforming lots, or on a lot with a nonconforming primary dwelling, must be compliant with lot frontage, setback, building height and lot coverage restrictions in the applicable zoning district.

**All of Littleton's  
dimensional  
requirements can be  
applied to the ADU  
except for minimum  
lot size**

**Just because a lot or  
principal dwelling is  
non-conforming does  
not mean the ADU is  
allowed to be  
nonconforming!**



# 5. Pre-Existing ADUs

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An Accessory Dependent Dwelling Unit, Accessory Apartment or Detached Accessory apartment created before February 2nd of 2025 no longer requires owner occupancy of either unit.

Any pre-existing unit that meets the requirements of a Protected Use ADU is considered a Protected Use ADU. The requirements of a Protected Use ADU are outlined in the definitions for “Accessory Dwelling Unit” and “Protected Use Accessory Dwelling Unit” in section 173-2 of the code.

**This clause allows ADUs created before 2025 to effectively become PUADUs, and therefore prevent a second ADU from being built on the same lot**

## 6. Administration and Enforcement

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No building shall be occupied until a certificate of occupancy is issued by the Building Commissioner, where required.

The Building Commissioner shall apply the Dover analysis as articulated in the standards in 760 CMR 71.03(3)(a), to any request for a Protected Use ADU Building Permit and shall waive any zoning requirement that the Building Commissioner finds to be unreasonable under the Dover analysis.

**The Dover analysis is used to enable the ADU regulations**