

**From:** [Beth Rouleau](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Planning Board meeting - support for ADU zoning bylaw change (one file attached)  
**Date:** Monday, January 30, 2023 12:26:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [ADUs - B.Rouleau.pdf](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)

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Dear Planning Board,

In advance of tonight's Planning Board meeting, I am sharing information below and attaching a summary table. I appreciate your time and insights during consideration of potential ADU bylaw changes in Hingham. The attachment includes excerpts 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. 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. The full report is available here [Council on Aging | Hingham, MA \(hingham-ma.gov\)](#)

As a member of the ADU committee and past Chair of the Council on Aging Board, I support proposed zoning changes to expand and diversify housing options in Hingham. ADUs leverage existing property infrastructure to create housing with lower impact on resources and the environment. ADU inventory and rental opportunities are limited by several pre-existing property features and eligibility requirements. For these reasons, ADUs have historically had limited impact on housing inventory but continue to offer an opportunity to a limited number of eligible householders. Amy Dain's 2018 report, State of Zoning for Accessory Dwelling Units captures the potential impact of less restricted zoning with even small increases in ADU inventory. If permits were to grow from the current average of 2.5 annually (per 100 municipalities where allowed) to 5 per year, thousands of rentals would be created in a ten-year period. In 100 municipalities 5,000 rentals would be dispersed among 538,000 single family houses; Less 1% would have an ADU.

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.

ADUs offers residents (many of whom are longtime Hingham residents) an opportunity to remain in their homes by the introduction of caregiver support; companionship; property maintenance support; or rental income, which creates affordability for the homeowner (as does reducing property maintenance or other costs when ADU occupants provide home or caregiver supports). There are also opportunities to create affordable rentals, as was done in Salem through an ordinance which requires rental rates be set at a percentage below market value. Information is available at <https://www.salemma.gov/adu>.

With appreciation for your time and consideration,  
Beth Rouleau