



Regional Housing Services Office

Serving Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston

Office Address: 37 Knox Trail, Acton, MA 01720
Phone: (978) 287-1092

Website: WWW.RHSOhousing.org
Email: INFO@RHSOhousing.org

TO: Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management
Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner
FROM: Jody Kablack, RHSO Specialist
RE: Concord Accessory Dwelling Units Survey
DATE: December 10, 2019

The Regional Housing Services Office prepared a brief survey to send to select Concord residents to solicit responses regarding Accessory Dwelling Units. The goal of the survey was to receive information from potential owners of such ADUs in order to determine size of the units, occupancy, rental rates, and other information which can help guide the Planning Board's current zoning initiatives. The survey was sent to Concord residents who have received a Special Permit from the Zoning Board for an Accessory Dwelling Unit over the past decade, as well as properties identified by the Concord Assessor's Office as having multiple structures on one lot that may include a residential unit, and properties identified as 2-Family if both units were in common ownership (indicating the second unit could be a rental unit). 179 surveys were sent by US mail in October, 2019. A Survey Monkey poll using similar questions was also developed and residents were given an opportunity to respond either on paper, or on-line. 36 responses were received – 33 paper and 3 on-line. A copy of the survey is attached to this memo, as well as a compilation of the survey results and comments.

Survey Results and Analysis

The survey yielded a 20% response rate (36 responses). Of this 20%, 23 responses indicated the property contained an accessory dwelling unit, which corresponds to a 13% rate of relevant responses.

- 64% of the ADUs are occupied by persons non-related to the homeowners
- Over 50% have only 1 occupant and 60% are 1 bedroom units or studios
- 65% responded that no rent is charged
- 30% responded that the rent received help them stay in their home
- Over 50% have been in existence for >10 years (very few responses were from recent permit grantees)
- Over 50% of the ADUs are in detached structures
- 35% responded that the permitting process was difficult

Generally, most units are small and are occupied by small households. Many units are in detached structures and have been in existence for many years, which have likely not received permits but which provide very appropriate housing. Rents ranged from \$850 - \$3950 per month, but many responses indicated no rent was charged (likely those units occupied by family members).

Comments

- 3 responders indicated that they sought "permits" from the Town but were not allowed to install a kitchen.



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- 1 commenter indicated the ADU can only be used as long as the property owner lives on the property.
- 3 comments indicated that housing diversity should be encouraged in Concord.
- 1 ADU was permitted for a disabled child.
- 2 commented that they have an ADU but don't rent it as they thought it was illegal to use it as a separate apartment.
- 1 commented that there is a pool house on the property but a "covenant" restricts its use as a rental unit.
- 1 commented that zoning for more dense uses should not be allowed in the 2 acre zoning district.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance on this topic.

Enclosures



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October 23, 2019

Dear Homeowner,

We are assisting the Town of Concord in implementing the Planning Board's FY2020 Housing Choice Initiatives by identifying opportunities and barriers to creating accessory apartments in the town. One of the ways we are assisting is through the attached survey on accessory apartments.

Accessory apartments, also known as accessory dwelling units in the Concord Zoning Bylaw, are units within a single family residence which are typically subordinate to the main dwelling and can be rented or occupied by separate households. The units may be within your home, or in a detached structure on your property. Accessory apartments provide benefits to both property owners and to smaller Concord families. The Planning Board is seeking creative ways to encourage more of these types of smaller units in town because they provide additional housing options without the need for significant new construction, loss of open space, and/ or disruption of neighborhoods.

The results of this survey may be used to promote additional housing choices in Concord.

According to Concord Assessor data, you may have an accessory apartment on your property. If you do, answers to the questions on the next page will be very helpful as the Town reviews this issue. You may remain anonymous, or fill in your identifying information (this would help us in case we have any follow up questions). This information will not be used in any advertising, will remain confidential, and will be used solely by the Regional Housing Services Office in its reporting to the Concord Planning Board. Your specific property data will not be released to any other Town department and will only be reported in the aggregate.

Attached is a pre-addressed stamped envelope for your convenient response. If you would prefer to answer this survey on-line, you can find it at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G7VS6HB> . Please note that Survey Monkey does not allow you to add comments. If you have more to say on this issue please send comments in the envelope provided. The on-line survey will be open until November 22, 2019.

If you have any questions about this survey, do not hesitate to email me at Jody@RHSOhousing.org, or call me at 978-287-1092.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Sincerely,

Jody Kablack, RHSO Specialist



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Do you have an accessory apartment on your property? Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, please proceed. If No, thank you for participating. We will remove your address from our list.

Who lives in the accessory apartment? A family member _____

A non-family member _____

Someone employed by your household _____

How many people live in the accessory apartment? _____

Do you charge a monthly rent? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, how much? _____

Does this include utilities? Yes _____ No _____

What is the approximate size of the accessory apartment? _____ # of bedrooms

How long has the accessory apartment been in existence? _____

Does the rent you receive from the accessory apartment provide financial assistance that is needed in order for you to stay in your home? Yes _____ No _____

Is the accessory apartment: Attached to your home _____

In a detached structure on your property _____

If a permit was issued for the accessory apartment, did you find the permitting process difficult?

Yes _____ No _____ N/A _____

Name: _____ (optional)

Address: _____ (optional)

Email Address: _____ (optional)

Please use the space below if there are any additional comments on this topic that you would like to share with us on this topic.

Concord Accessory Dwelling Unit survey (as of 12/10/2019)

179 surveys sent on 10/23/19

Built from Assessor data to identify potential properties and list of Special Permits issued

Response Rate:

8 surveys returned unopened

36 responses received, 20% - 33 paper and 3 on-line

Responses:

- 1) Do you have an accessory apartment on your property? Yes: 23 No: 13
- 2) Who lives in the accessory apartment?
 - A family member: 6 (26%)
 - A non-family member: 10 (43%)
 - Someone employed by your household: 1 (4%)
 - Blank: 6
- 3) How many people live in the accessory apartment?
 - 1 person: 12 (52%)
 - 2 people: 1 (4%)
 - 3 people: 1 (4%)
 - >3 people: 2 (9%)
 - Blank (or the ADU is empty): 7
- 4) Do you charge a monthly rent? Yes: 7 (30%) No: 13 (57%) Blank: 3
If yes, how much? Ranges from \$850 - \$3950 (avg. \$2000)
- 5) Does this include utilities? Most included utilities
- 6) What is the approximate size of the accessory apartment?
 - Studio: 1 (4%)
 - 1 bedroom: 13 (57%)
 - 2 bedrooms: 6 (26%)
 - >2 bedrooms: 3 (13%)
- 7) How long has the accessory apartment been in existence?
 - 1-5 yrs: 2 (9%)
 - 6-10 yrs: 5 (22%)
 - >10 yrs: 13 (57%)
 - Blank/Unsure: 3
- 8) Does the rent you receive from the accessory apartment provide financial assistance that is needed in order for you to stay in your home?
 - Yes: 7 (30%)
 - No: 10 (43%)
 - Blank: 6
- 9) Is the accessory apartment:
 - Attached to your home: 10 (43%)
 - In a detached structure on your property: 13 (57%)
- 10) If a permit was issued for the accessory apartment, did you find the permitting process difficult?
 - Yes: 8 (35%) No: 6 (26%) N/A: 9