Accessory Dwelling Units

Facts:

What is an ADU?

- a second small dwelling on the same grounds (or attached to) your regular single-family house
- self-contained living units that typically have their own kitchen, bedroom(s), and bathroom space
- Examples:
  - Apartment over the garage
  - Backyard cottage
  - Basement apartment
- Also commonly referred to as: granny flats, elder cottage housing opportunities (ECHO), mother-daughter residences, or secondary dwelling unit
- PowerPoint: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU): Advanced (Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Comprehensive Planning)

Benefits of an ADU: Accessorydwellings.org

- Economic:
  - Generates jobs during construction. Approximately half of the cost of new construction will go towards labor, while half will go towards materials. Labor is inherently a local job, so when you construct, you are keeping money circulating in your community.
  - Enhances property tax base for the city. New residences generate more tax revenue and more taxable income for a city.
  - Creates housing near employment centers and near public transportation, where there is demand for housing.

- Environmental
  - Building small is building green: the smaller the building, the less energy, material, and waste will be used in the construction, residence, and maintenance of the lifespan of the building.
  - Buildings are responsible for approximately 49% of the energy used in the United States. The smaller the spaces in which we dwell, the less energy we’ll use.
  - ADUs are built where there is a market demand for housing. These locations are also the locations where residents are able to walk, bike or ride to work. Transportation (including commuting), is responsible for 33% of the energy used in the United States.
  - Providing more habitable, flexible dwelling options in a pre-existing urban core, utilizes existing governmental infrastructure (eg. roads, sewers, schools), and
reduces the demand for expanding infrastructure in far lying reaches of a metropolitan area.

- Societal:
  - Housing stock is not matching demographic trends. More and more people are seeking smaller, urban residences. This trend includes “baby-boomers”, generation X-ers, and non-nuclear family partners.
  - Comfortable, affordable, and practical housing for multi-generational households
  - ADUs can provide a means for adult children to give care for their aging parents in a semi-independent living arrangement. Can provide elderly people with sense of personal security and companionship
  - Alternatively, it can provide young adults (with children or other responsibilities) with an affordable urban dwelling adjacent to their parents.
  - Provides organic opportunities for groups and individuals to live and share socially with one another but to have their own living space.
  - Provides more affordable housing options in a neighborhood without changing neighborhood character
- Presentation on benefits by accessorydwellings.org

Trends:

- Although a number of communities still restrict development of accessory dwelling units, there is a growing awareness and acceptance of ADUs as an inexpensive way to increase the affordable housing supply and address illegal units already in existence (HUD Case Study)
- Multigenerational living trends
  - Video by USAToday
  - News article:
    - Significant spike in multigenerational living
      - Elderly parents are moving in with their kids
      - Cash-strapped college grads are settling back in with mom and dad
  - PewResearch:
    - Boomerang generation – college grads living with mom and dad
    - Multi-generational household appears to lift Americans out of poverty
    - Large numbers of Americans enacted their own anti-poverty program in the depths of the Great Recession: They moved in with relatives

Examples of ADUs:

- Barnstable, Massachusetts – Accessory Affordable Apartment Program
- Austin, Texas – Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance
- Wellfleet, Massachusetts – Accessory Apartment Bylaws
- Los Angeles, California – Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance
• Portland, Oregon – ADU Information
• Boulder, Colorado – ADU Administrative Review Application
• Minneapolis, Minnesota – Accessory Dwelling Units Text Amendment
• Montgomery County, Maryland – News Article on Improved ADU Regs
• Accessory Dwelling Unit Zoning Codes – West coast examples

Resources:
• Model Bylaws:
  o Massachusetts Model for ADUs
  o AARP Model Ordinance
• Case Studies:
  o HUD Case Study – June 2008
    ▪ This case study explores how the adoption of ordinances, with reduced regulatory restrictions to encourage ADUs, can be advantageous for communities
    ▪ It also provides examples of municipalities with successful ADU legislation and programs including ordinances in the appendices
  o Massachusetts Case Studies:
    ▪ Suburban
    ▪ Urban
    ▪ Rural