



Citywide ADU Zoning Kick-off Meeting

Wednesday, March 13
6 - 7:30 PM



**boston planning &
development agency**

Zoom Controls to Listen to Interpreters

(EN) Look for the interpretation icon (**globe**) at the bottom of your screen and select the language you want to hear.

(Caboverdean) Djobe íkune di interpretason (**un globu**) na parti inferior di tela y selesiona bu língua ki bu kre skuta reunion.

(Kreyòl Ayisyen) Chèche ikòn entèpretasyon ki gen fòm (**glòb**) anba ekran ou an epi seleksyone lang ou vle tande a.

(Español) Busque el ícono de la interpretación (**globo**) en el borde inferior de su pantalla y seleccione el idioma en el que desea escuchar.

(Português) Procure o ícone de interpretação (**globo**) na parte inferior da sua tela e selecione o idioma que deseja ouvir.

(Tiếng Việt) Tìm biểu tượng phiên dịch (**hình quả địa cầu**) ở phía cuối màn hình của bạn và chọn ngôn ngữ bạn muốn nghe.

(简体中文) 查找屏幕底部的翻译图标(**地球仪**), 然后选择您想听到的语言。

(繁體中文) 查找屏幕底部的翻譯圖標(**地球儀**), 然後選擇您想听到的語言。

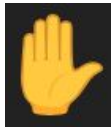


Zoom Meeting Info + Tips

- **The BPDA will be recording this meeting** and posting it on the BPDA's project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.
- **Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.
- **Use raise hand function** (dial ***9** if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon to unmute** (dial ***6** if joining by phone) before asking your question or providing comment.



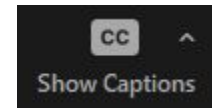
Mute/unmute



Raise hand to get in line to ask a question or provide comment



Turn video on/off



Turn on captions

Please Ask for Clarification!

Ask questions in the chat along the way!

Our staff are available to answer during the presentation.

Ask for us to clarify any terms or concepts we discuss!

We want to make sure that what we cover is accessible to everyone so you can all share your informed feedback.



Citywide Zoning for Accessory Dwelling Units

"This year we will eliminate barriers for residents to build ADUs citywide and support local contractors in getting them built."

- Mayor Wu, State of the City 2024



The City of Boston and the BPDA are working to **eliminate barriers to building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)** by updating zoning to make these small homes as-of-right citywide.

Eliminating Barriers to Building ADUs: Cross-Department Collaboration

Over the course of 2024, the BPDA and the Mayor's Office of Housing / Boston Home Center will work together to ensure that Bostonians have the tools and support they need to build an ADU.

BPDA - Planning & Zoning for ADUs

The BPDA will work to **make it allowable** for Bostonians to build ADUs by updating zoning to allow ADUs by-right.

- Update zoning to align code requirements with existing building patterns and allow ADUs without zoning relief
- Publish an ADU Guidebook, a visual guide that helps homeowners understand the zoning and building guidelines for developing an ADU on their lot

MOH / BHC - Technical Assistance & Financing for ADUs

MOH & BHC will work to **make it accessible** for Bostonians to build ADUs by expanding resources for financing and technical assistance

- Financing tools for low- and moderate-income homeowners
- Clear guidance & staff to help homeowners navigate the process
- Strengthened connections with local builders/contractors community

Why ADUs?

A Hyde Park homeowner smiles outside her recently completed basement ADU, funded in part by the Boston Home Center's ADU loan program.



Diversifying Housing Options with ADUs

ADUs are additional units that can be built either within an existing home or outside of it, such as in a smaller detached dwelling.

ADUs allow homeowners to utilize their property to its fullest potential and do what is right for their family's needs.

- Extra room for growing families, keeping multiple generations close
- Provide opportunities for extra income with an on-site rental unit
- Increase equity on a property



Internal ADU



Attached ADU

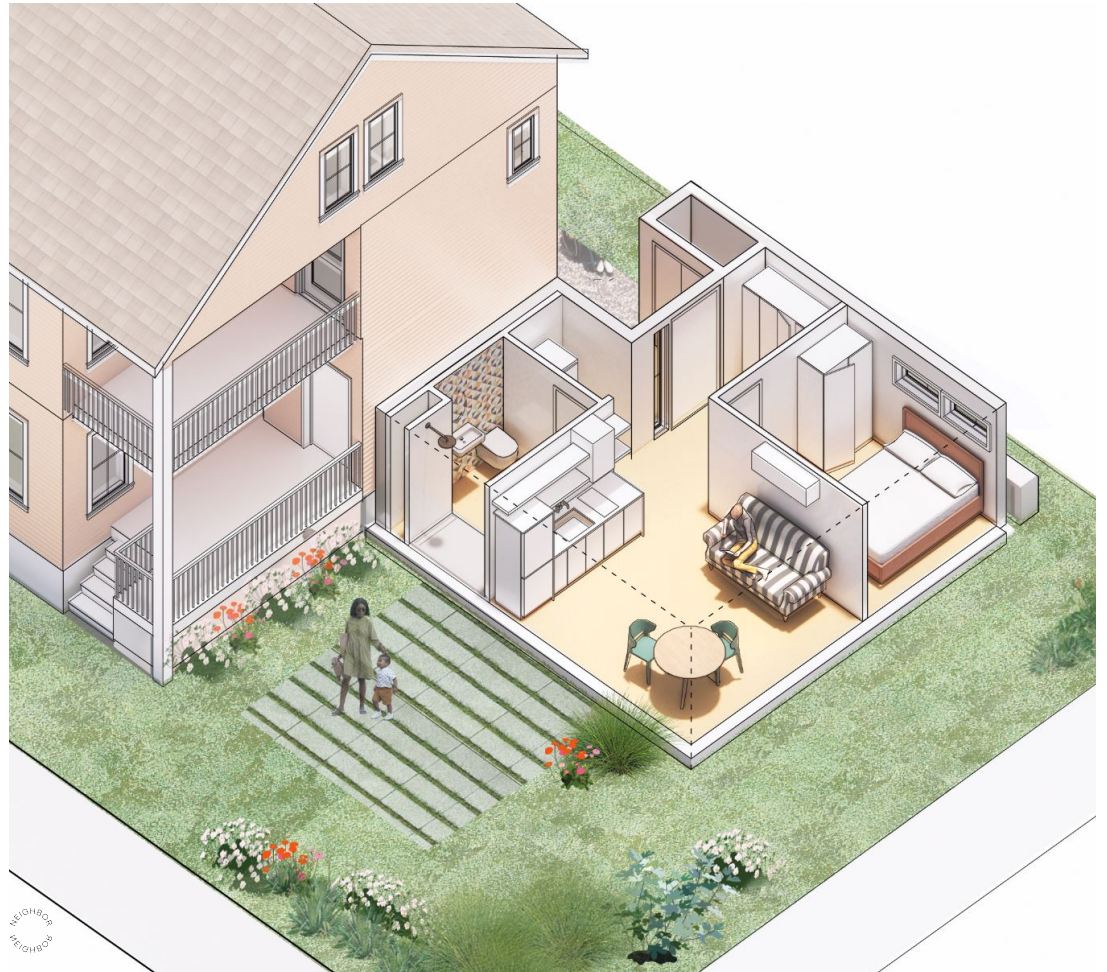


Detached ADU

What is an ADU?

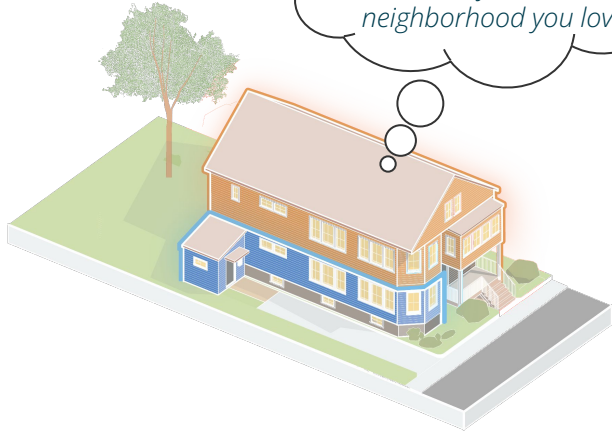
An ADU is a Dwelling Unit, which includes:

- A **full bathroom** and **kitchen**
- Building code compliant and safe **egress routes**
- Access to **electric and water shut off valves**
- **Sprinklers** for any units that increase the total number of units in the building to 3 or more



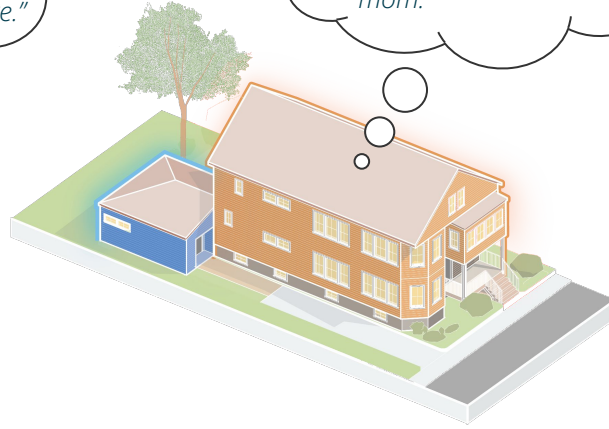
Different ADU Types Can Fit Different Needs

"The ADU provides generational wealth and the ability to age in place and to stay in a neighborhood you love."



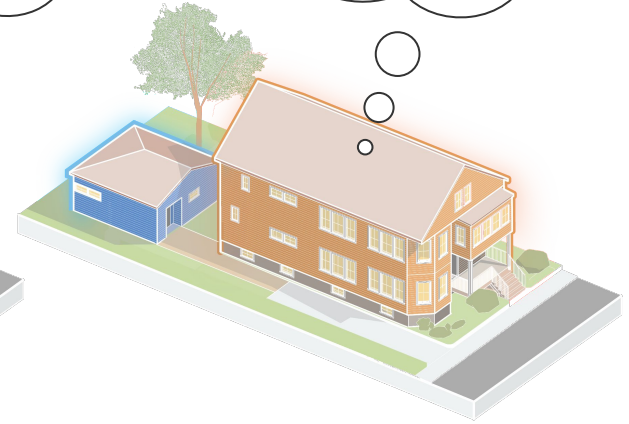
Internal ADU

"The ADU has made me one of the proudest people on the planet to be able to build a house for my mom."



Attached ADU

"I'm always trying to help people and with this ADU I can provide housing in my neighborhood."




Detached ADU

ADUs Can Help Ease Boston's Affordable Housing Crisis

ADUs simultaneously support flexibility in Boston's housing stock while also adding much-needed new rental units to the neighborhood.

- ADUs help ensure that a property can support a household's unique needs throughout life
- More diverse, affordable housing throughout neighborhood
- Retaining long-time neighbors and community ties



 **mayorwu** Mark is a Roxbury homeowner who built an additional dwelling unit (ADU) to give his mother a safe and accessible place to live. Thanks to her new ADU, Mark's mother will be able to be close to her son and have her independence at home.

ADUs are Becoming More Common Throughout the US

An increasing number of municipalities are recognizing the potential that ADUs have to help ease rising housing costs, diversify housing stock, and support families as they navigate household changes.

- California, Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Vermont have passed legislation **requiring the by-right permitting** of ADUs
- **MA Housing Bond Bill** - would allow ADUs to be built by-right across MA on single family lots (except in Boston)
- Seattle – **1,000 ADUs** permitted in a single year (2022)



ABOVE: A detached ADU in Seattle. Seattle policymakers passed regulations in 2019 to encourage the development of ADUs. In the 5 years since, ~2300 ADUs have been permitted.

Boston's Current ADU Program Allows Internal Units Only

Current policy allows homeowners to convert pre-existing spaces (attics, basements, etc.) into ADUs by using only **pre-existing building footprint**.



Pre-existing unit -
Convert extra independent unit into rental unit

Elizabeth is hoping to generate an income stream to offset regular housing costs, including mortgage payments.



Carve out unit -
divide first floor into two studio units

Justin wants to create a unit for his parents to live in so they can assist childcare, without sacrificing rental income.



Basement conversion-
convert basement into an accessible unit

Nancy is an older adult who hopes to age in place while supported by rental income



Attic conversion -
convert attic into additional unit

Robert has extra space in the attic of his triple decker and wants to provide an affordable rental unit

Neighborhood	Number of ADUs
Dorchester	39
East Boston	17
Mattapan	17
Roxbury	15
Hyde Park	14
Brighton	11
Jamaica Plain	11
Roslindale	8
South Boston	8
West Roxbury	3

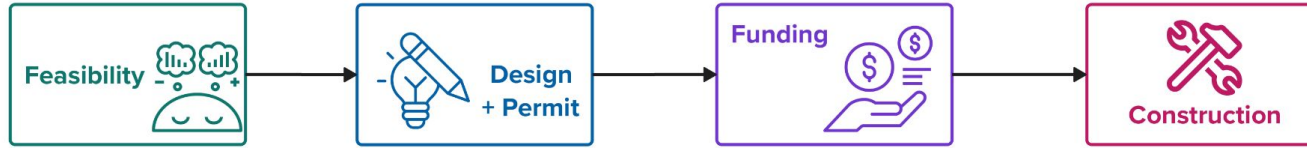
To date, there have been about **150 internal ADUs built across Boston** since the program launched in 2018, and almost every neighborhood has seen ADU development.

Barriers to Building ADUs in Boston



Access to Financing and Technical Assistance

Building an ADU is a new experience for most homeowners, requiring new skills and resources at each step in the process.



Navigating the process: Homeowners need to assemble a team, get plans drawn, and submit required documents.

- BARRIERS: finding professions, understanding code requirements
- SUPPORT: online toolkit and monthly ADU Design Workshop
- UPCOMING: Technical assistance for income qualified homeowners

Access to affordable financing: Internal ADUs average \$100K and external ADUs \$250-350K. Household's fund ADUs with savings, home equity, and renovation loans.

- BARRIERS: access to home equity, high interest rates, borrowing limits, limited options for financial products
- SUPPORT: Boston Home Center \$50K loan
- UPCOMING: New financial product with local lenders to fill the financing gap

Boston's Current ADU Program Is Limited

Currently, the only type of ADUs that can be built *without special approval* are internal ADUs that are built *within the existing footprint of a home* and by a resident homeowner.

Current zoning law dictates that ADUs must be built with **zero bump out, extension, or construction** to the existing envelope of the structure which results in the addition of Gross Floor Area



Only *internal ADUs* can be built without special approval.

ADUs built through new construction or extension of the building envelope would most likely require special approval.



External ADUs are effectively illegal to build on most residential lots without a zoning variance.

Zoning Reform for ADUs in Boston



Boston's Residential Zoning is Outdated

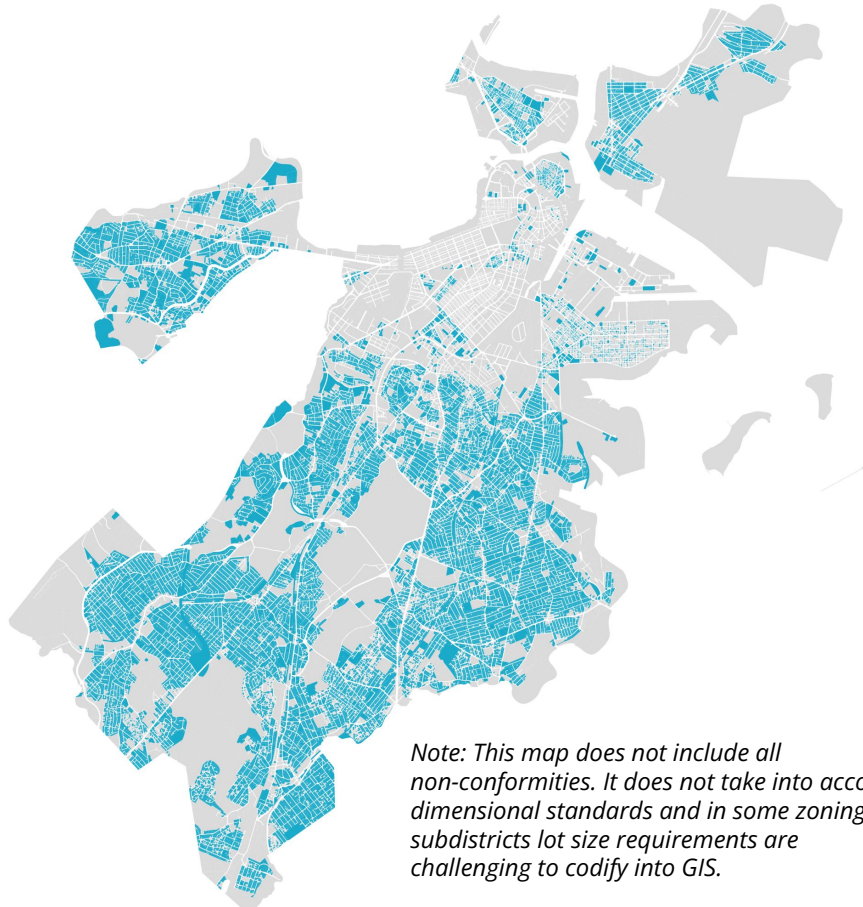
Our city's outdated zoning code does not reflect the existing building patterns throughout Boston's neighborhoods.

Many of the buildings that we know and love in our neighborhoods **predate the zoning code** and exceed the code's regulations.

That means that at least one aspect of these **buildings or the lot** they are built on are ***nonconforming*** with zoning regulations.



At Least 80% of Residential Parcels* Do Not Conform to Zoning



Note: This map does not include all non-conformities. It does not take into account dimensional standards and in some zoning subdistricts lot size requirements are challenging to codify into GIS.

This map shows a conservative calculation of parcels that do not align with either lot size, FAR, or unit count zoning restrictions. **Any substantive change to these parcels currently requires a zoning variance.**

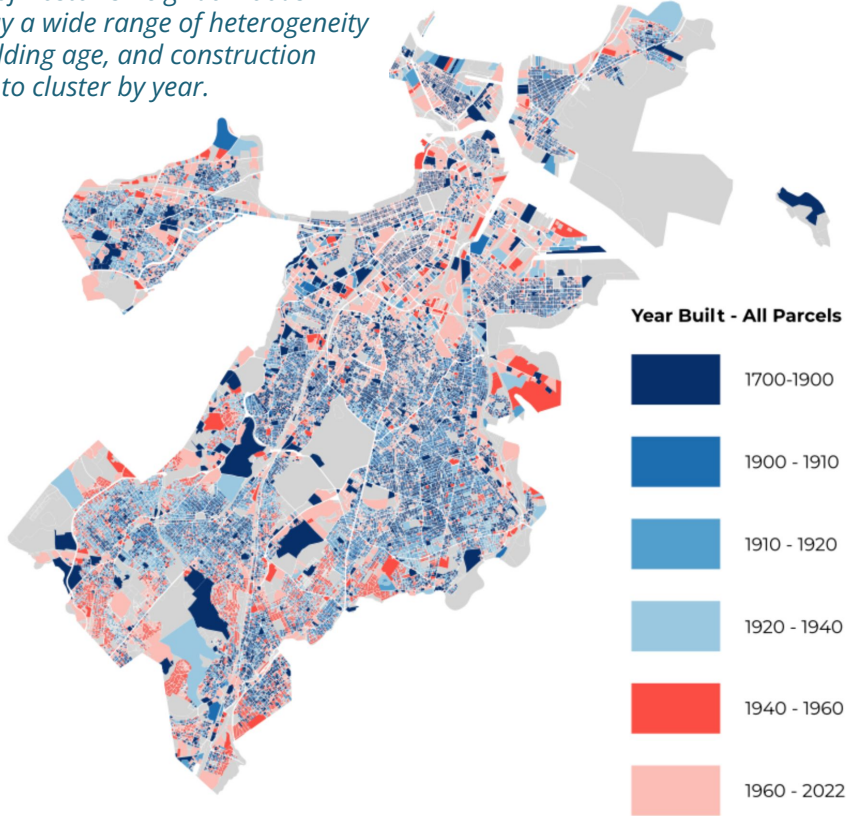
This analysis does NOT take into account dimensional standards (front/side/rear yard setbacks, frontage requirements, etc.) that likely dramatically brings this percentage much closer to 100%. Yard violations are the most common zoning relief requested at the ZBA.

** 60,500 out of 75,500 residential parcels have at least one nonconformity, in areas where neighborhood zoning applies, (excluding the Back Bay, South End, and Beacon Hill), where gross area is under the Article 80 Small Project Review threshold.*

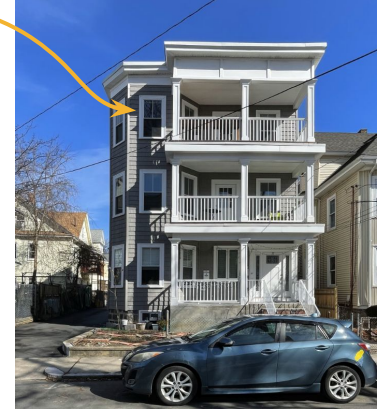
How Does Nonconformity Happen?

Boston's zoning code was created in 1964. But the vast majority of Boston's housing stock was built before the zoning code – 77% of homes were constructed before WWII.

Most of Boston's neighborhoods display a wide range of heterogeneity in building age, and construction tends to cluster by year.



This Brighton triple-decker, built in 1910, is in violation of most of the zoning regulations for its subdistrict.



More modern homes may still have zoning violations, as they tend to be designed to match the existing, established character of a neighborhood.

But *why does it matter* for ADUs if the pre-existing home does not conform to the zoning code?

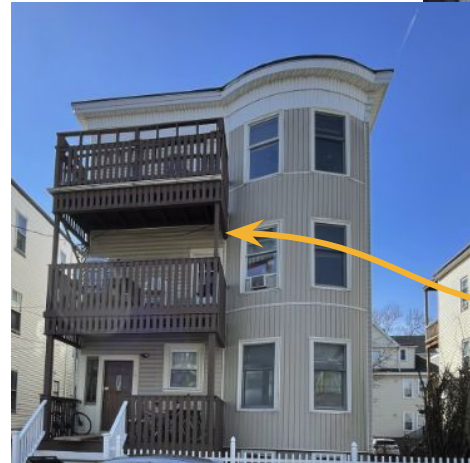
Nonconformity Means No Change Without Special Approval

Homes that are out of alignment with one or more aspect of the zoning code *cannot make any further renovations* without zoning relief.

The following are common renovation projects that frequently require zoning relief and approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

- Adding dormers
- Installing balconies/porches/roof decks
- Adding extra rooms
- Increasing square footage of existing rooms
- Raising roof height
- Extending living space into basement or attic
- ***Building an ADU***

Dormers are a common aspect of many homes, but their addition often violates FAR or height maximums.



Adding new porches/decks, or even renovating old ones, can trigger zoning violations.

Nonconforming Projects Take Longer to Permit

Projects that need zoning relief take longer to be permitted.

Longer permitting times mean ...

- **More costs** incurred by the homeowner
- **More waiting time** between project start and completion
- **More City staff hours** devoted to project review
- **Less homes permitted** each year, contributing to citywide housing shortage

How long does it take to permit an ADU?

99
days

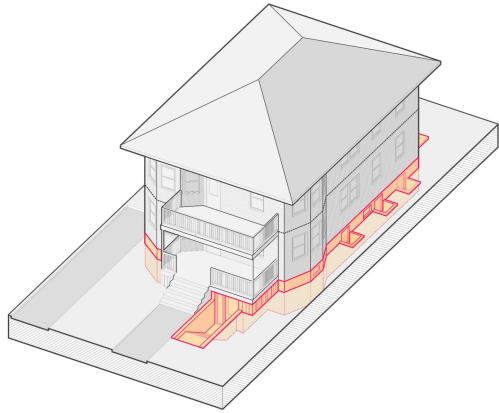
Median permitting time for internal ADUs that **did not** need zoning relief

499
days

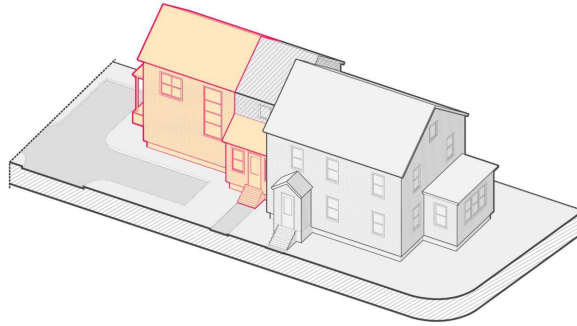
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ADU Case Studies

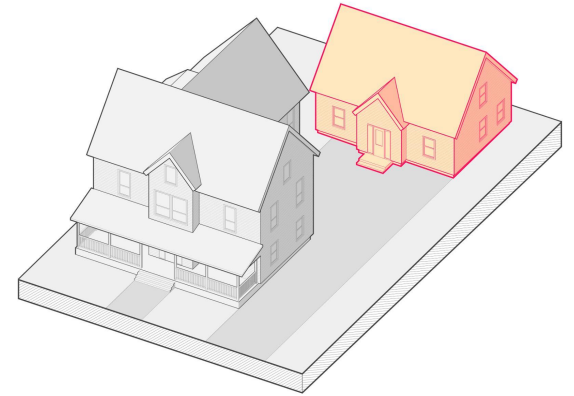
Existing ADU cases are hindered by pre-existing zoning violations (even when the existing building matches the scale and style of other buildings in the neighborhood).



Hyde Park Basement Conversion



Dorchester 2-Story Addition



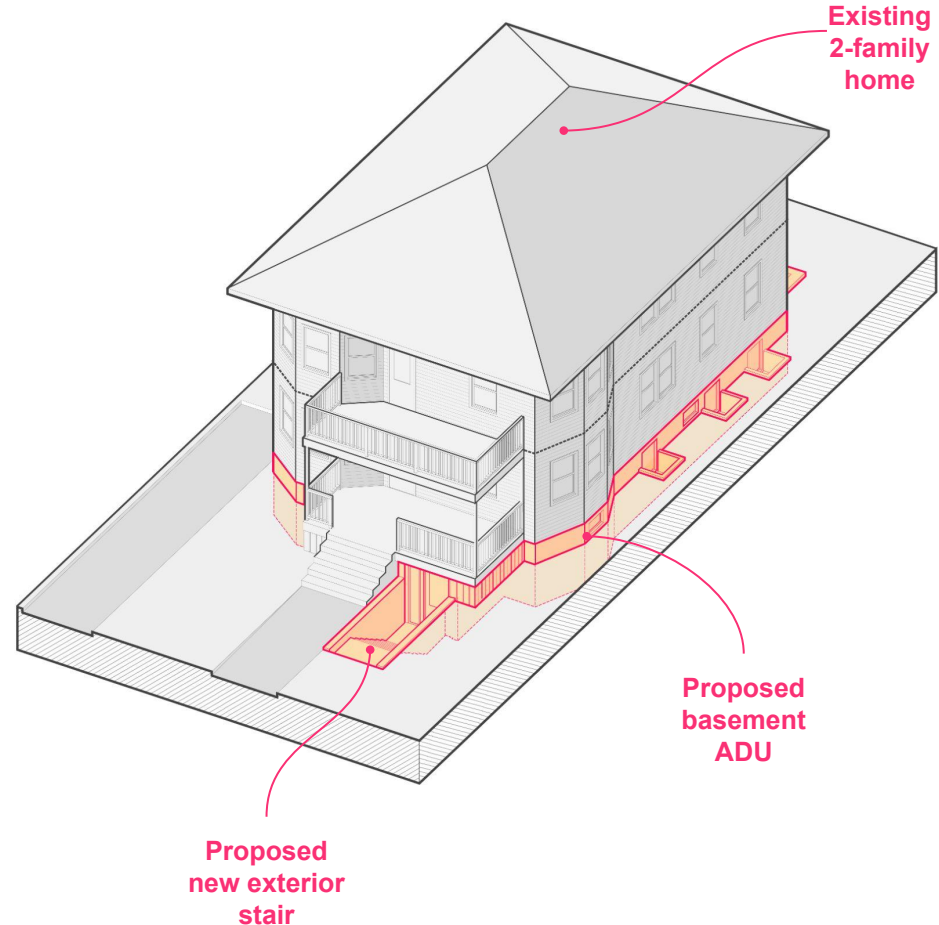
West Roxbury Carriage House Conversion

Case Study - Internal ADU

Hyde Park Basement Conversion



This two family home in Hyde Park converted an unused basement into an ADU. Due to the addition of a new exterior entrance/stairs (which resulted in new gross floor area), the project did not comply with the rules for Boston's current internal ADU program, and required zoning relief.



Case Study - Internal ADU

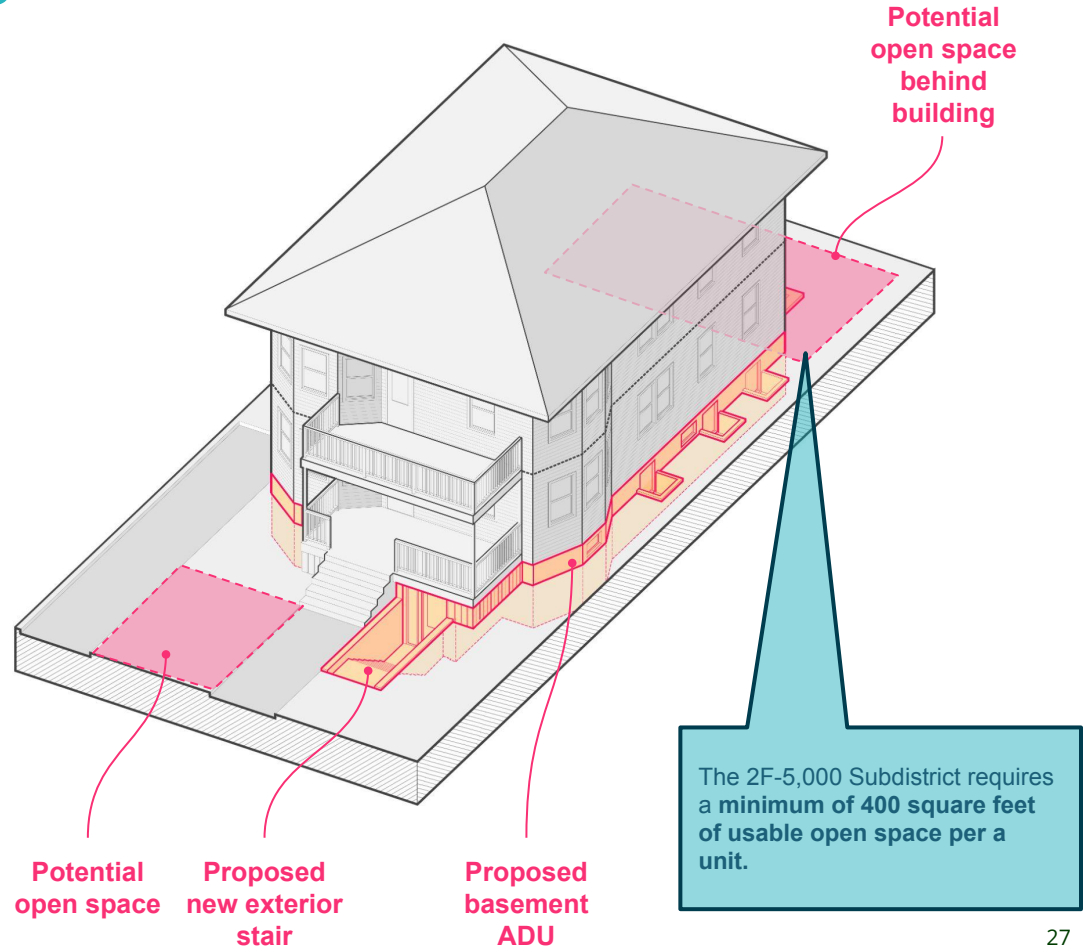
Hyde Park Basement Conversion

Pre-existing Zoning Violations

- **Usable Open Space Insufficient**
- Front Yard Insufficient
- Side Yard Insufficient
- Insufficient Parking
- Additional Lot Area Insufficient
- FAR Excessive

ADU Zoning Violations

- Additional Lot Area Insufficient
- FAR Excessive
- Forbidden Use (2 family to 3 family)
- Use regulations - basement units not allowed



Case Study - Internal ADU

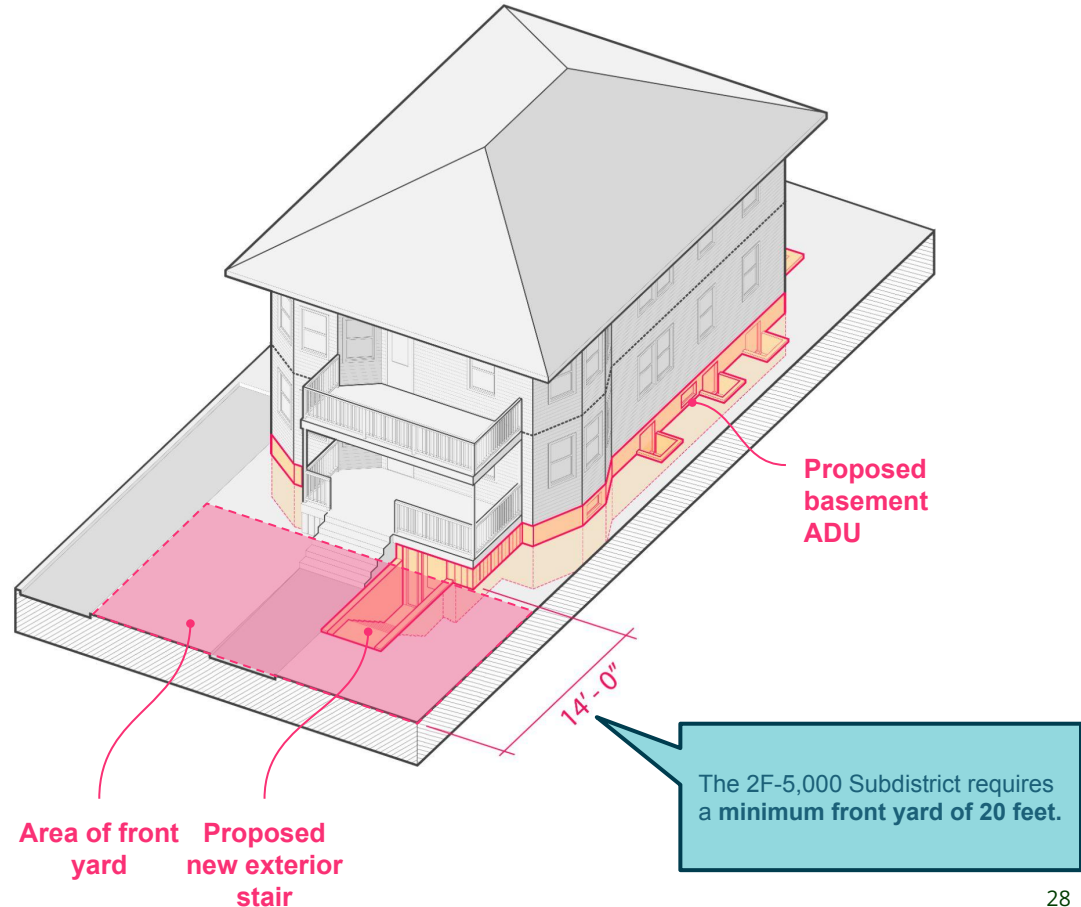
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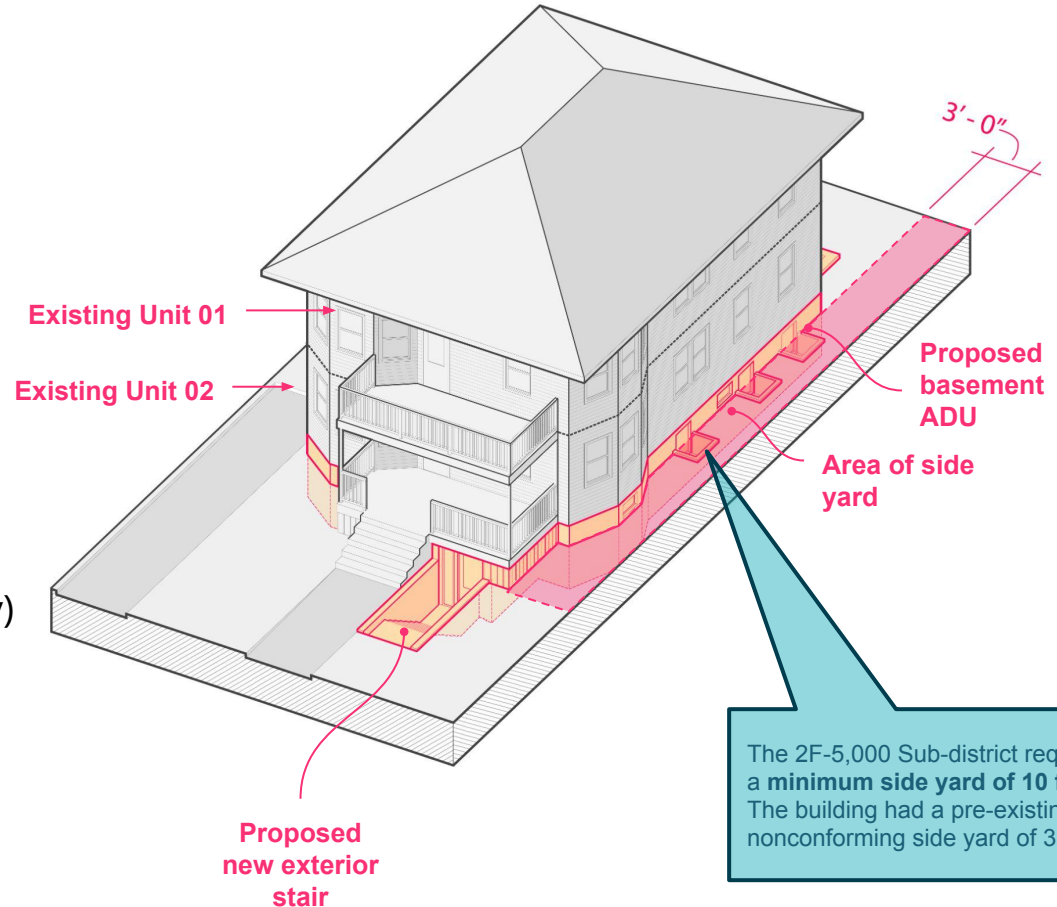
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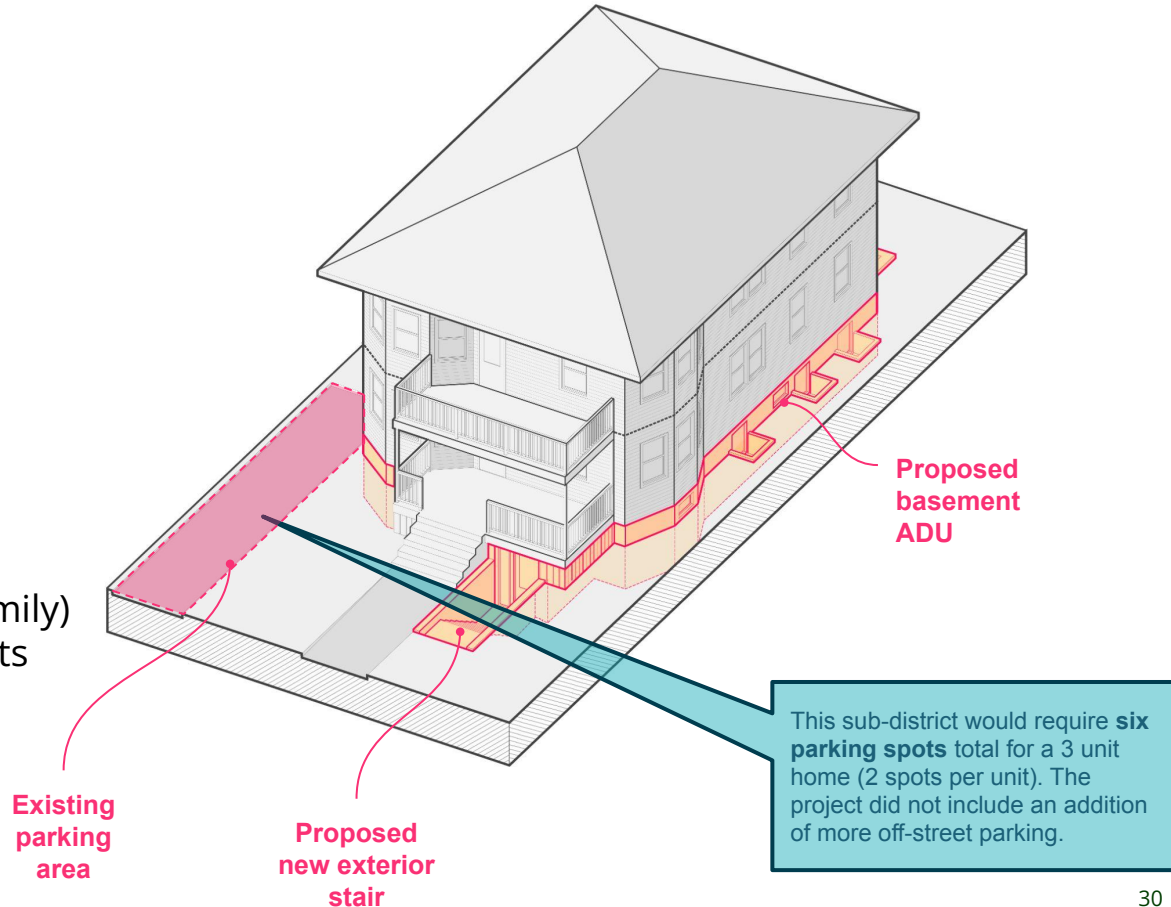
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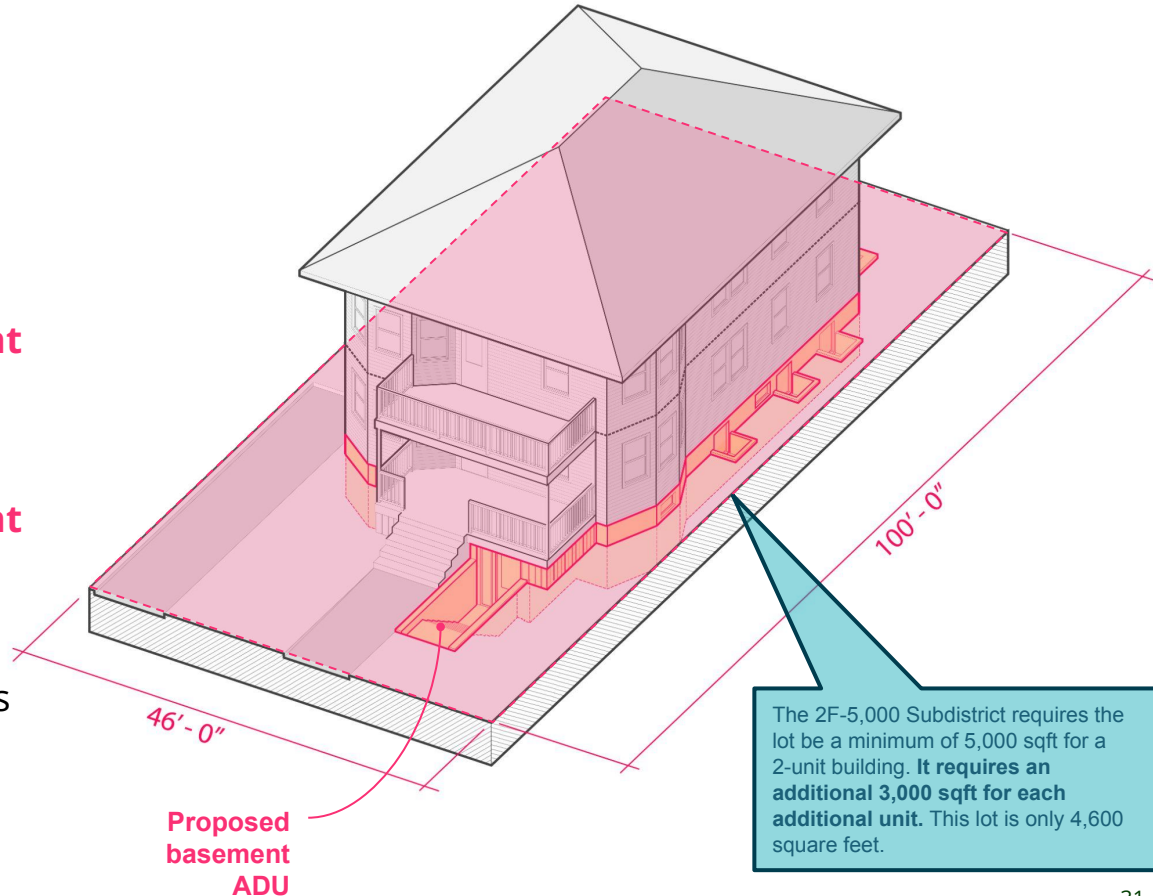
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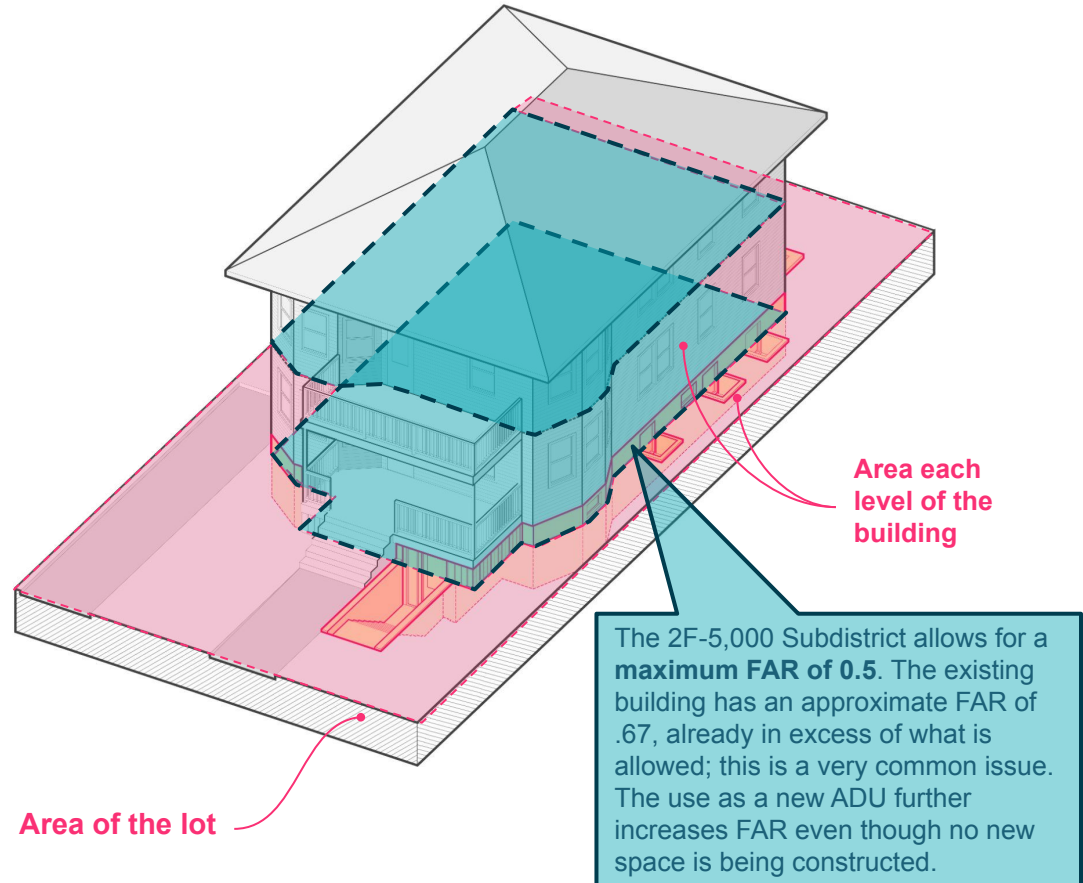
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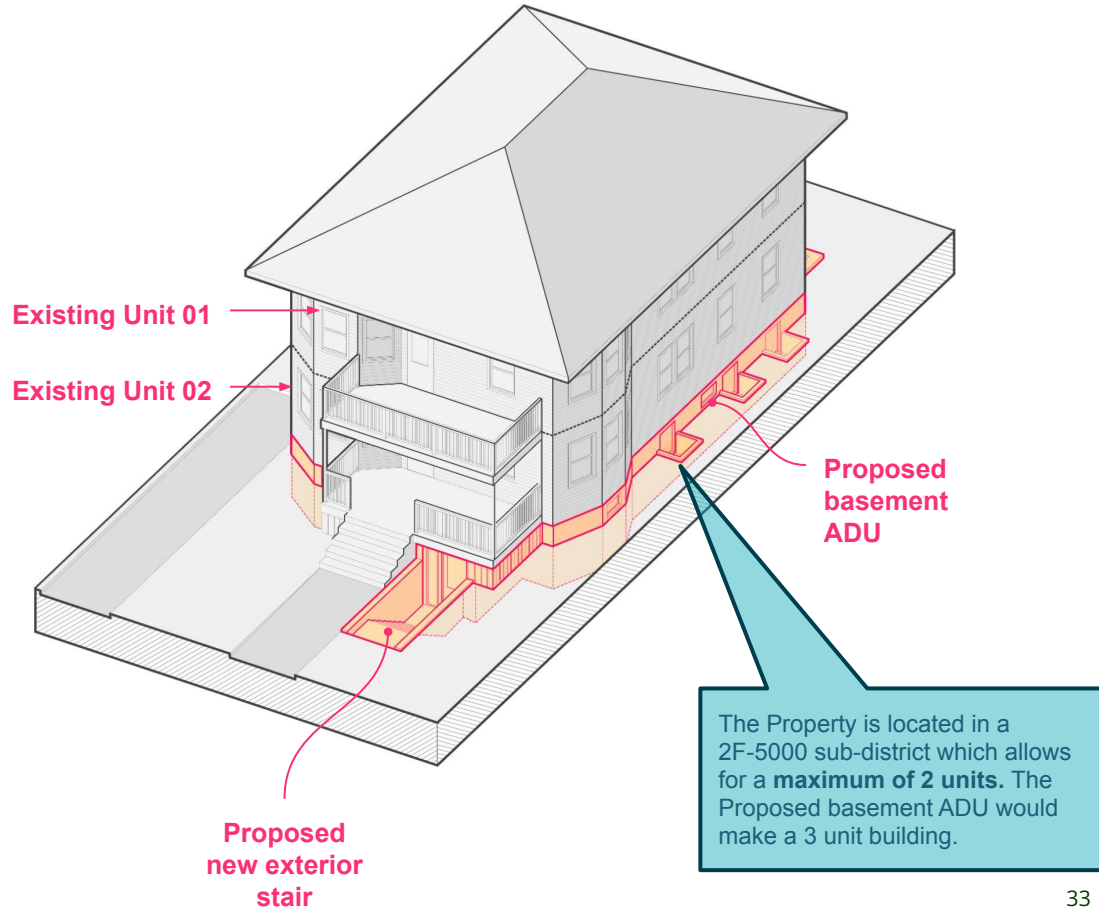
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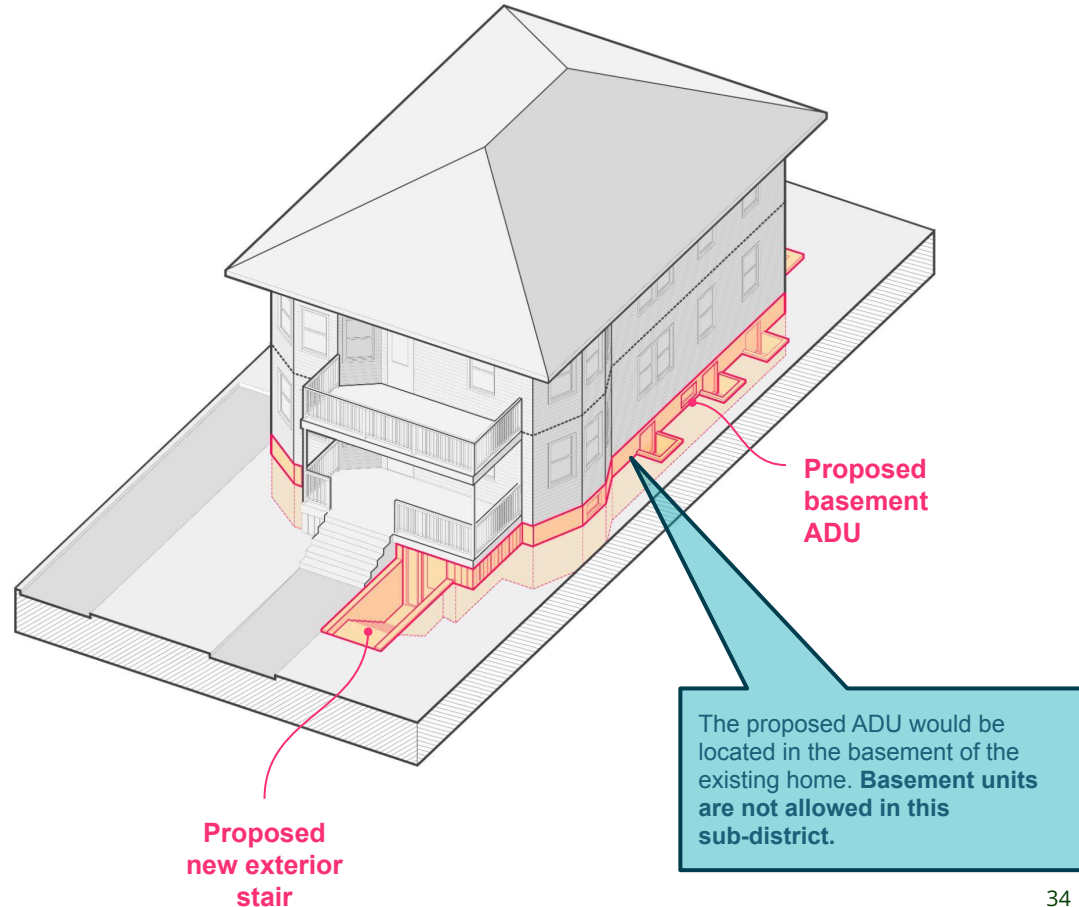
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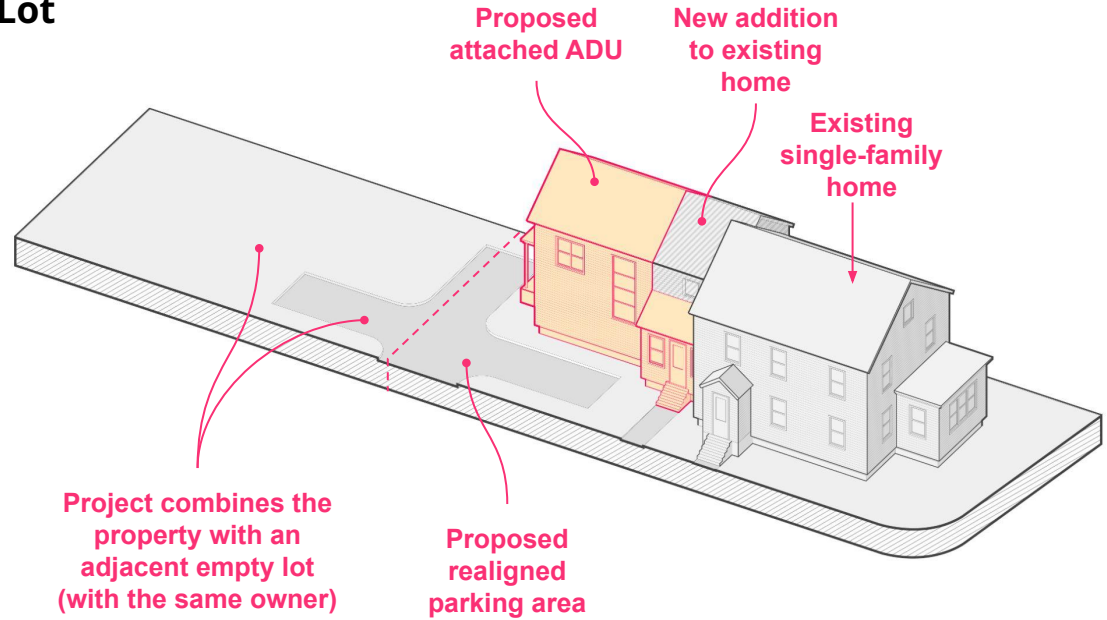


Case Study - Attached ADU

Dorchester 2-Story Addition on Double Lot



This single family home in Dorchester constructed a 2-story addition their existing home. The extra living space in the addition was used partly to extend living space in the existing home, and partly for a new, smaller unit (attached ADU).



Case Study - Attached ADU

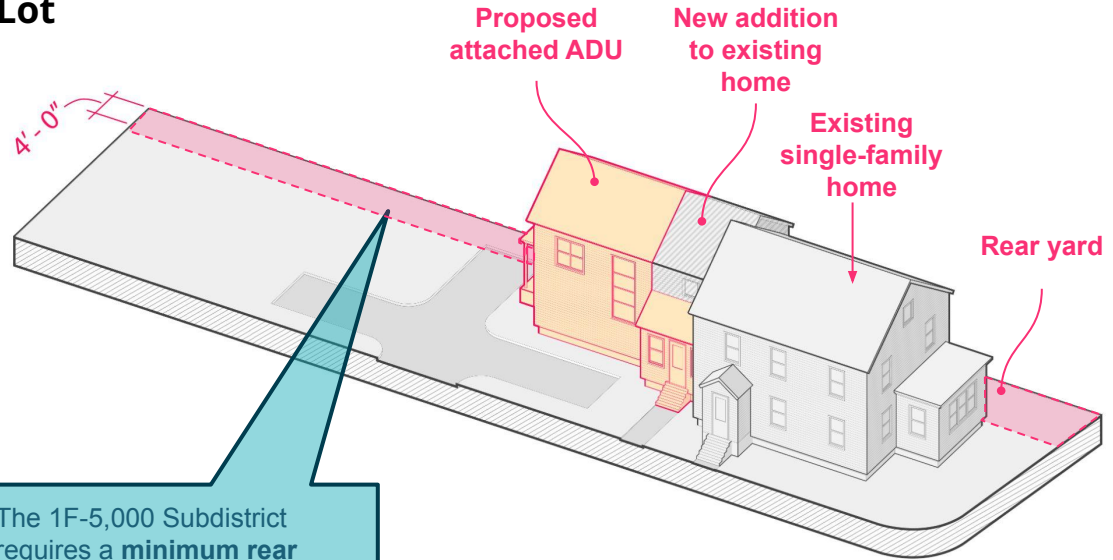
Dorchester 2-Story Addition on Double Lot

Pre-existing Zoning Violations

- **Rear Yard Insufficient**

ADU Zoning Violations

- Parking Location
- Forbidden Use (1 family to 2 family)



The 1F-5,000 Subdistrict requires a **minimum rear yard of 20 feet**. The existing dwelling has a rear yard of 6', and the placement of the ADU will further diminish it to 4'.

Case Study - Attached ADU

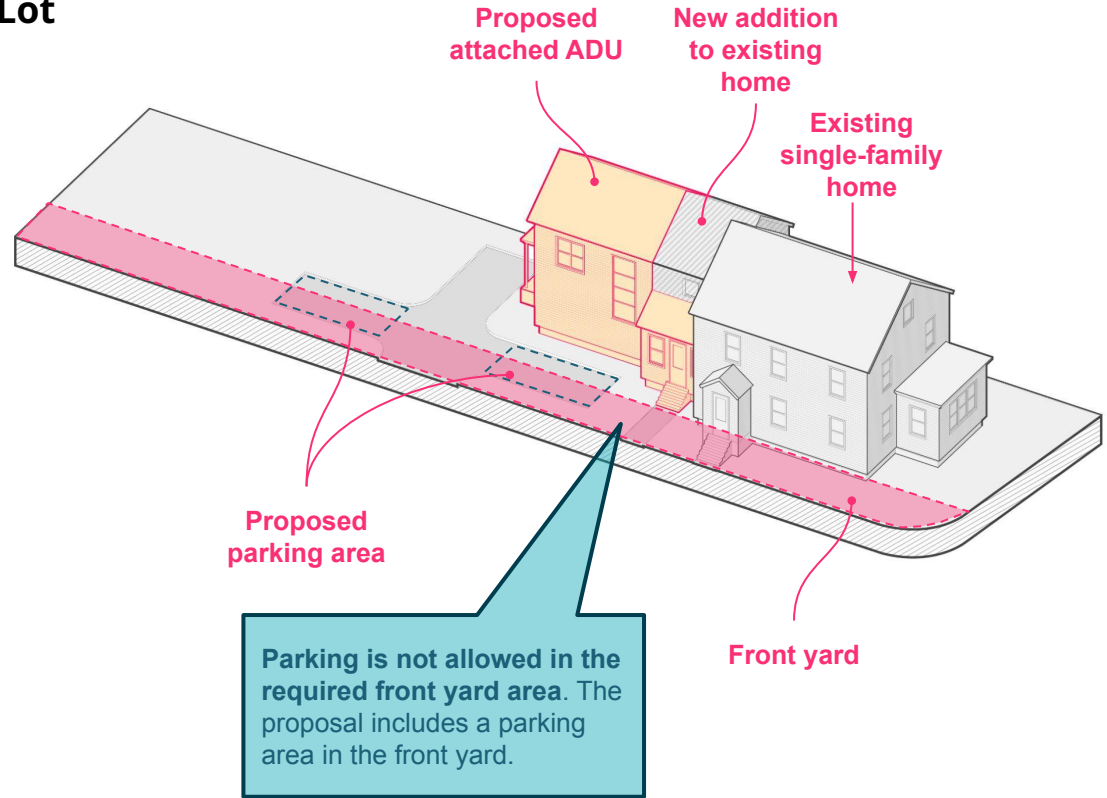
Dorchester 2-Story Addition on Double Lot

Pre-existing Zoning Violations

- Rear Yard Insufficient

ADU Zoning Violations

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Case Study - Attached ADU

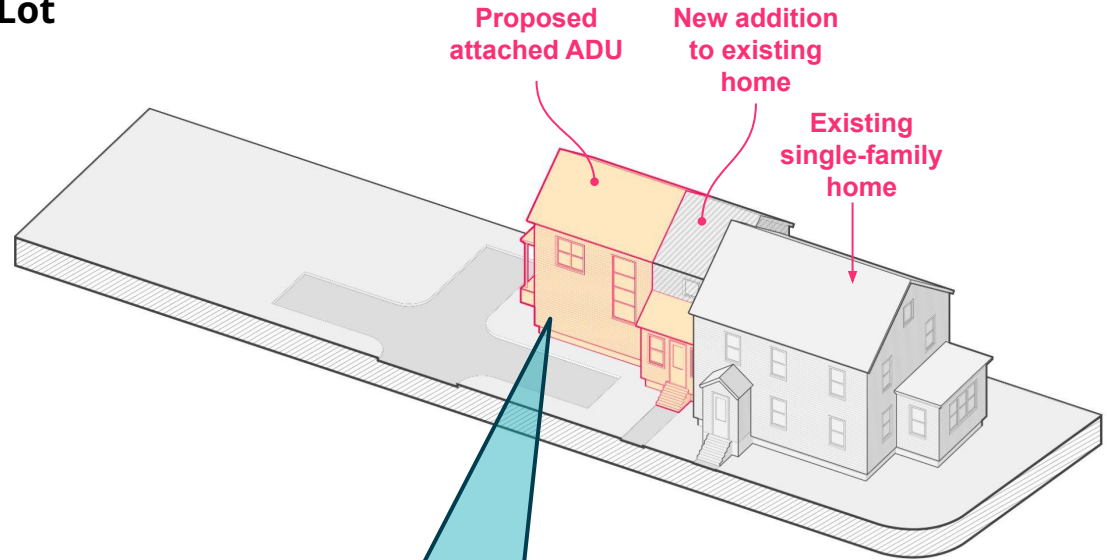
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ADU Zoning Violations

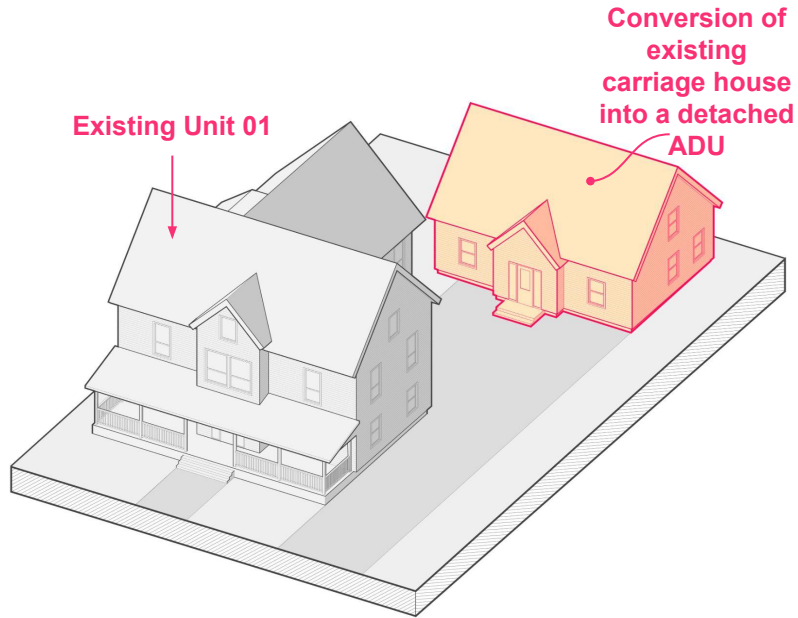
- Parking Location
- **Forbidden Use (1 family to 2 family)**



The Property is located in a 1F-5000 sub-district which allows for a **maximum of 1 unit**. The Proposed attached ADU would make a 2 unit building.

Case Study - Detached ADU

West Roxbury Carriage House Conversion



This single family home in West Roxbury converted an existing carriage house to an ADU. The project was approved by the ZBA and constructed soon after.

Case Study - Detached ADU

West Roxbury Carriage House Conversion

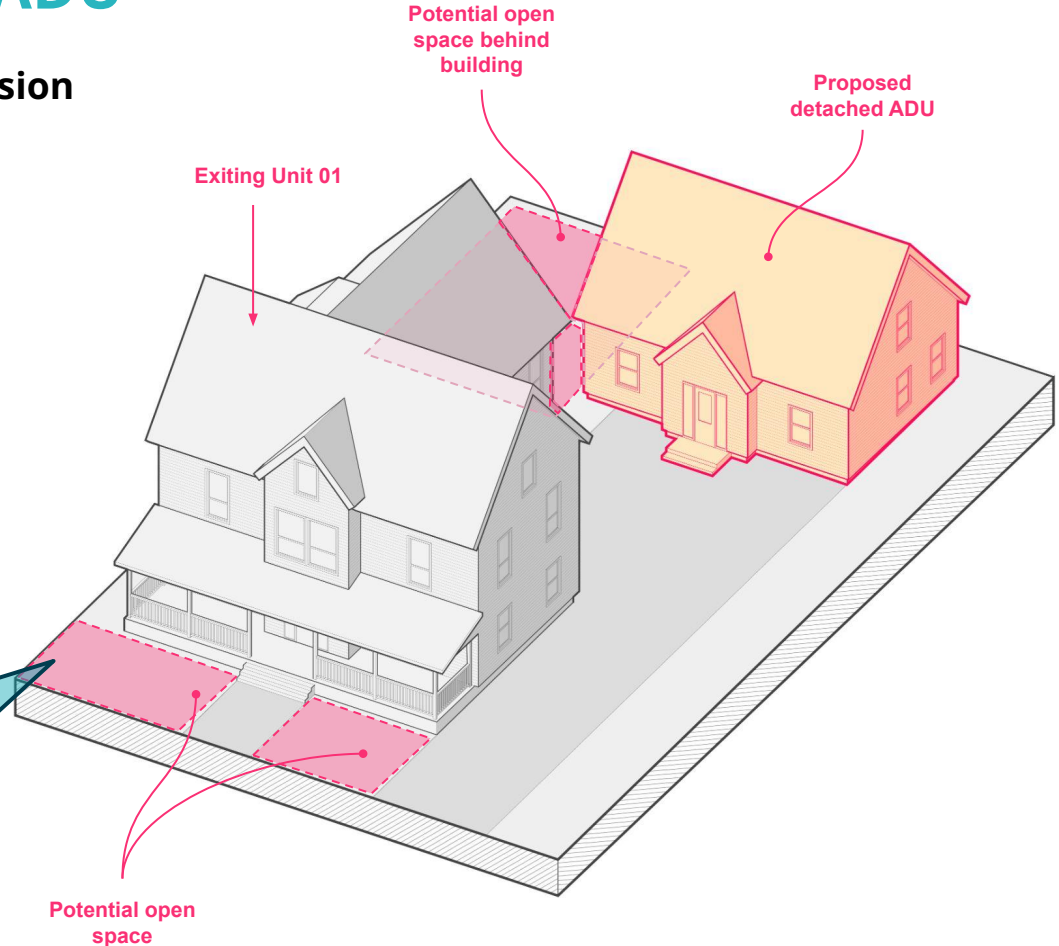
Pre-existing Zoning Violations

- **Insufficient usable open space**
- Front yard insufficient
- Side yard insufficient
- Insufficient Parking
- Excessive FAR

ADU Zoning Violations

- Excessive FAR
- Rear yard insufficient

The 1F-6,000 Subdistrict requires a **minimum of 1,800 square feet of usable open space per a unit.**



Case Study - Detached ADU

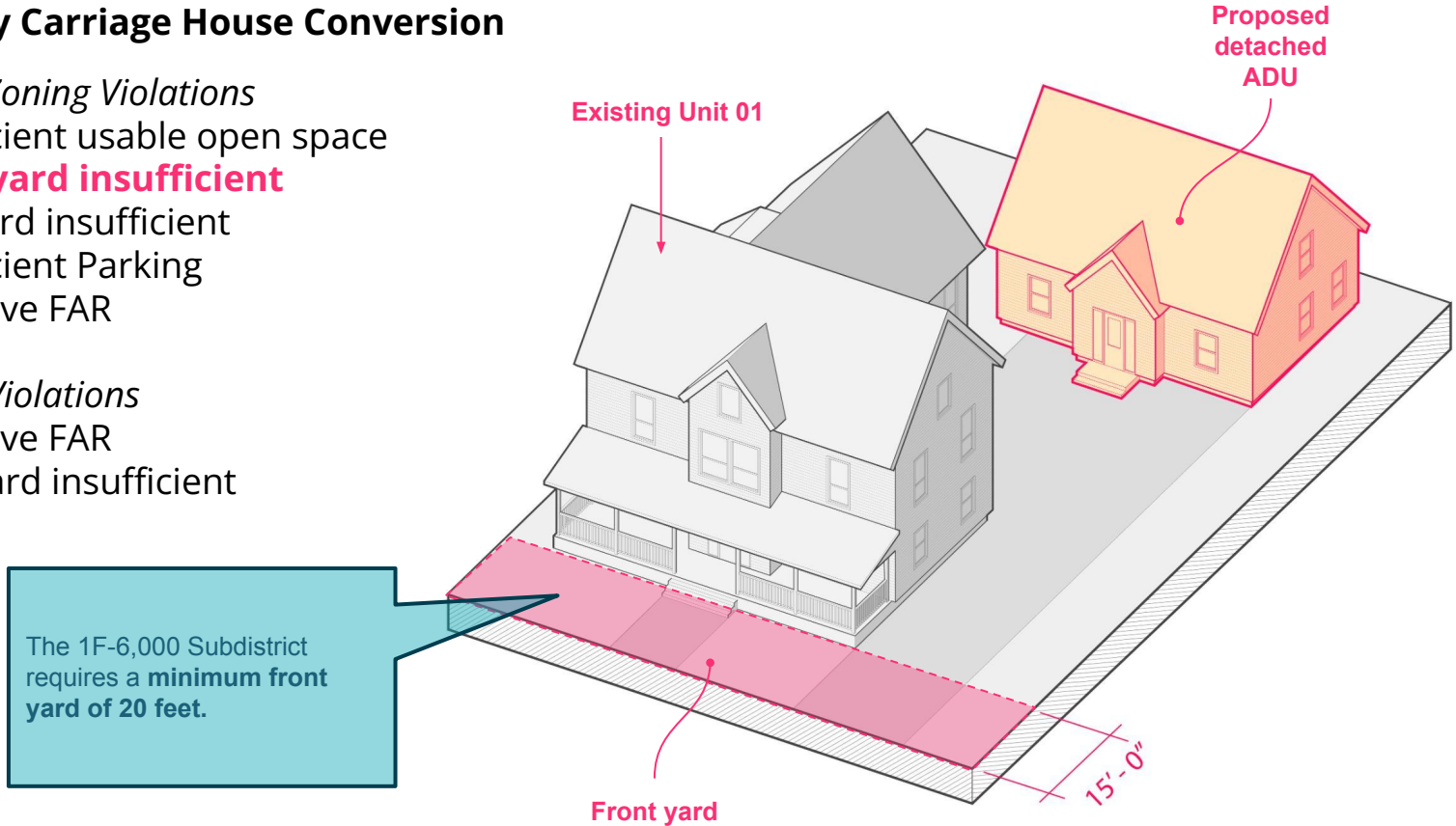
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Case Study - Detached ADU

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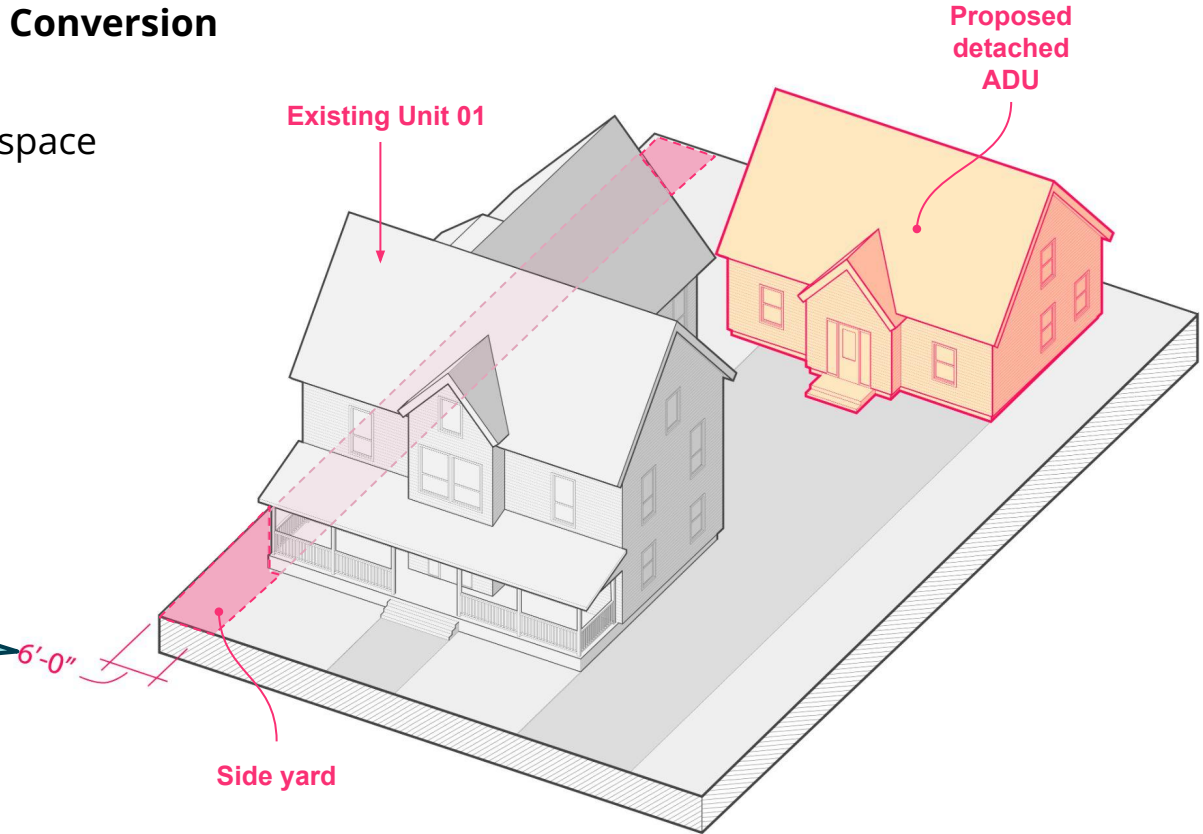
Pre-existing Zoning Violations

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- Excessive FAR

ADU Zoning Violations

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- Rear yard insufficient

The 1F-6,000 Subdistrict requires a **minimum front yard of 10 feet.**



Case Study - Detached ADU

West Roxbury Carriage House Conversion

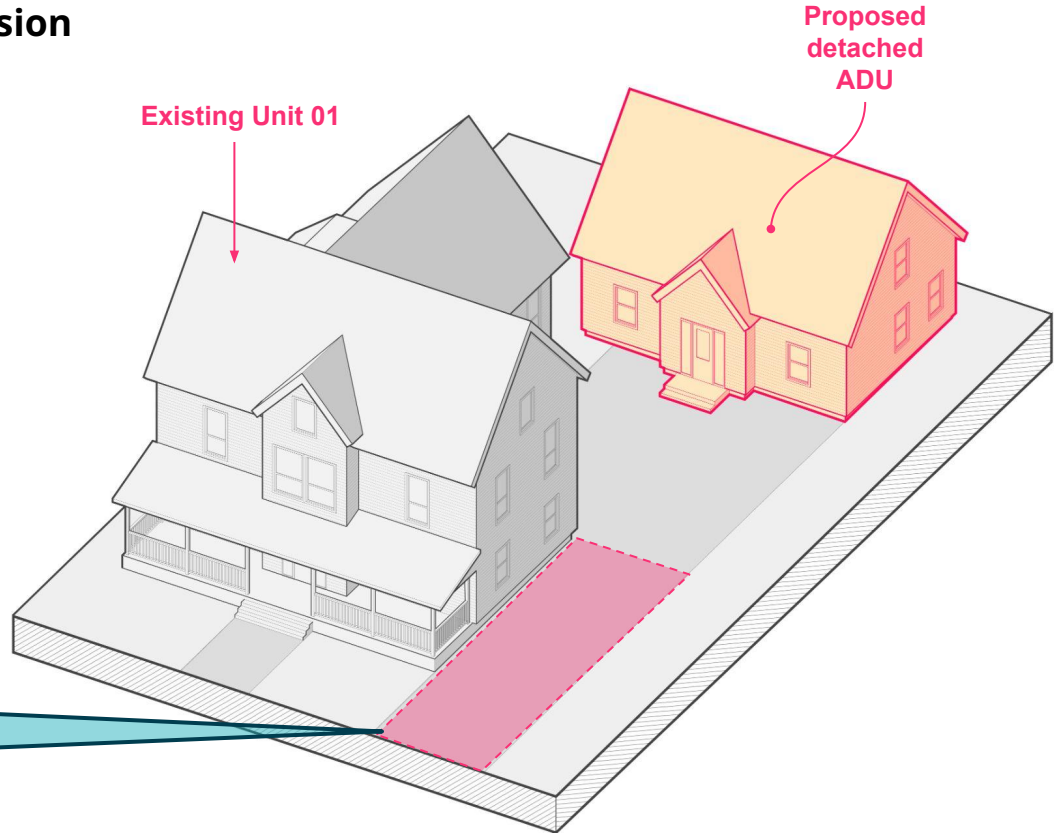
Pre-existing Zoning Violations

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ADU Zoning Violations

- Excessive FAR
- Rear yard insufficient

The 1F-6,000 Subdistrict requires a **one off-street parking spot for each unit**. The proposed plan did not include any additional off-street parking.



Case Study - Detached ADU

West Roxbury Carriage House Conversion

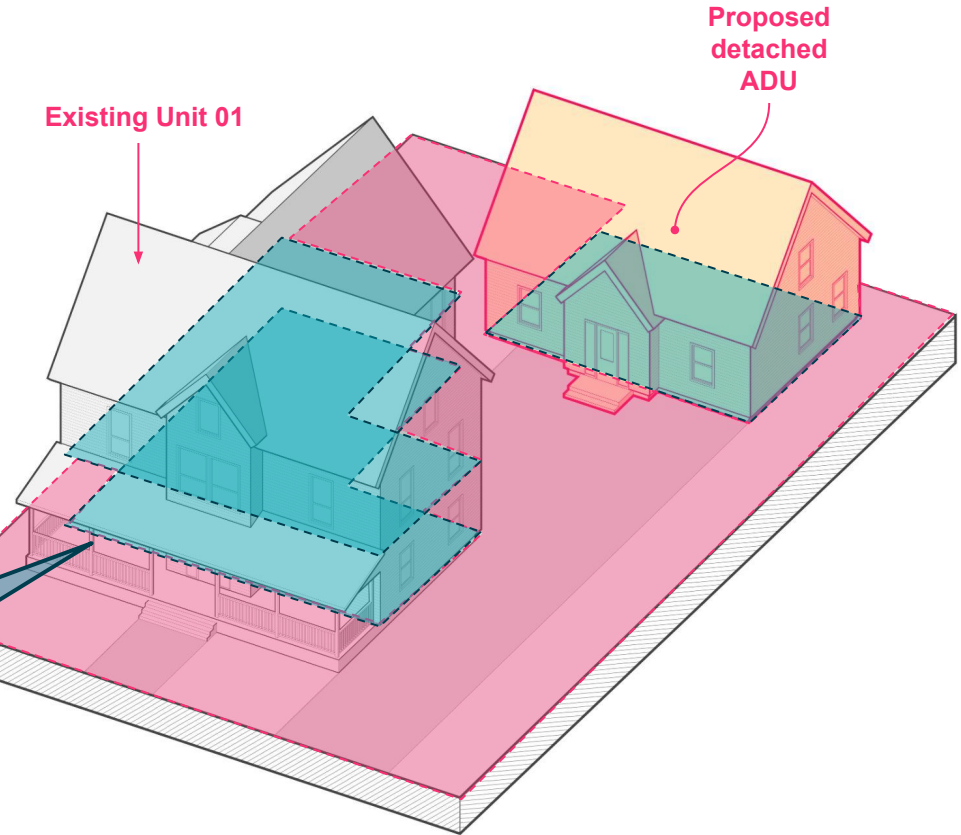
Pre-existing Zoning Violations

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ADU Zoning Violations

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- Rear yard insufficient

The 1F-6,000 Subdistrict allows for a **maximum FAR of .4**. The existing building has an approximate FAR of .43, already in excess of what is allowed.



Case Study - Detached ADU

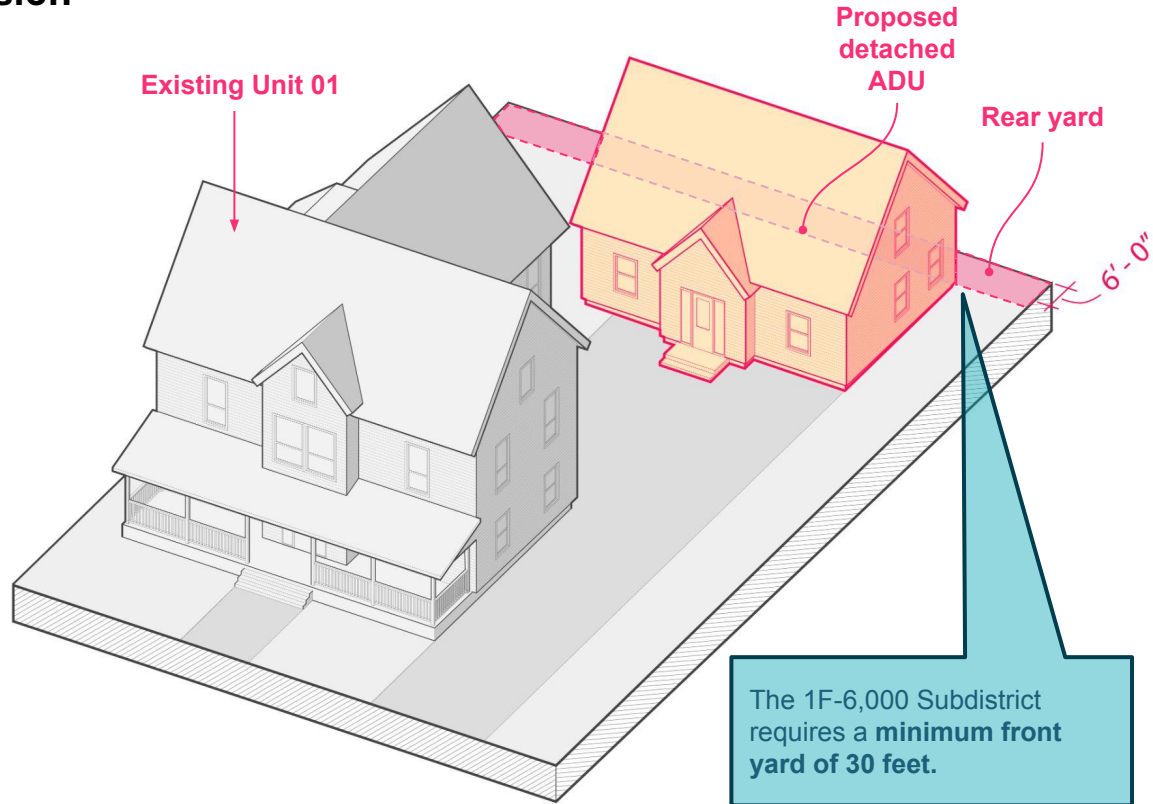
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ADU Zoning Violations

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- **Rear yard insufficient**



Recent Mattapan Zoning Update Allows ADUs

New residential zoning in Mattapan (approved in January 2024) delivers clearer land use regulations that more accurately reflect Mattapan's neighborhood character.

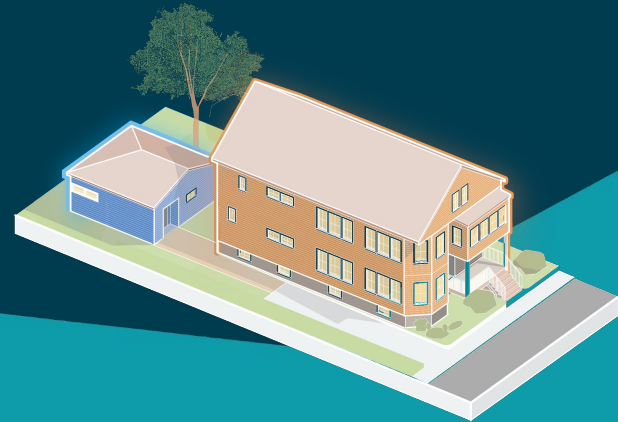
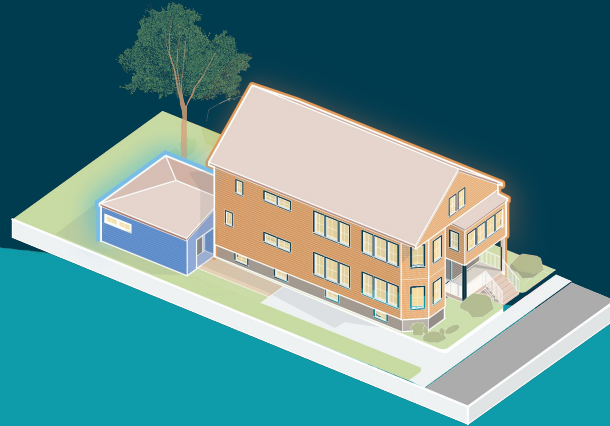
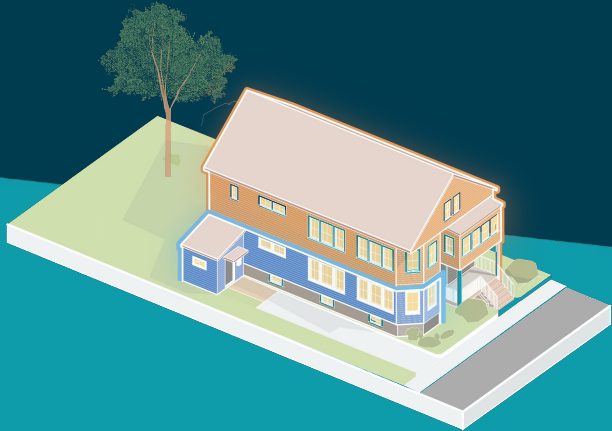
The new zoning accomplishes the following:

- **Reduces non-conformity by at least half**, if not fully eliminating it for certain dimensional requirements
- **Supports the existing character of the neighborhood** via renovations to existing homes and development of new, contextual housing on vacant lots
- **Allows by-right development of internal, attached, and detached ADUs** - 77% of lots have the zoning envelope to allow for a detached studio-sized (600 sf) ADU



Mattapan's new residential zoning resolves the majority of zoning nonconformities for most parcels, allowing more projects to be built without special zoning approval.

Citywide ADU Program Expansion



Make It Allowable: Updating Residential Zoning

The Citywide ADU Zoning initiative will right-size residential zoning to make it easier to build the type of residential projects, including ADUs, that will support Bostonians' housing needs.

The goals of these zoning updates are to:

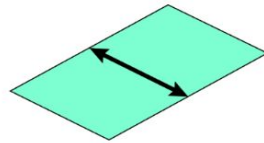
- Right-size regulations to **reflect and legalize established neighborhood fabric**
- Create **clear standards** of what can and cannot be built on residential lots
- **Allow ADUs to be built** on most residential lots without special approval



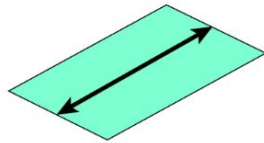
Right-sizing zoning regulations to match established neighborhood form will make it easier for homeowners to make renovations to their homes, including build ADUs.

Analysis to Update Residential Zoning

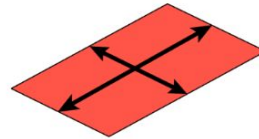
Zoning updates will be made based on real lot & building patterns observed throughout Boston's residential areas.



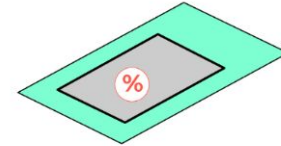
Lot Width



Lot Depth



Lot Area



Lot Coverage

First, we're determining **lot patterns**:

- Understanding patterns in lot size and dimensions and how they shape the buildings that are built on them
 - Groupings of **lot area, lot width x depth**

Analysis to Update Residential Zoning

Zoning updates will be made based on real lot & building patterns observed throughout Boston's residential areas.

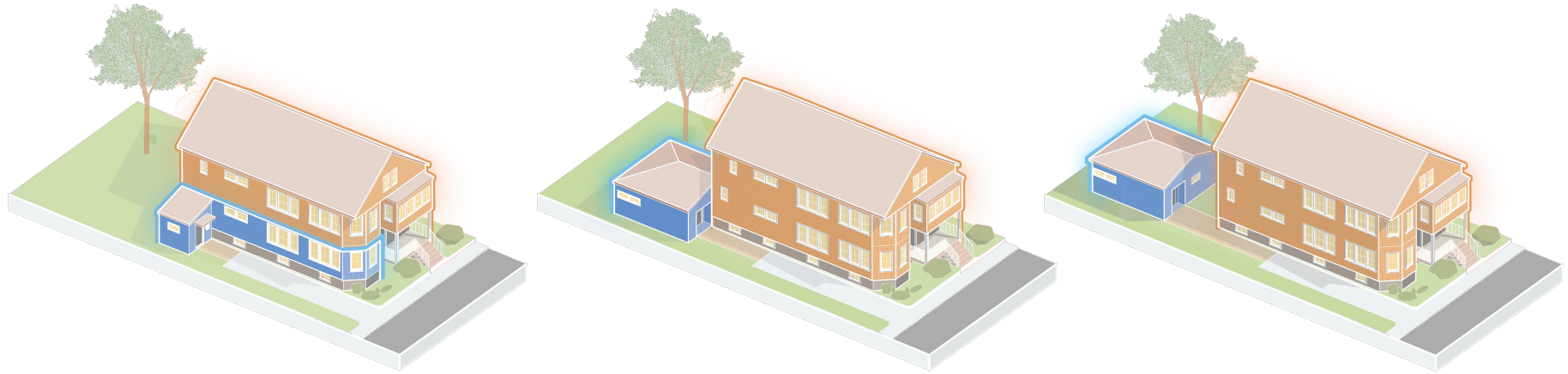


Second, we're cataloguing **building patterns**:

- What are the broad groupings of **residential building types** in Boston?
 - How much of the lot does a building cover?
 - What are the typical yard dimensions?

Analysis to Update Residential Zoning

Zoning updates will be made based on real lot & building patterns observed throughout Boston's residential areas.



Third, we're testing different scenarios to right-size regulations for existing building fabric and allow ADU development:

- Understanding how updated lot and building standards will facilitate ADU development
 - Scenarios where ADUs will fit - best practices for building
 - Scenarios where ADUs will not fit

ADU Guidebook for Homeowners

The BPDA is developing an illustrated ADU Guidebook that will help homeowners understand the zoning and building guidelines for developing an ADU on their lot.

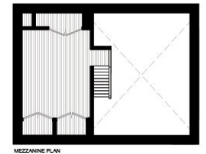
- Will be published at the end of September 2024
- Will include new zoning regulations as well as a guide to key building and fire code regulations
- Will serve as a resource for homeowners, architects, contractors, and builders



Overview

DETACHED ADU

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FIRST FLOOR FLOOR PLAN

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ADJACENT AREA OF MEZZANINE
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CITY OF BOSTON

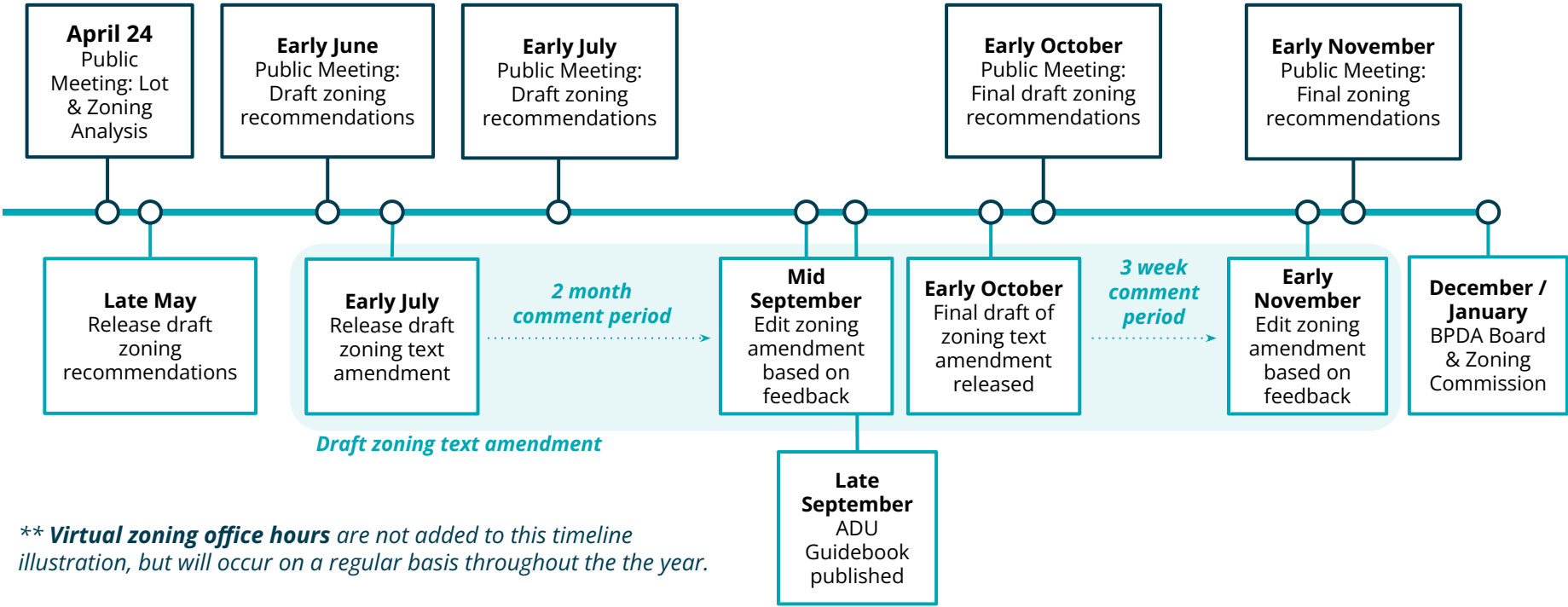
© Additional Dwelling Unit

NEIGHBORHOOD
11
4/10/2024

The ADU guidebook will include building recommendations, such as sample floor plans, to help guide homeowners through the process of building their ADU.

ADU Zoning Initiative: Process Timeline

*Focus groups (virtual & in-person) throughout summer:
ADU Guidebook; Draft zoning based on lot types*



** *Virtual zoning office hours* are not added to this timeline illustration, but will occur on a regular basis throughout the the year.

Discussion Questions

Community feedback will be an essential part of this zoning initiative. Over the course of the project, we'd love to hear your thoughts on the following topics:

- What are your **hopes for expanding** ADU development in Boston?
- What are your **concerns about expanding** ADU development in Boston?
- When you think about detached ADUs (or ADUs built in backyards), **what are some of the most important criteria** that you feel must be addressed?
- As we develop the ADU Guidebook, **what kind of information and ways of distribution** would be most helpful? (i.e. including recommendations for floor plans, exterior design, PDF version vs. website, etc.)

... And other questions and feedback as well!

Questions or comments?

*If you have questions about a particular ADU project,
please email adu@boston.gov or visit boston.gov/adu-toolkit*