SMART GROWTH
toolkit

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT   INTRODUCTION TO SMART GROWTH   STATE POLICIES AND INITIATIVES
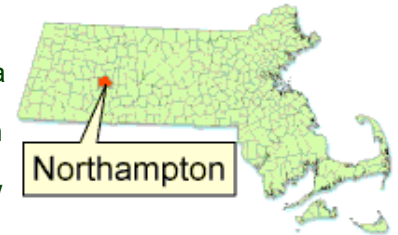
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Urban Case Study

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Northampton, MA

Colloquially called "Paradise City," Northampton is a lively, diverse community located in the heart of Pioneer Valley in western Massachusetts. The town is located along Route 91, 43 miles east of Pittsfield, Massachusetts and 30 miles north of New Haven, Connecticut. The city has a strong and diverse economic base consisting of retail, commercial, and manufacturing sectors, three hospitals and Smith College, which is part of the Five-College Consortium. There are several village centers within Northampton that serve outlying residential areas, and there is an active downtown has numerous restaurants, clubs featuring an array of music, street musicians and a Center for the Arts. The town is well connected to multiple modes of transportation, including bike, car (Route 91), train (Amtrak in Springfield), bus (regional service), and air (Northampton Airport).

Local Accessory Dwelling Ordinance

The City of Northampton first implemented the accessory units ordinance in 1999 and had it apply to all single-family dwellings. Some of the key requirements of the ordinance include:

- Accessory units within a single-family dwelling are by-right and if the apartment is detached, a Special Permit is required. There are no affordability restrictions required for the permitted accessory dwelling units.
- The number of tenants is restricted to a maximum of 3 people in the accessory units, but there are no relationship restrictions
- Floor area of the accessory units is limited to 900 square feet
- There are no specific requirements on setbacks and lot coverage
- Three parking spaces are required on the property
- Access to the accessory dwelling unit must be from the side or rear yards of the primary building
- Units can be specified for handicapped persons

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