

# **BUILDINGENERGY BOSTON**

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## **Moving the Needle on ADU Policy and Production**

**Greg Bossie, Rare Forms**

**Katie Faulkner, West Work**

**Hilary Gove, Maine Dept. of Economic and Community Development**

**Chris Lee, Backyard ADUs**

**Parlin Meyer, BrightBuilt Home**

*Curated by Lauren Baumann*

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**Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) | March 21, 2025**

# WELCOME

## **ADUs: Small Homes, Big Solutions**

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What makes ADU's...  
Exciting...  
Confusing...  
Intriguing...  
Accessible...  
Timely.



# Today's Panel

## Greg Bossie

President, Director Of Design

**Rare Forms, Inc. | Easthampton, MA**

## Katie Faulkner

Founder & Principal

**West Work | Boston, MA**

## Hilary Gove

Housing Opportunity Program Coordinator

**Maine Dept of Economic & Community Dvpt**

## Chris Lee

CEO

**Backyard ADUs | Brunswick, ME**

## Parlin Meyer

Managing Principal, Co-owner

**BrightBuilt Home LLC | Portland, ME**



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES



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## Understanding Legislation

Ability to navigate state and local legislation, to better utilize density and ADU incentive programs

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## Strategy for Marketing

For designers, ability to understand ADU marketplace, to inform marketing campaigns and approach to design.

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## Construction Methods

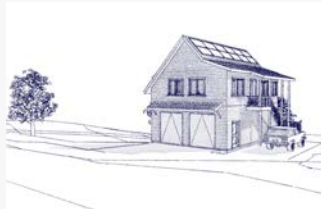
Understand methods of both on and off-site construction, and benefits therein

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## Site Analysis

Capacity to evaluate a property and understand potential for ADU size, placement, and type.

# TODAY'S CONTENT



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## 1. What | How | Why

Definitions, Ordinances, Social Drivers

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## 2. Policy & the Marketplace

New Laws & Initiatives

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## 3. Methodologies of Construction

Renovation, Site Built, Off-Site

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## 4. Roadblocks & Tips

New Tools, Cautionary Tales,  
Exciting Opportunities



# WHAT | HOW | WHY

1

**Definitions,  
Ordinances,  
& Social Drivers**



## **WHAT IS AN ADU?**

- An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a self-contained secondary dwelling unit on the same lot as a primary residence. These units contain cooking, sleeping, and toilet facilities and can be located within, attached to, or detached from the primary structure.
- Common names for ADUs include accessory apartments, in-law suites, and granny flats.

# HOW does it work?

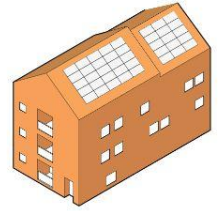
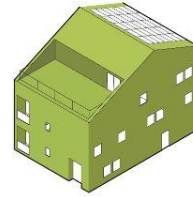
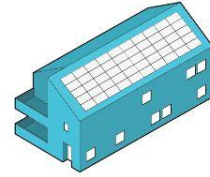
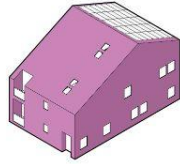
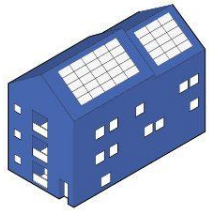
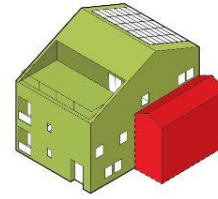
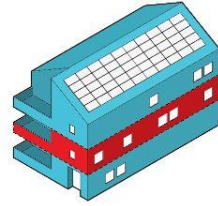
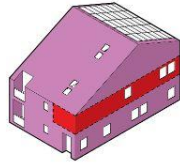
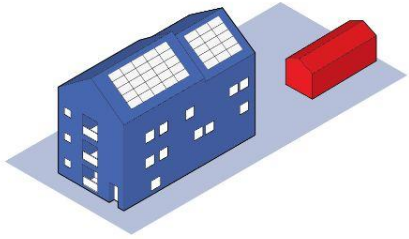
- ADU construction is regulated by state or local municipalities; Regulations vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction
- Common ordinance components include:
  - ◆ ADU configuration
  - ◆ Parking requirements
  - ◆ Dimensional standards
  - ◆ ADU size
  - ◆ Owner-occupancy requirements
  - ◆ Short-term rental requirements
  - ◆ Water and wastewater (including impact fees)
  - ◆ Design standards





# WHY build them?

- Housing for Family (Kids, Parents)
- Rental Income
- Property Value Boost



DETACHED ADU

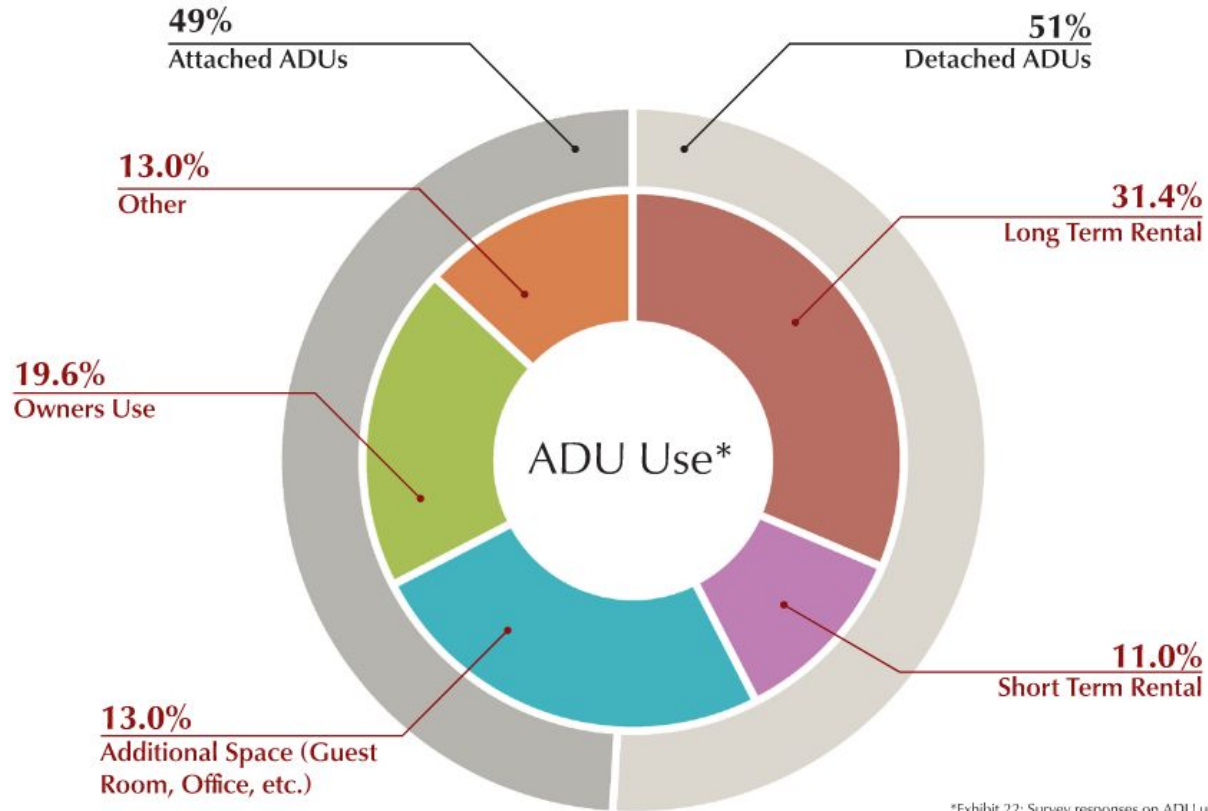
SPLIT UNIT

FLOOR ADDITION

EXTENSION

ATTIC/BASEMENT  
CONVERSION

# WHY build them?



\*Exhibit 22: Survey responses on ADU use  
Source: OPCD-ADU Annual Report 2022.

# HOW to build them?

## Education



- Social Media
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Educate homeowners and offer technical support
- Incentive sustainability

## Finance



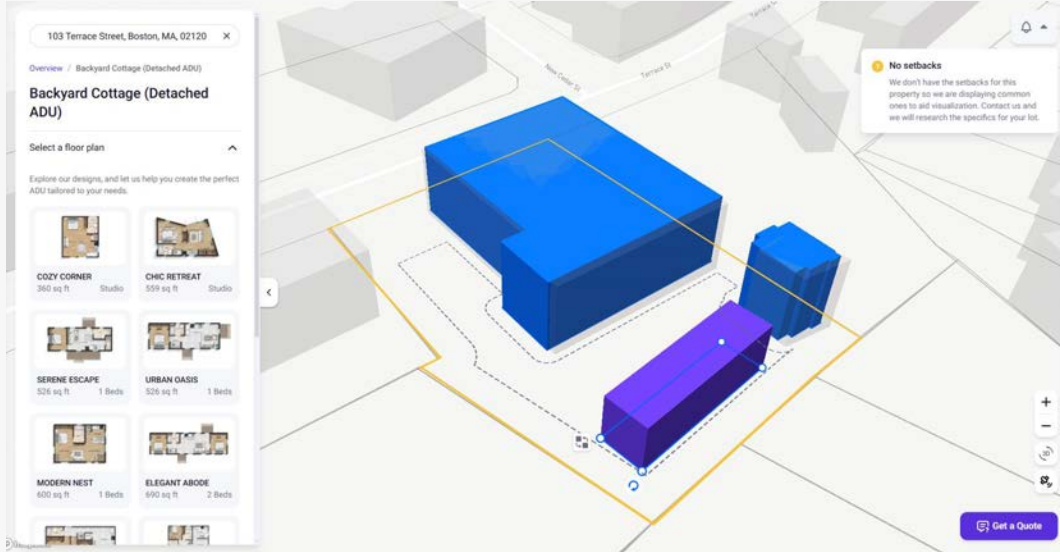
- Low-interest or 0% interest loans
- Grants and Property Tax Incentives
- Vouchers

## Regulations



- Fast track and preapproval permitting
- Relaxed zoning restrictions in high-need areas

# HOW : INNOVATION





# **POLICY & THE MARKETPLACE**

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**New Laws &  
Initiatives**

# POLICY and Marketplace: Massachusetts

An official website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Here's how you know

Menu Select Language Contrast Settings State Organizations Log In to...

Mass.gov Search Mass.gov SEARCH

Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

OFFERED BY Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

PRESS RELEASE

## Accessory Dwelling Units Officially Allowed Statewide

Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Issues Final Regulations to Help Cities and Towns Update Local Regulations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/03/2025 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

### MODEL ZONING FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Version 1  
March 11, 2025

Prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on behalf of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP)

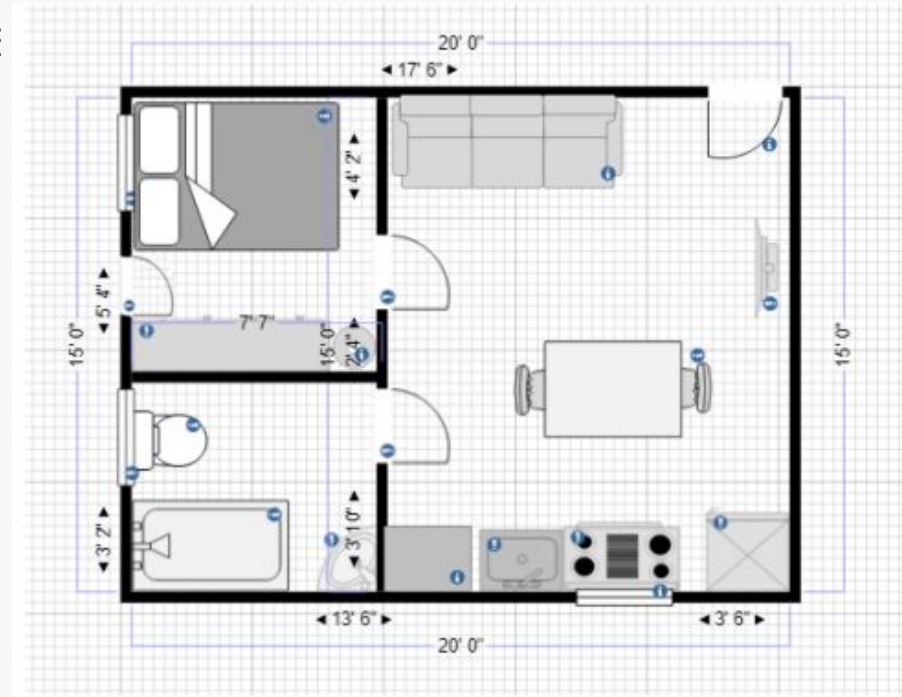
MAPC MHP HOUSING AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

“ The undersupply of housing in Massachusetts has dramatically increased housing costs in recent years. ADUs are part of the solution to build more homes and drive down costs for tenants and homebuyers. As of Sunday, Feb. 2, ADUs less than 900 square feet can be built by-right in single-family zoning districts statewide, and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities estimates that **8,000 to 10,000 ADUs can be constructed over the next five years** thanks to this simplification of the ADU permitting process. ”

Press Release, EOHLC  
02/03/2025

# POLICY & THE MARKETPLACE: MAINE

- **Case Study:** City of Bath (coastal community NE of Portland)
- Permits ADUs on single-family and two-family lots.
  - ◆ Exempts ADUs from density calculations
  - ◆ Size: 190 minimum; 850 maximum
  - ◆ No parking for ADUs on single-family lots
  - ◆ Must be rented for >90 days
  - ◆ Permit required from the CEO
- Created a how-to guidebook in 2022
- 9 permitted units since December 2022



Source: Planning for Accessory Dwelling Units: A Guidebook, Bath, Maine  
Converted Garage Floorplan; 300 sq. ft.

# POLICY & THE MARKETPLACE: MUNICIPAL ADU INCENTIVES



- Kittery, ME: Coastal community in Southern Maine (2024 re-upped)
  - ◆ Up to \$75,000 for design, permitting, and construction
  - ◆ Income restrictions for homeowner and renter
  
- Auburn, ME: City in South-Central Maine (2022- ARPA/Grant)
  - ◆ Forgivable loan program; up to 15% of construction costs (or \$30,000)
  - ◆ Income restrictions for homeowner and renter
  
- Salem, MA: (2022-ARPA)
  - ◆ Design grant: funded up to 50% of the design cost (or \$2,500)
  - ◆ Construction grant: funded up to 50% or \$45,000; limited rent to 50% FMV for 20 years
  
- Limitations on funding:
  - ◆ Limited municipal funding
  - ◆ Limited in scope/number of people supported
  - ◆ Income-restricted for both homeowners and renters



# A Roadmap for the Future of Housing Production in Maine

HR&A Advisors

- **Policy roadmap to address Maine's 84,000 housing unit shortfall.**
  - ◆ **Set clear standards about infrastructure costs**
  - ◆ **Reform State and local building codes to reduce costs**
  - ◆ **Establish a working group to explore innovative construction technologies**
  - ◆ **Expand the pool of qualified workers, recruit non-traditional workers and improve worker retention in the construction industry.**

January 2025

HR&A



# METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

RENOVATION | ON-SITE | OFF-SITE

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# RENOVATION

**BASEMENT / ATTIC / GARAGE**

## **Pros:**

- ◇ **Lower Costs (Usually)**
- ◇ **Potentially Shorter Permit Process**
- ◇ **Preserves Open Space On Site**
- ◇ **Less Material Use / Embodied Carbon**
- ◇ **Potentially Faster Timeline**

## **Cons:**

- ◇ **Unpredictable Costs**
- ◇ **Design Constraints**
- ◇ **Performance Hurdles**
- ◇ **Reduced Privacy**
- ◇ **Incompatible Conditions**

# ON SITE

## Pros:

- ◆ Familiar To Trades (Accessible Labor Pool)
- ◆ Familiar To Clients
- ◆ Materials And Trades Kept Local
- ◆ Flexibility In Design
- ◆ No Shipping Constraints

## Cons:

- ◆ Unpredictable Costs
- ◆ Longer Construction Time
- ◆ High Site & Homeowner Impact

# OFF SITE (PANELIZED & MODULAR)

## Pros:

- ◆ Streamlined Construction Process
- ◆ Higher Quality Control
- ◆ Predictable Costs
- ◆ Predictable Performance
- ◆ Minimized Delays
- ◆ Less Waste
- ◆ Increased Volume
- ◆ Lower Impact To Site

## Cons:

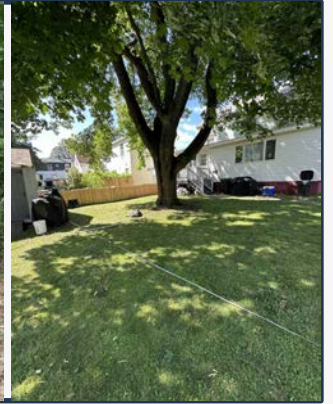
- ◆ Potential Size & Design Limitations
- ◆ Larger Upfront Costs
- ◆ Potential Zoning & Permit Hurdles



# PRE-DESIGNED ADU'S

- ◆ Lower Design Costs
- ◆ Faster Project Timeline
- ◆ Predictable Budgeting
- ◆ Streamlined Permitting
- ◆ Refined Design
- ◆ Optimized for Off-Site Construction
- ◆ Integrated Performance / Sustainability
- ◆ Scalability
- ◆ Reduced Decision Fatigue





## ROADBLOCKS & TIPS

### Verify Feasibility & Budget First

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**You Can Almost always build an ADU, but when should you spend time and money?**

- Talk to the town
- Do a survey
- Hire an architect
- Talk to a builder

# CAUTIONARY TALES

- Conservation In Lexington, MA
- Septic in Wellfleet, MA
- Sprinklers in Portland, ME & Burlington, VT
- Public Water In Concord, MA





# NEW TOOLS


thebuilder.ai (MA, RI, NH)

canibuild.com (not yet in NE)

Quickly performs basic feasibility study for residential properties

Check zoning, dimensional controls, wetlands, and historic restrictions so you can quickly determine which lots and which leads are worth pursuing

1115 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, M X



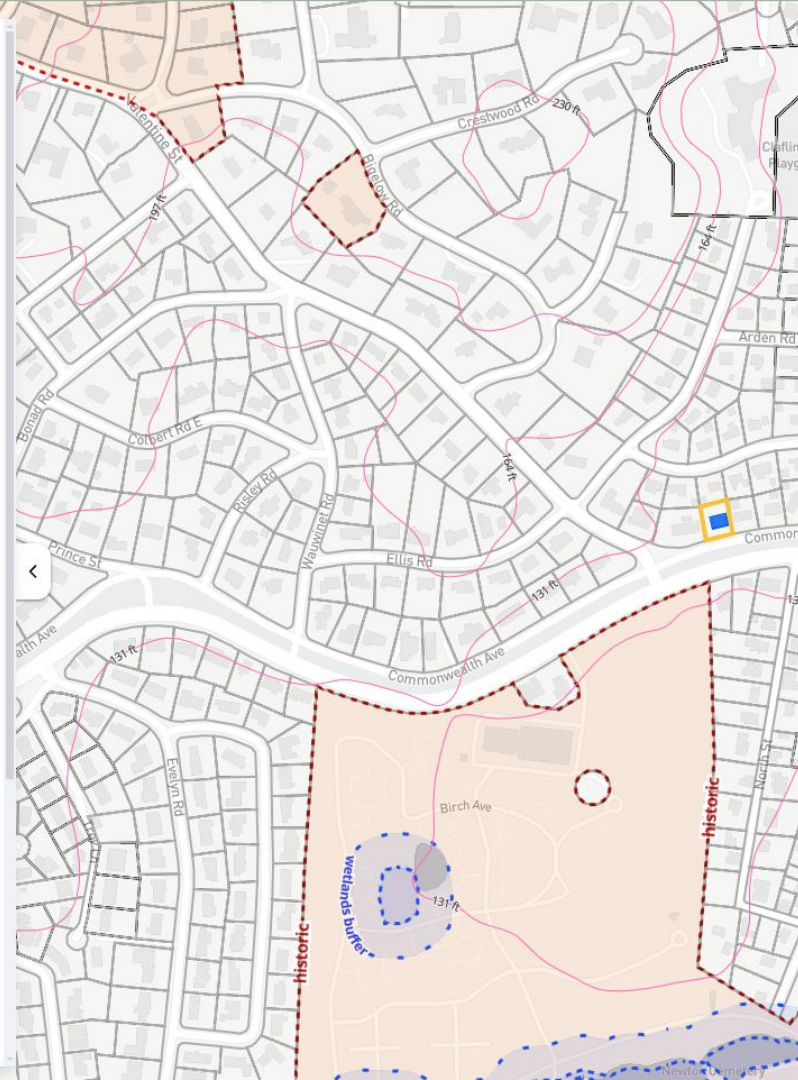
### Overview

What can you build ^

- ? **Backyard Cottage (Detached ADU)**  
This property may meet the basic requirements for a detached ADU.  
[View Details →](#)
- ✓ **In Home Apartment (Conversion or Addition)**  
Great news! This property meets the basic requirements for an internal ADU.  
[View Details →](#)

Property facts ^

🏠 Property Type	Single Family
📏 Zone	SR2
📅 Year Built	1924
📐 Lot Size	7,949 sq ft



# NEW PROGRAMS

Not new ideas, but potentially unique

## State Trust Fund

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ADUs **do not need grants**, to spur construction, allowing relatively small amount of money per unit to go a long way.

## Employer Partnerships

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Offer **Housing as a Service** to Employers and unlock commercial financing for ADUs via master lease guarantees

## Sell Your Backyard

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*Do you need to subdivide to sell your Backyard?*  
With ADUs and upzoning, **sell the right** to build and own a to be built ADU Condo

# MUNICIPAL SUPPORT



## For Professionals



**BSA ADU Directory**  
Connecting Architects & Homeowners to support housing creation in the region!

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### BSA ADU Directory Sign-Up

[As of Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025](#), Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) less than 900 square feet can be built by-right in single-family zoning districts across the state of Massachusetts. To support homeowners and others interested in creating additional housing across the State, the BSA is creating a Directory of Architects and Architecture Firms interested in creating ADUs. This Directory will live on the BSA website on the ["Find an architecture firm"](#) page.

To include your organization in the directory, please complete the form below.  
*Note: Only BSA Members and BSA Member Firms are eligible to be listed in the Directory.*

## For Homeowners



**CITY OF BOSTON**

ADU ZONING

### ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT GUIDEBOOK

Planning and designing an accessory unit on your property

## For Developers



PROSPECT 30 EIGHT CONSTRUCTION

### ADU Financing: Everything You Need to Know

→

# ADUs are Simply Cheaper to Build, Let's Build Them!

## ADU Space Conv.

\$150,000 – \$300,000



## ADU Detached

\$270,000 – \$310,000



## New SF Home

\$350,000 – \$550,000



## New Apartments

\$450,000 – \$650,000

**THANK YOU**

