

AGING AT HOME

SOME IDEAS REGARDING HOW A CURRENT HOME MAY BE MODIFIED TO ACCOMMODATE THE CHANGING NEEDS OF OLDER RESIDENTS

If you are . . .

- A senior who would prefer to continue living in your current home, but needs or desires help and/or companionship near at hand, or
- An individual or family that wishes to accommodate an older member of the family,

There may be ways to adapt your home short of constructing an additional unit or physically dividing your present one, which in most cases would not be allowed under current zoning.

The easiest solution is to provide the person being added to a household a bedroom in your home. However, if you wish to provide more amenities and/or achieve greater privacy, depending on the lay-out of your home, you may be able to add any one or all of the following:

- An adjoining, private bathroom
- An adjoining, private sitting room
- A food preparation area included within a bedroom or sitting room, with any one or all of the following:
 - counter with small/bar sink
 - refrigerator
 - microwave

Such solutions may be achieved through interior changes to your home and/or through the construction of an addition that does not violate the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit that is allowed under the applicable zoning for your particular parcel.

Requirements:

- Access: Any secondary living space constructed in your home *must* have available at all times access *through* your home to *two means of egress*. That is, while the secondary living space may have a door with a privacy lock from within, the side of the door leading to the primary living space cannot be locked and must remain unobstructed for free access.
- Occupancy standards: Rooms must meet the minimum space per occupant, dimensional and other requirements of the State Sanitary Code and Massachusetts State Building Code.
- Construction: Depending on what you are proposing, your changes will require building and plumbing and/or electrical permits, as applicable.

Restrictions:

- Cooking: No stove or oven other than a microwave may be installed.
- No exterior changes, such as an additional exterior door solely serving the secondary living space or additional mailbox may be installed which might make this secondary space usable as a second dwelling unit.

This secondary living space is not and cannot be treated and/or rented as a separate dwelling unit. This secondary living space is considered a “Rooming Unit” under the Health Code in the event of any enforcement activity brought by either the homeowner or any occupant of the space. The occupant of a Rooming Unit may have access to other areas of the home, such as the kitchen, as agreed to by the parties.

Questions:

If you have any questions concerning what changes may be made to your home without zoning relief, please contact any one of the following Town departments:

- Department of Planning and Community Development: (617) 730-2130
- Building Department: (617) 730-2100
- Public Health Department: (617) 730-2306