

# Massachusetts Home Buyers Should Consider the Impact of New ADU Law

*A new accessory dwelling unit law takes effect on February 2, 2025, easing restrictions on ADUs and creating opportunities and concerns.*

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, January 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Massachusetts home

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*Rich Rosa, co-founder of  
Buyers Brokers Only*

buyers should carefully weigh the potential benefits and drawbacks of the new accessory dwelling unit (ADU) law before making a purchase decision.

Sometimes referred to as in-law or accessory apartments or "granny flats," [ADUs are smaller detached or attached secondary dwellings](#) on the same lot as a primary residence.

The Affordable Homes Act, signed into law by Governor Maura Healey on August 6, 2024, will allow ADUs by right in single-family zoned neighborhoods statewide. The law overrides any conflicting local bylaws or ordinances and

takes effect on February 2, 2025.

Buyers Brokers Only believes the new law provides advantages and disadvantages, depending on home buyers' preferences.

Supporters of the legislation believe it will lead to the construction of 8,000 to 10,000 new ADUs in the next five years. Home buyers have a lot to consider.

"Home buyers should carefully consider how the eased restrictions and increase in ADUs might affect their purchase," said Richard Rosa, Buyers Brokers Only co-founder. "While ADUs can provide benefits such as increasing housing options, property utility, and additional income, they could also change the character of some single-family neighborhoods."

Under the new law, homeowners can add ADUs of up to 900 square feet—or half the size of their primary home, whichever is smaller—without special permits. Homeowners can create ADUs as basement or attic apartments, home additions, or detached units. Occupants do not need to be related to the property owner, and owners are not required to live on the property.

## – Key Considerations for Home Buyers

**Zoning Simplifications:** The new law overrides existing local zoning bylaws and ordinances, streamlining the process for homeowners. Municipalities may still impose reasonable regulations, such as setback requirements and restrictions on structure height.

**Neighborhood Dynamics:** Some home buyers may welcome the flexibility ADUs provide, while others may feel that the additional density alters specific neighborhoods' quiet, single-family feel.

**Short-Term Rental Rules:** Buyers considering properties with existing or potential ADUs should review local short-term rental regulations, as municipalities retain the authority to prohibit or regulate the use of ADUs for short-term stays.

**Proximity to Public Transit:** ADUs within one-half mile of commuter rail stations, subway stations, ferry terminals, or bus stations will not require a parking space. This provision could be a factor for home buyers evaluating properties near public transportation. Municipalities cannot require more than one (1) parking space for an ADU located outside 0.5 miles of a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal, or bus station.

"For home buyers, it's essential to understand how ADUs might affect property values and neighborhood characteristics, as well as how a homeowner could utilize an ADU for multi-generational living, rental income, or even future resale value," Rosa explained.

## – Balancing Opportunities and Concerns

Proponents of easing local zoning restrictions have long viewed ADUs as a solution to expand housing stock without requiring new land development. While supporters argue that the new law gives homeowners more control and increases housing availability, opponents worry about potential changes to the character of single-family residential areas.

"For [prospective home buyers](#), it isn't a question of whether the new ADU rules are good or bad," Buyers Brokers Only co-founder David Kres said. "The important thing for home buyers is to understand how ADU regulations may impact their home wants and needs."

As the implementation date approaches on February 2, 2025, Buyers Brokers Only, LLC encourages Massachusetts home buyers to seek loyal, professional advice.

About Buyers Brokers Only, LLC: [Buyers Brokers Only is a consumer-focused exclusive buyer agent](#) real estate firm serving Central and Eastern Massachusetts, Southern New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Since 2005, Buyers Brokers Only has helped more than 2,000 home-buying clients purchase over \$1 billion in real estate. As exclusive buyer agents, the firm's brokers are

dedicated solely to protecting the interests of home-buying consumers.

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