



**September 24, 2010**

*(This is the twenty-first in a series of updates on zoning in Kenton County. The series is intended to keep city and county elected officials abreast of issues being addressed by NKAPC in the **2020 Sourcebook**, a new model zoning ordinance for Kenton County's local jurisdictions. We hope you find it timely and thought provoking and encourage you to contact us using the link below if we can provide more information or answer any questions.)*

## **Societal changes spur accessory dwelling unit growth**

Growing numbers of Americans are seeking the ability to locate a new self-contained dwelling unit on their property. Spurred by a number of societal and economic issues, these accessory dwelling units are being pursued to:

- provide social and personal support to a family member;
- obtain greater security; and/or
- generate income.

Despite the many arguments supporting these goals, accessory dwelling units are unlawful in Kenton County's jurisdictions today because zoning restrictions permit only one dwelling unit per lot in single-family residential zones. As such, these jurisdictions could be forgoing many of the benefits the accessory dwelling units can provide. The *2020 Sourcebook* intends to provide these jurisdictions with a means of realizing these benefits.

*For the community...*

- Accessory dwelling units can help increase the supply of affordable housing without government subsidies.
- Accessory dwelling units tend to be better integrated into the community, unlike other forms of affordable housing that may be concentrated in a few areas.
- Accessory dwelling units encourage efficient use of existing housing stocks and infrastructure, such as water and sewer service.

*For the homeowner...*

- Accessory dwelling units make it possible for adult children to provide care and support to a parent in a semi-independent living arrangement. Many baby boomers are now facing the prospect of having to arrange for the care and housing of their aging parents or other close relatives. By allowing accessory dwelling units, the community can give these families the option of providing for either live-in care in their parents' house or of having their parents move in with them. With an accessory dwelling unit, adult children can care for an aging parent while retaining a semi-independent living arrangement both for themselves and their parents.

- Accessory dwelling units provide increased security and companionship. Besides the financial benefits, many homeowners will also benefit from the security and companionship provided by having a tenant who lives close by. For an elderly person, concerns about injuries while they are home alone and fears about rising neighborhood crime rates may be greatly reduced just by the fact of having someone else living under the same roof. The presence of a tenant may also enhance security while homeowners are out of town.

*For the tenant...*

- Accessory dwelling units offer housing opportunities in more desirable single-family neighborhoods for some who might not otherwise be able to afford to live there. For many single individuals, single parents, or others with modest incomes, the only other housing option available may be apartment complexes.
- Accessory dwelling units increase housing opportunities for handicapped people. Handicapped people often face limited opportunities for housing that can meet their special needs. Accessory dwelling units can provide many handicapped individuals with the opportunity to live independently in their own home but close enough to others to provide needed assistance.

The *2020 Sourcebook* will provide for the proper integration of accessory dwelling units into single-family residential zones by:

- developing specific performance standards for minimum lot size, maximum unit size, parking standards, and setback and height requirements;
- requiring owner occupancy in either the principal single-family dwelling unit or the accessory dwelling unit;
- prohibiting the accessory dwelling unit from being sold separately; and
- requiring the design of the accessory dwelling unit to be consistent with the principal single-family dwelling unit by using similar exterior wall materials, window types, door and window trims, roofing, and roof pitch.

To keep up with current trends, it is important for Kenton County's jurisdictions to be able to provide flexibility in housing choices. Allowing accessory dwelling unit regulations could provide much needed housing choices and benefits for communities, homeowners, and tenants. The *2020 Sourcebook* will provide proposed text to that end.

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To contact a staff member who can answer your questions about the issues covered in this update or on the *2020 Sourcebook* in general, click [here](#).

To view past editions of this update series, click [here](#).