

Legalize Basement Apartments and Accessory Units

Policy

In order to unlock an underused affordable housing resource, we will work to update our zoning laws, cut through red tape to make it easier for homeowners to complete the work needed to add basement or other accessory units, and set aside capital funding to help homeowners afford the work needed to add these new units and make them safe.

Impact

The affordability crisis is not unique to renters. As neighborhoods change, long-term homeowners fear that they will no longer be able to afford to stay in their homes. For far too long regulations that prevent homeowners from converting their basements into rental units, or building small units above their garages, have exacerbated this problem. We expect at least 10,000 units of safe, legal housing stemming from these changes within the next decade.

Implementation

- **Zoning Changes:** We will begin work on a Citywide zoning text amendment that gives homeowners the flexibility they need to add a basement apartment, apartment over the garage, or other accessory dwelling on their property. This amendment to the City's zoning regulations will include relaxing parking and other requirements that block homeowners from having the flexibility to add this type of affordable housing. We expect this process to take at least two years.
- **Cutting Red Tape:** We will partner with the City Council to introduce legislation to cut red tape for homeowners trying to add or legalize a unit after the zoning changes are made to their property.
- **Helping Homeowners Pay for It:** We will set aside capital funds to finance low interest loans to homeowners hoping to create safe and legal affordable apartments on their property.