



For Immediate Release  
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## **Accessory Dwelling Units in the Spotlight** *Discussion Unpacks the How and Why of a Small-Scale Housing Solution*

**October 12, 2021, White River Junction, Vt.** – How can individual homeowners make a dent in the regional housing shortage while adding vitality to their neighborhoods and money in their pockets? One solution is explored in the free public discussion, “ADUs: How Homeowners Can Become Home Creators,” Wed. Nov 3, 5:30-7 pm, Zoom. Register at [vitalcommunities.org/ADUs](https://vitalcommunities.org/ADUs).

ADU is short for “accessory dwelling unit” - a housing unit added on to a single-family home. Throughout the country, regions facing housing shortages are discovering how ADUs allow homeowners to earn rental income and create new homes without adding costly infrastructure like extensions of roads, utilities, and sewer lines. This virtual discussion looks at:

- How ADUs have positively impacted the lives of their inhabitants, and
- What’s preventing more widespread construction of ADUs, and
- What are some strategies for addressing those barriers.

One of the presenters at the discussion is Chris Lee of the company [Backyard ADUs](#) based in Brunswick, ME. Lee guides people through the process of building an ADU, from design to permitting to move-in day. You can purchase a feasibility study of your land and local zoning rules from them for \$450. “When we started working on ADUs, we thought the mission was to help homeowners build rental units in their backyards,” shared Chris. “But we quickly realized there was simply a huge gap in available housing — there are not enough quality small homes to go around and most builders don’t want to build them.” New Hampshire and Vermont, like much of the nation, are struggling to create housing options that meet the needs of a changing population and a shifting economy. Our population is aging, with many older adults wanting to remain in their communities but who cannot find appropriately scaled, universally accessible homes nearby. Households are becoming smaller, with families choosing to have fewer children and consequently looking for housing that’s smaller than the conventional single-family home. Wages have remained flat while housing costs have soared, straining household budgets and putting much of the housing market out of reach for working and middle-class families. Addressing these challenges will require pursuing a variety of strategies and creating a range of housing types. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)—a home built on a lot of an existing home—offer one approach that communities and ordinary homeowners can use to create much-needed housing that fits within the context of a surrounding neighborhood.

In addition to Lee, panelists will include:

- RJ Adler, [Wheel Pad](#)
- Tyler Maas, [Vermont State Housing Authority](#)
- Barbara Conrey, [Sustainable Montpelier Coalition](#)
- Steven Paquin, [Town of Wolfeboro, NH](#)

This virtual discussion will be moderated by [James Vayo of Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission](#) and is sponsored by [Southwest Region Planning Commission](#), [Vital Communities](#), and [The Local Crowd Monadnock](#).

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