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**Subject:** Yes to ADU changes (81952)  
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Dear Housing Strategy Committee,

I support item 81952 to eliminate arbitrary restrictions on ADUs. ADUs are worth supporting for several reasons:

- \* They make a (small) dent in Madison's housing shortage, without requiring the demolition of the existing structure. (For those who want to see existing single-family houses be preserved, this is an advantage over duplexes, for example.)
- \* As a result, someone can live in an ADU, closer to work and amenities, instead of moving to a suburb or becoming unhoused.
- \* An ADU increases the assessed value of a property, which means the property contributes more to Madison's tax levy per acre.
- \* They can support multi-generational housing, instead of separating or displacing those families.
- \* They can allow someone to age in place, by moving to a single-level dwelling on the same lot, or providing on-prem housing for a caretaker.
- \* When increasing residential demand isn't given a more incremental outlet, the only available outlet for it becomes large-form high-rises and complexes, which are often perceived as more disruptive to the neighborhood.

All that being said, constructing an ADU is not something that every property owner will choose to do, and for those who undertake it, it's not a quick cash grab. For a little while, Madison has allowed ADUs in certain places, mostly in proximity to high frequency transit. This has not led to a construction boom. So the proposed change is not going to "open the floodgates". But it will make a difference to someone, and it will benefit the city as a whole and the neighborhoods that become more neighborly and vibrant as a result.

The changes in 81952 are pretty modest and uncontroversial:

- \* If there's an 8 unit building on the property, but there's room for a separate 9th unit, then why not?
- \* The owner occupancy requirement was arbitrary and unenforceable: you're allowed to be away from the property for six months of the year, but if you're away 7 months, who is going to know? Why should anyone care?
- \* 81952 strikes language in the ordinance limiting the occupancy of "unrelated" individuals. The number of people living in the ADU doesn't need to be specified here--that's already defined elsewhere in ordinance--and the limit of "unrelated" occupants is a relic of outdated prejudices favoring biological family over found family or even just cohabitation in general. The nature of residents' relations to each other is none of the city's business, nor has the city

ever been able to equitably enforce this.

\* ADUs are literally the most modest form of densification possible, so they need not be restricted to high-frequency transit corridors, while apartment buildings are cropping up on all edges of the city.

I encourage you to support item 81952 and recommend adoption of it to the Common Council.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
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