

Group Living Code Amendment

DIY/Artist/Co-op Problem Statement

Overview

This document outlines problems identified with the Denver Zoning Code (DZC)'s regulations that impact nontraditional residential uses desired by artists, musicians and other creative workers. They include problems identified by a committee of artists, co-housing advocates, developers, special district and neighborhood representatives, and by City staff.

Committee Goals

A subcommittee of the Group Living Advisory Committee collaboratively developed and agreed to a series of goals for DIY/Artist group living and co-housing living arrangements. These “future state” goals served as a starting point for identifying specific problems in the Denver Zoning Code:

1. The Zoning Code will allow for more flexible residential uses to meet the unique housing needs of people working in creative industries. Currently, some desired residential uses may not meet traditional Denver Zoning Code definitions for “dwelling unit” or “household.”
2. The Zoning Code will allow for ongoing adaptation to allow new residential uses as they emerge and evolve.
3. The Zoning Code will encourage the development of attainable housing, including adaptive reuse of existing non-residential structures for residential purposes where appropriate.
4. The Denver Zoning Code will enable more spaces to be used for both one’s residence and occupation, where appropriate.

Problems identified in the Denver Zoning Code

Potential issues with the Code identified by the Group Living Advisory Committee are listed below. They are further detailed in the full Problem Statement document, available at www.denvergov.org/groupliving.

1. **The Denver Zoning Code’s definition of “Household” limits the number of unrelated individuals who can live together. These restrictions inhibit the development of nontraditional residential typologies like artist housing, cooperative housing and co-living.**
2. **The Denver Zoning Code’s Household and Group Living definitions and use limitations make it difficult to establish creative spaces that combine low-cost housing with flexible performance venues, assembly and gallery venues, and the narrow “Live/Work Dwelling” category has proven inapplicable to such uses.**
3. **Key terminology used in the Denver Zoning Code is not always consistent with corresponding language in the Building, Fire and Health Safety codes. This leads to confusion in interpreting the correct language and regulations between the codes, causing delays and additional expenses as staff and property owners resolve the inconsistencies.**

Examples: DIY Housing/Performance/Art venues; Cooperative Housing

Combined Housing and Performance Venues

- Live/Work Dwelling inapplicable to use
- No clear DZC Building Form

Rhinocerosopolis

- Consistency between DZC and Building and Health Safety Codes
- Impact on cost

Cooperative Housing

- Limited by Household Definitions
- 2 unrelated adults only in many zones

