



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

On the evening of September 7, 2017, the City of Denver hosted a Community Open House to review the proposed solutions to address slot home development for the Slot Home Evaluation and Text Amendment project. The purpose of the open house was to ask the community, “does the proposed solutions solve the problem?” (as described in the problem statement)

Over 40 community members attended the workshop in central Denver, including Councilman Rafael Espinoza and 5 other members of the Slot Home Task Force. The Department of Community Planning and Development promoted the event with a special edition newsletter and notified Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs). The Task Force engaged with their community to invite interested members of the public.

Open house comments generally expressed support for the proposed solutions to address slot home development and generally agreed that the proposed solutions were addressing the problem statement.

The Open House began with a welcome and presentation by City staff. The presentation (online on the project website) addressed:

- Project Scope
- Existing Conditions (definition of slot home, problem identification statement, criteria for successful solutions)
- Proposed solutions for mixed use, multi-unit, and row house zone districts

Following the presentation, the attendees were directed to participate in the open house. The open house consisted of 16 different boards (online on the project website) with content related to the project background, existing and proposed outcome for the different zone districts. Attendees were encouraged to move throughout the room and provide comments and engage in discussion with other attendees and staff members.

In addition to the open house activities, individual worksheets were provided to all open house participants to submit additional comments and feedback. Comments provided via way of the worksheet have been integrated into the comment summary and are provided in the written comments received.

Key comments and themes are summarized below:

The majority of comments provided were related to the proposed **zoning tools** within the proposed solutions.

- Support for **orienting the units to the streets** which is a big improvement that is in alignment with neighborhood character. Disallowing side-ways unit orientation in the rear of the lot should be explored.
- Requiring an **entry feature** is very important. It is important for these features to create usable space that can contribute to the ownership of the space. Minimum size requirements might be appropriate.
- Support for a **primary street setback** with some concern that a 10’ primary street setback was insufficient to create the appropriate transition of public to private space.
- Strong support for reducing the **building height in feet**, additional interest in exploring other tools that address mass and scale.
- Support to **reduce the vehicular drive aisle** width and limit visibility of the vehicle use areas.
- The **increased side setback** was seen as an effective tool to address impact to neighbors. Interest in applying this standard to mixed use districts in addition to multi unit.
- Support to **remove the garden court building form** in the row house districts as the intent and outcome (even with changes proposed in the moratorium) are still inconsistent for the district and neighborhood character.

- Additional tools such as **upper story setback, materials, transparency** and **articulation** were noted by the community as topics to explore.

Additional comments were received that related to broader city-wide topics:

- Landscaping standards in the right-of-way
- Accommodating density in a growing city
- Misalignment with existing zone districts (mapping) and existing built form

Following the Open House segment of the meeting, staff, task force members and attendees were provided the opportunity to report back to the entire group of participants. The following are key comments shared to the group during the report back:

- Support for the units oriented to the street
- Some levels of concern about the side-way units and mass still allowed to the rear of the zone lot
- Support for the primary street setback, with interest in exploring a larger dimension
- Support for “meaningful” entry features on the front of the building, concern over allowances on the side interior.

At the conclusion of the meeting, city staff encouraged the public to stay engaged throughout the process moving forward. Methods for continued public engagement include:

- Upcoming open office hours – opportunity for members of the community to talk with staff to provide input and received answers to questions.
- Task Force Meetings – All open to the public, agendas are posted to the website 7 days prior
- RNOs and Community Meetings – City Staff will come to RNO and other community meetings as requested
- Slot Home Website – All meeting summaries and content will be posted to the website
- Slot Home Newsletter – Sign-up to receive updates and notice of upcoming meetings

All written comments received are provided below:

The following comments include those made on sticky-notes on the poster board as well as comments made on the worksheet. Staff comments have been added in underlined italic.

Comments specific to proposed tools:

Require Unit Orientation to the Street

- Facing the street helps a lot
- Street orientation is good for the neighborhood. It provides the density and additional housing without the negative effect to the street and others.
- This can blend well with single family homes and apartment buildings. (same comments as MX) for pushing the pulling the envelopments.
- Side facing = disruption of street rhythm
- Support for requiring the front entry orientation to the street

Require an entry feature (porch, patio, canopy) for units oriented to the street

- What constitutes an entry feature? How does this not become a judgement call?
- Require some size minimum for stoop/porch entry feature
- Porches should be deep to encourage a chair and should have a roof like a real porch!
- Porch is very important
- Balcony in front setback (encroachment)
- Add in standards for entry feature
- Railing or edging better for people using it, sense of community
- Porches and patios need to be a functional and meaningful size.
- Front porches are artificial solutions to public realm engagement fir front door and porch simply leads to a stairway. Create real townhomes facing streets
- Promote front porches around the city- don't count it against lot coverage in all zone districts *(building coverage is not a proposed standard for the urban townhouse. In other districts where building coverage apply, a front porch is exempt up to 400 sq ft for each dwelling unit)*

Primary Street Setback

- Mixed use areas are not all at 0' setbacks like most slot homes
- Propose 5' front setback instead of 10', encourage street interaction
- Is 10' enough of a setback to be consistent with the character?
- Maybe 10' setback is not enough
- No tiger pits in front setback (couple examples in Curtis park)
- No more than 4 stairs up to front entrance
- It helps, it improves the presence of the street with requiring street facing front doors and requiring a setback to allow for a more pedestrian scale and a "front yard" landscape look. However, it does not solve for the dramatic shift in height or character imposed on the neighborhood.
- Much better engagement, mass/scale

Reduce Building Height in Feet and Revise Height Exceptions

- Yes to reduced building heights!
- Buildings are still bulky, plus the rooftop "hats" are still as issue
- Building height reductions help al lot with the mass and scale
- Mass and scale is still off
- Reduce height is a good idea
- Limit stair enclosure size
- Roof top access
- Much better engagement/scale/mass

- I think these ideas are headed in the right direction as far as facing the street. Seeing the doghouse/stair enclosure back from the primary street and forcing a setback for the units in the rear of the development.
- Use operable skylights instead of stair enclosures
- Stair enclosure (require) windows

Reduce Drive Aisle Width

- Have you considered reducing the drive aisle width? Yes. The drive aisle width is proposed to reduce from 23' to 18'.
- Want to make sure that off-street parking is still available. Current off-street parking would still apply
- 23' is too wide for drive aisle- people just park in it. Its good to reduce it
- Study the encroachment of the drive aisle into the side setback
- I wonder if some of these solutions consider “realistically” sided units and wonder if there is any way of reducing the areas dedicated to vehicular transit, perhaps bey reducing the drive asile width, wish we could rezone more lots for higher density. Drive aisle width is proposed to be reduced form 23' to 18'.
- Love the no-visible drive lanes.

Increase side interior setback

- Impacts on neighboring properties by site entered units is a big concern and allowing balconies on the side would make it worse. The current proposal would only allow single story (ground floor) porches, canopies and drive aisles to encroach.
- Study the encroachment of the drive aisle into the side setback
- Side setbacks in back units is fabulous for the owners and neighbors
- Side setback is a big help to owners and neighbors, sunlight gets in to each unit
- Side setback for back units is very important, it offers the opportunity to create community
- The setbacks at the side are appropriate.
- Don't put unit access on the exterior of the lot, consider a garden court type interior access.
- The setbacks at the side are appropriate.
- Side setbacks are important to avoid adverse impacts to adjacent homes

Remove the Garden Court building form in RH/TH zone districts:

- Big improvement, glad garden court is gone.
- Garden court should no longer be allowed in the code!!! The garden courts current in the pipeline are abominations. No gardens, no courts, not even enough parking. Too dense.
- If done right, garden courts could be a good outcome
- Specific intent of the row house district does not include garden court. Completely wrong to have allowed the slot home/garden court
- Support for design and minimum width requirements with the Garden Court moratorium

Additional tools proposed by the community:

- Design standards & Materials
- Building materials are not character appropriate
- Increase transparency on upper levels to show “front of home”
- Architectural standards need to be added. Add quality and type of materials. Need for building articulation and depth and reveals rather than just a material.
- Still not compelling articulation?
- More articulation, don't want flat surfaces
- Articulation?
- Incentivize the use of similar materials for the rest of the neighborhood
- Articulation and variety of materials, and colors on the façade
- It doesn't go far enough: delineation of stories, window alignment, parapets should not be uses as railings for rooftop use.

- Upper Story setback?
- Can there be a reduced upper floor area, or setbacks on the upper floors?
- What about setbacks at the street facing upper floors?

Other general Comments:

- Proposed solutions are Big improvement over what is now allowed
- Make sure we have protected district standards Protected districts standards currently apply and would be maintained in the proposed urban townhouse.
- Can you still have parking here? (point to the first level of the unit) Parking located within the building is limited by the existing active use standard.
- (site drawing) illustrating site plan with not side facing units
- How does solution work without combining lots? Proposed solution can still occur on small lots (approx. 50' in width)
- Slot home are not an appropriate building form in MX districts, should be eliminated from the zone district
- This isn't really an apartment form, shouldn't there be interior access
- MU district form should be a series of row houses and another series of row houses, not side ways facing
- No more river rock
- Enforcement of exterior landscape maintenance with owners won't do what is needed
- Good to treat multi-unit differently than mixed use
- I struggle with the contextual vehicular accommodation. In most urban districts, before these building types could encourage alternate means of transportation. I agree with the height restrictions, but disagree with the side loaded units not requiring to be set back (in MX districts)
- On the right track with unit orientation and encroachments
- A mixed use district should not be comprised on only urban townhomes which is 100% residential. This building form works only if there are other buildings/parcels that contain commercial and/or office uses. We are getting blocks of slot homes resulting in single use areas which contradicts the intent of mixed use districts.
- The quality of the construction and fit for the neighboring structures will be a major effect on wither it works.
- Solutions mostly address street side but not the impacts to properties on either side of the slot home lot
- (Developer) my proposed projects are aligned with the options
- Developer rights vest too early. Multiple examples exist where development rights vest and there can be 2,3,or 4 years before construction begins. Creates limbo for neighbors