February 19, 2020  
Attn: Denver Planning Board

For the last two years, Denver city planners have been working with residents, policy experts, advocates and service providers for vulnerable populations and other community members to update the Denver Zoning Code’s regulations on residential uses. These regulations govern everything from conventional households to group homes, shelters and assisted living facilities. Why are rules changing? Current regulations don’t reflect the evolution of lifestyles, community needs, or the vision in Denver’s Comprehensive Plan for a more inclusive, connected and healthy city. They make it hard to provide housing for Denver’s most vulnerable populations, by excluding some populations from our neighborhoods, and define “households” in ways that make it harder for residents to reduce housing costs by living with roommates.

• What changes are proposed?
  o Allow people to live together without requiring that they be related by blood or marriage. This is already possible in most other cities, and helps provide flexibility and affordability.
  o Allow residential care and group homes in more places and reduce inequity by no longer categorizing them by the types of people or needs they serve. This will eliminate many barriers that facilities addressing community needs for housing and supportive services currently face, and it will allow residents to live closer to transit, jobs and other services.
  o Improve predictability for providers and neighbors by standardizing permitting processes and regulations, such as spacing between facilities.
  o Require Community Information Meetings for larger residential care uses to notify neighbors and foster positive relationships.

• What’s next?
  o Public Review Draft: redline document of proposed changes to code language, posted on project website for public review for 30 days in advance of Planning Board. Anticipated in late March or April.
  o Legislative Review Process: The Denver Planning Board will review the proposal and hold a public hearing in Spring of 2020. This is the first step in the legislative review process, which would conclude with City Council review, anticipated in Summer of 2020.