

ADUs in Denver

Outreach and Feedback Summary for Project Phase 5

This document summarizes public feedback received in phase 5 (Develop the Tools Phase) of the ADUs in Denver project, key themes, and highlights of how public input was used to shape the project. The document includes links to more information available on the project website.

Outreach was conducted using the following approaches:

- Updates to City Councilmembers
- Connecting with neighborhood groups and industry organizations
- Online comment form
- Information made available on the [project website](#), via project newsletters, targeted outreach, and social media

Please visit the [project web page](#) for additional information.

Summary of Outreach

Phase 5: Develop the Tools

February 2023 – March 2023

Engagement focused on gathering feedback on the proposed draft strategy and associated text amendment to the Denver Zoning Code.

Key Engagement Events in Project Phase 5

Presentations to Neighborhood Groups

- Montclair ADU Council Office Discussion – March 14, 2023

Public Review Draft of the Text Amendment to the Denver Zoning Code

The ADUs in Denver text amendment draft was available for public review and comments March 8 – March 27, 2023.

Newsletters

City staff sent a newsletter update about the ADUs in Denver project to community members who signed up for email updates at <https://bit.ly/ADUsInDenver>.

- March 8, 2023: [Public Review Draft Now Available for Comment](#)

Website Comments

From February 2023 to March 2023, the ADUs in Denver project received 25 comments and 6 questions from the general public related to the project, submitted through an [online form](#) available at <https://bit.ly/ADUsInDenver>. Below is a summary and synthesis of key themes and demographics from comments submitted to the website in project phase 5.

Comments Received Regarding Public Review Draft

Comment Themes

- Participants had varying thoughts about the owner occupancy requirement. Some believed that keeping the requirement in place would help preserve neighborhood character. Others believed that the owner occupancy requirement is a significant barrier to ADU construction and should be removed.
- Participants expressed the desire for additional flexibility for rear setbacks, in the form of further reducing or eliminating them.
- Participants expressed general support for the project strategy, including the allowance for second story decks and balconies in certain contexts.
- Participants expressed a desire for measures that support affordable housing and are outside the scope of this project, like allowing more duplexes and triplexes and rezoning the entire city to allow ADUs.
- Participants expressed concern about the permitting process including the length of time and the requirement that only licensed contractors may construct ADUs.

Demographic Information

- 94% of respondents were homeowners. 6% of respondents preferred not to answer.
- 61% of respondents identified as male, 32% identified as female, and 6% preferred not to answer.
- The age of respondents was fairly evenly distributed. The majority of respondents (26%) fell into the 35-44 age category.
- 74% of respondents identified as white, 10% identified as Hispanic, Latino/Latina/Latinx, or Spanish, 3% identified as Black or African American, and 13% preferred not to answer.
- The household income of respondents varied, though 84% of respondents reported household incomes of \$50,000 or more.

Appendix A includes a complete listing of comments and questions submitted through the project website from February 2023 - March 2023.

ADUs in Denver Comments Received

Response Submission Date	We want to hear from you. Questions or comments about the ADUs in Denver zoning code project can be shared in the text box below.
02/28/2023 17:07 PM	SINGLE SERWER SO THAT YOU DONT HAVE TO PAY TO ACCESS STREET
02/28/2023 17:11 PM	I support reducing construction hurdles for ADUs but believe that a regulation should exist requiring the homeowner to live in the main house or ADUs increase the price of the primary residence and, as a result, decrease the stock of affordable housing. They make home ownership, the primary method of wealth accumulation, more difficult for working people.
02/28/2023 17:29 PM	I am very much in favor of ADUs. In fact, I think we should abolish SFZ for any lot with an urban designation and should expand our zoning code to allow for triplexes. ADUs are simply not enough to address our housing shortage, particularly with affordable housing.
02/28/2023 20:22 PM	I respect that the city is trying to reduce housing taking by short-term rentals with their proposed owner occupancy rule, I think there are better ways to achieve this that don't add limitations to building more housing. Things like additional taxes and fees or license requirements for any I would like to see hard data on the eventual use of the ADUs that have been approved. Everyone always says they provide affordable housing but they seem to mainly be used for commercial uses such as short term rentals which do not provide additional affordable housing, only increased density. Because of this, changing the existing rule regarding the requirement for owners of a property with an ADU to live on the I wish all requirements and setbacks were loosened in all contexts (suburban, urban & urban edge). Privacy & other neighbor concerns should not get in the way of us being able to increase density in our city as quickly as possible to address the housing crisis we're currently experiencing so every person has access to a dignified home. I do not support reducing ADU height in any context. I do not support increasing the rear setback
03/01/2023 15:04 PM	We live in an area that is expensive and may in the future require that we take care of elderly parents/grandparent and would love to have the ability to put them safely in an ADU unit due to rising long term care costs. In today's world with rising costs everywhere multi-generational living Many garages in Sunnyside, and I assume other neighborhoods, were built less than 3 feet from the property line-- garages on 4000 and 4010 Shoshone st. are 2.5 feet from the property line, for example.
03/01/2023 17:13 PM	Would the proposed requirements preclude utilizing an existing garage that was built less than 3' from the property line, or adding a unit to the top I sat in on an informative ADU webinar hosted by the City of Denver a couple weeks back. I gained a better appreciation for how challenging it is to navigate the existing permitting rules and understand that some change is needed. However, I also came away with the impression that city planners advocate changing the owner occupancy requirement in favor of requiring that owners occupy the main residence only at the time the ADU permit is issued. I believe that this is a mistake. It will not deter outside investors from snapping up homes and filling neighborhoods with rental properties with attached rental ADUs. Home sellers will quickly learn that seeking an ADU permit just prior to sale will boost their home's selling price and desirability to cash buyers. As a result, the inventory of affordable properties for regular entry-level homeowners will shrink even This doesn't go nearly far enough to address Denver's housing crisis. We need to legalize more than just ADUs that only maybe 1% of Denverites would build. No city that has legalized ADUs alone has made any significant dent in its housing crisis.
03/02/2023 9:02 AM	This continued failure from the city is the reason this city has a displacement crisis. It's also the reason we have such a bad pollution crisis, because the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says urban density is necessary for low-carbon cities, while this plan does almost nothing to advance that goal.
03/06/2023 11:15 AM	How can the committee say it is removing restrictions to building ADUs when the biggest restriction to building more ADUs is the owner occupant While I'm tentatively in favor of ADUs in my neighborhood (Athmar Park), and others, my hesitancy rests on my concern that ADUs will not be designed with respect to the current neighborhood designs (modest) and may block what are great views of downtown.
03/07/2023 14:11 PM	At this time, I don't see how those that are middle income could afford to build an ADU even if they wanted to. There's support for the bottom but I am delighted with the recommendations about ADUs in Denver zoning code project and support all of the recommendations. I believe it will be positive both for homeowners and for people seeking affordable rentals.
03/08/2023 15:05 PM	
03/08/2023 15:06 PM	
03/08/2023 15:19 PM	
03/08/2023 15:27 PM	

03/08/2023 16:00 PM Decks facing the alley and ADU allowances in the TH, RH and TU zone districts is a great idea to increase density

03/08/2023 18:03 PM If you actually want to see ADUs in Denver why aren't you allowing them to be placed on non-owner occupied properties?

03/09/2023 7:43 AM How will this help Seniors located in gentrified 80205 neighborhoods obtain zoning for ADU's?
Not removing the owner-occupancy requirement for ADUs in any zone will defeat the stated purpose of the changes to allow ADUs. For example, I am a duplex owner in a U-TU-C who is in my 70's. I have a perfect location for an ADU that could be used by renters who might work in the Tennyson St. area between 38th and 46th. However, this continuing requirement would require the property be sold by my heirs upon my death, I am now retired and widowed and would like to continue living in my neighborhood, Congress Park, but the house I have is expensive. My entire support system in here in the neighborhood: my friends, neighbors, grocery store and church. If I was allowed to build a small ADU in my backyard above the garage (a two story structure), I would be able to have an income source from rent and be able to continue to live in my home. It would not increase cars on the street as building an ADU would allow for more off street parking on the 1st floor. Further, if the time came that I Absolutely fantastic way to incentivize property owners to create more affordable housing in Denver

03/09/2023 13:57 PM Hello,

03/10/2023 11:03 AM Thanks again to the planning department for all of the hard work done so far. In the last round of comments, I shared my disappointment in seeing the owner-occupancy requirement remaining unchanged. In the latest Feedback Summary, it is clear that I was not the only person disappointed that this requirement remained unaltered.

03/13/2023 13:48 PM

03/14/2023 11:15 AM The public, the advisory board, and the planning department staff appear to all be in favor of removing this requirement. City Council appears to I am writing to support the changes in the latest draft recommendations, in particular the height limit changes, dormer encroachments into the bulk plane, the 100sf balcony allowance, and the maximum size. For the Urban zoning context, I support all of the draft recommendations.

03/14/2023 12:18 PM Not entirely related, but I also hope the planning department is undertaking serious efforts to reduce the time it takes to secure building permits for an ADU. This will help provide additional housing at a time when those needs are critical.
I have a question (which is also inherently a comment). Are you suggesting that we can have more habitable space on the first floor (presuming garage with ADU on top)? As your draft clearly demonstrates -- yet glosses over -- if we can do 650sf on the bottom, plus 75% of that on top, most of the first floor sits empty. You correctly note that 2 parking spaces = 720ft, but yet we have approximately 650sf for parking down there. It's too big for 1 car and too small for 2. Let me put a second bedroom down there, and then maximize the upstairs as well. Heck, if you did that, you could still keep the 1.5 stories! Unless I missed something, you really missed the mark on this. Also keep in mind that if there's habitable space downstairs, we'll need indoor stairs which take up a ton of habitable space. In reality, the currently permitted 650sf habitable space is not 650sf. In Do not ok ADU in Montclair. It seems that you are intent on destroying a beautiful old neighborhood for the gain of developers. I can't wait to vote against you as I voted for you to stop this kind of stuff. But, you have betrayed all i hoped for.
Another thought regarding the problem of requiring resident owners where ADUs are allowed...
I'm not exactly sure as to why this requirement was put in place, but I'm guessing there were at least two considerations: 1.) that if such wasn't the case, developers would buy, build, and rent, which more often than not would result in disruption of the neighborhood quality; and, 2.) owner care for all the improvements would be perceived as being lessened. A possible approach to address both would be to require owner residency when the ADU was permitted and built but not require residency as long as the property remained within direct family ownership (which assumes they

03/14/2023 14:39 PM

03/15/2023 13:47 PM

03/16/2023 14:21 PM

The length and depth of the report on ADU's shows the concern and dedication of City staff in researching this issue.

I grew up in a two flat in Chicago. My parents purchased the house with my grandparents to make it affordable as they were starting a family. Over time, my parents were able to care for my grandparents when they got old, and now many years later my sister is living where my grandparents once lived and taking care of my aging mother.

Two units on the same lot, one more friendly to aging, and many other identical units in the neighborhood (a neighborhood which "looked" like it was only single family bungalows) created multi-generational stability. My family was able to stay in the same home for 48 years already.

In Denver, that sort of family stability, and neighborhood stability is often illegal.

ADU's provide a very small option for some families to create this sort of stability.

I have a friend who grew up in Park Hill, then moved out when they could afford to buy a house. Not because they couldn't afford Park Hill, but because there just wasn't anything available to stay near family. Eventually, their father passed and their mom left the neighborhood to be near her grand kids. They probably wouldn't have lived in an ADU because their neighbors would have judged them, but maybe it would have provided them the same opportunity as my family had to stay in the neighborhood they grew up in.

I think that at one level, allowing ADU's is a moral question of keep families and neighborhoods together. A moral question of housing affordability. A moral question of prioritizing homes over parking, convenience, and shadows.

On the technical end of the equation, I appreciate the effort to reduce barriers. Seemingly little details such as stepping back the second floor add a lot of structural cost to small project compared to stacking walls vertically. They also increase maintenance costs by creating more places problems to occur. ADU's should be simple. Building an ADU should be simple.

While I think that ADU's primary contribution to the urban fabric is their accessibility to families an individual home owners, I think they can also provide value to people who don't already own land or lack the ability to build their own home. ADU's add value to developer built homes, condo's and apartments.

For large developments, adding a row of ADU's along the boundary of the project can create a low impact, low, cost option to transition from commercial buildings to existing smaller buildings.

03/16/2023 18:47 PM

The option of adding ADU's to town house developments increase the accessibility of homes to first time home buys by providing an income. It would be great to see ADU's as use by right in any zoning. We have had, currently have, and will have an inventory shortage for years to come.

03/17/2023 17:15 PM

This is on of many steps that should be taken to help the inventory shortage!

03/17/2023 17:35 PM

When will ADU's be allowed to be built in Athmar Park?

03/18/2023 10:36 AM

Please allow homeowners to apply for their own permits when building an ADU. There are currently a lot of checks and balances to the homeowner permit exam process that allowing for homeowners to conduct their own work would not result in and safety or long term issues. This ADUs are great. It's good either for increasing density (not necessarily "affordable" housing, per se), or for providing short term rental options for visitors, which is great for home owners (ABB hosts) and for businesses (more foot traffic and tourist money).

03/19/2023 7:43 AM

Cory-Merrill is not zoned for ADUs. There is a red permit dot on the map on the western edge of Cory-Merrill. Has an ADU been approved with Cory Merrill?? Also, it appears there are 3 red permit dots in Belcaro which is not "teal" and not zoned for ADUs. Why does it appear on the map

03/20/2023 8:56 AM

03/20/2023 14:25 PM

I like that the city is trying to make the building of these easier. I really like the removal of the rear setback as our lot size is very small so having to bring in an ADU 5 feet from a corner of our lot takes up a huge amount of space. Anything to make ADUs easier to build and permit would be welcome as it seems like the process is made way more expensive (and thus out of reach for many) if it necessitates a contractor and/or