

# ADUs in Denver Online Survey - Community Feedback Summary

May 2022

[Link to data and text spreadsheet](#)

## Survey Objectives

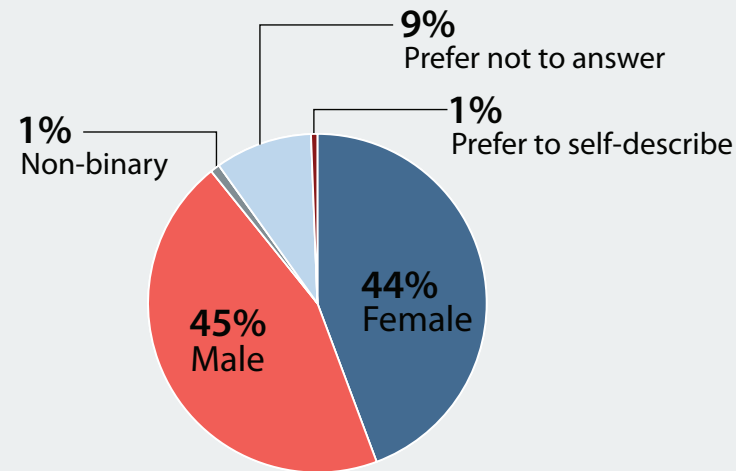
The community feedback survey was created and distributed to gather information on the public's experience with ADUs, the concerns and challenges associated with building them, how they fit into different neighborhoods, and what might make them easier to build.

## Survey Distribution

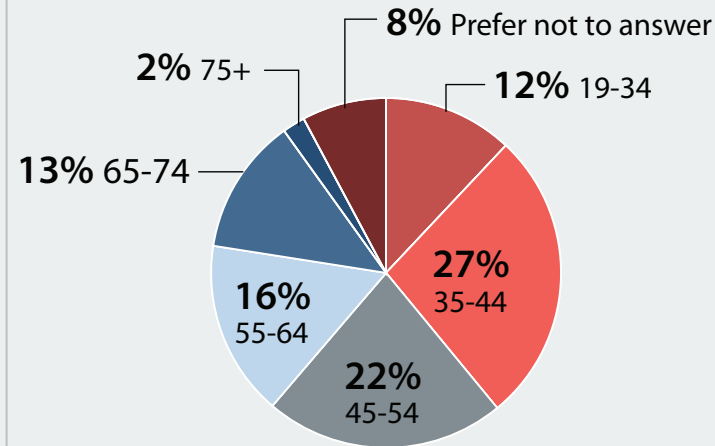
The survey was available online from May 4-31, 2022. It was distributed through the project email list, project webpage, social media, and to councilmembers and registered neighborhood organizations to share with their networks. The survey was completed by 377 individuals.

## Survey Demographics

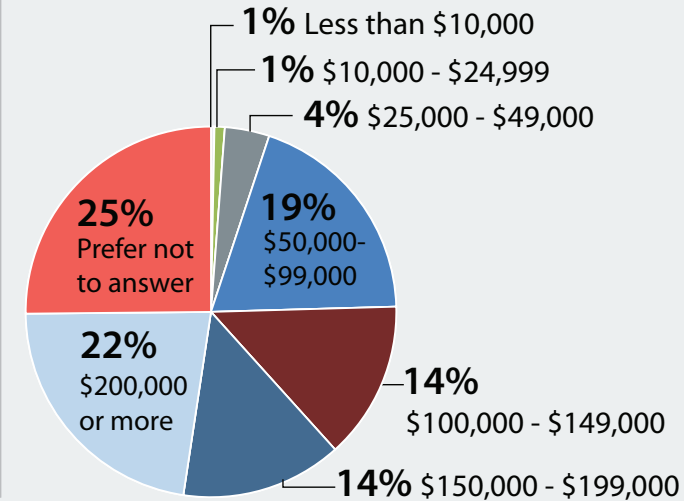
### Gender



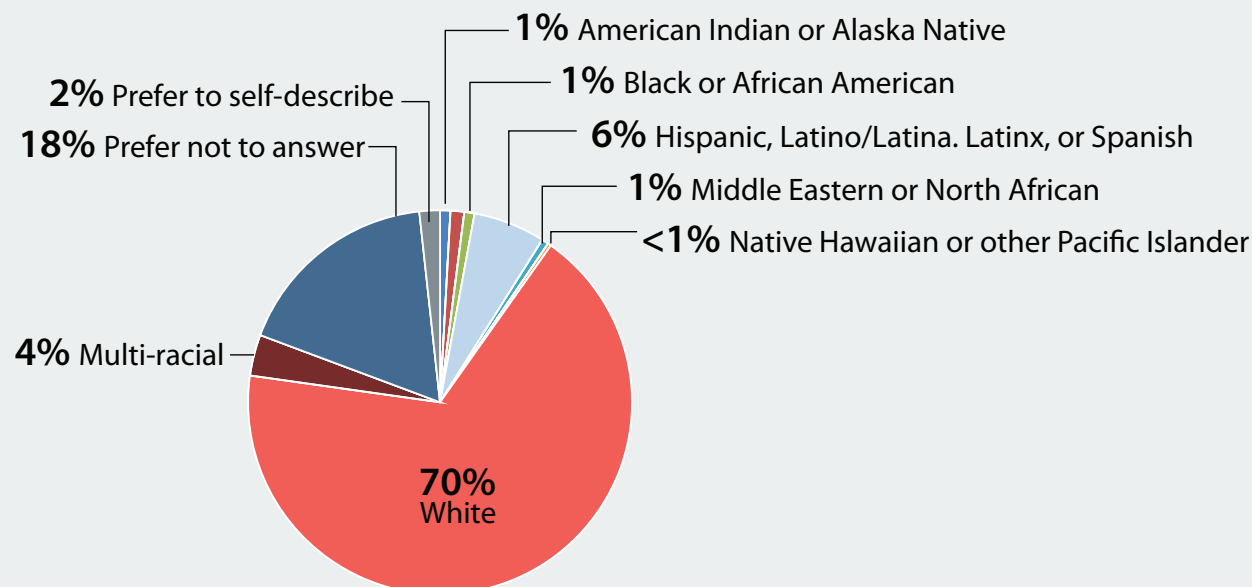
### Age



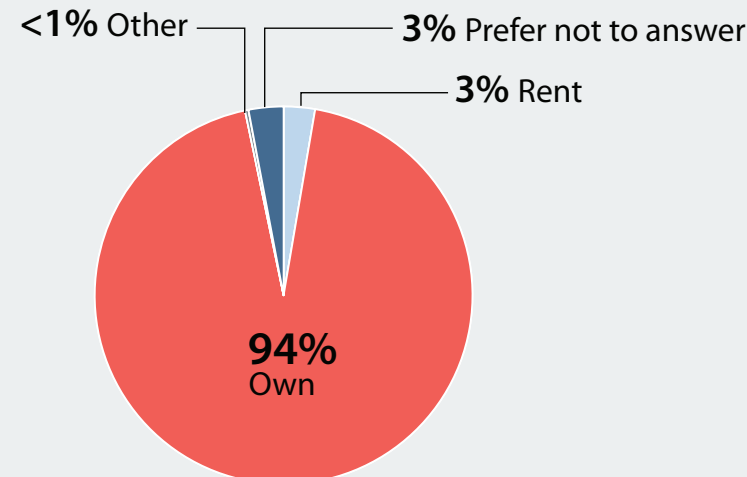
### Household Income



### Race/Ethnicity



### Home Ownership



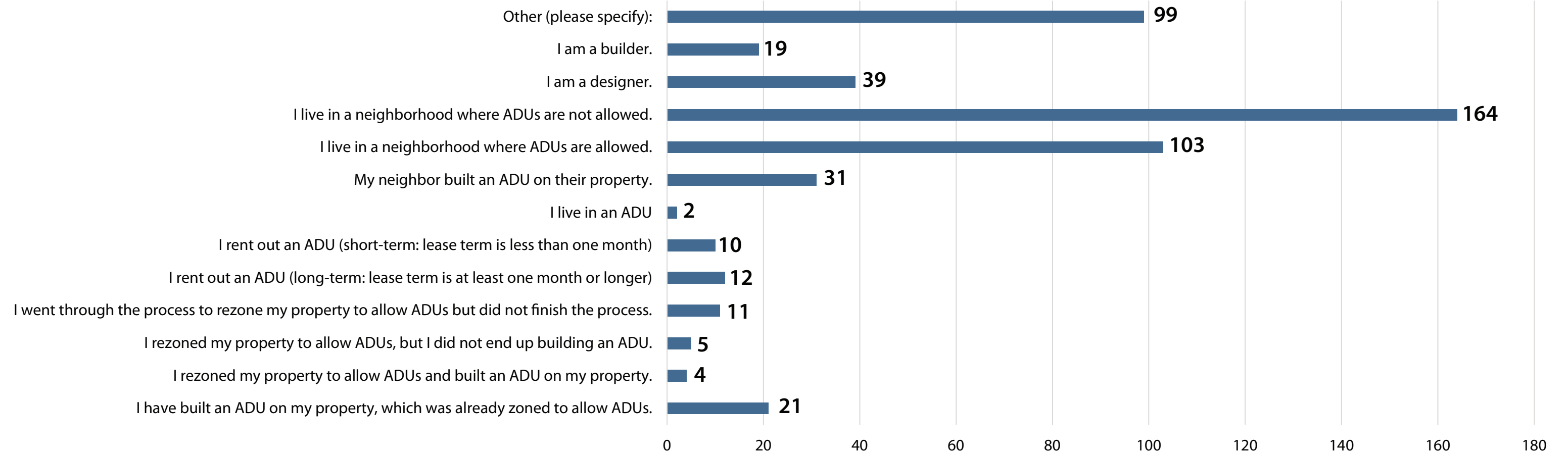
## Neighborhoods Represented

- Athmar Park
- Baker
- Barnum
- Belcaro
- Berkeley
- Bonnie Brae
- Capitol Hill
- Central Park
- Chaffee Park
- Cheeseman Park
- Cherry Creek
- City Park
- Clayton
- Cole
- College View
- Congress Park
- Corey-Merrill
- East Colfax
- Elyria-Swansea
- Five Points
- Fort Logan
- Gateway - Green Valley Ranch
- Globeville
- Goldsmith
- Hale
- Fort Logan
- Gateway - Green Valley Ranch
- Globeville
- Goldsmith
- Hale
- Hampden
- Hampden South
- Harvey Park
- Highlands
- Mar Lee
- Montclair
- Overland
- Park Hill
- Platt Park
- Regis
- Rosedale
- Sloan Lake
- South City Park
- Southmoor Park
- Speer
- Sunnyside
- University
- University Park
- Villa Park
- Virginia Village
- Washington Park
- Washington Park West
- Washington Virginia Vale
- Wellshire
- West Colfax
- West Highland
- Westwood
- Whittier
- Winsor



# Experience with ADUs

What has been your experience with ADUs? (Check all that apply)



## If you rezoned your property to allow ADUs but did not build an ADU, why did you not build the ADU?

- Issues with city processes and regulations - permitting and plan review processes are difficult to navigate. Zoning and building regulations are too restrictive.
- Building an ADU is too costly.
- Property specific constraints - unable to build due to factors like lot configuration, historic preservation concerns, and owner-occupancy requirements.

## If you started to rezone but didn't finish, why did you not complete the process? What part of the process was the most challenging?

- The rezoning process is too costly and time-consuming.
- The rezoning process is confusing and overcomplicated.
- Zoning regulations are too restrictive.
- Property owner was advised by staff that City Council would likely not approve the proposal.
- City staff was difficult to communicate with, including issues with availability and conflicting information.

Image Source: Pexels





# Issues Impacting ADU Construction

The ADUs in Denver project has organized potential issues into four general categories.



## Impact on Neighbors/Community

Includes issues such as parking, privacy, neighborhood fit, potential displacement



## Design/Construction/Buildability

Includes issues such as permitting, minimum lot size, minimum square footage, building form, accessibility



## Cost and Affordability

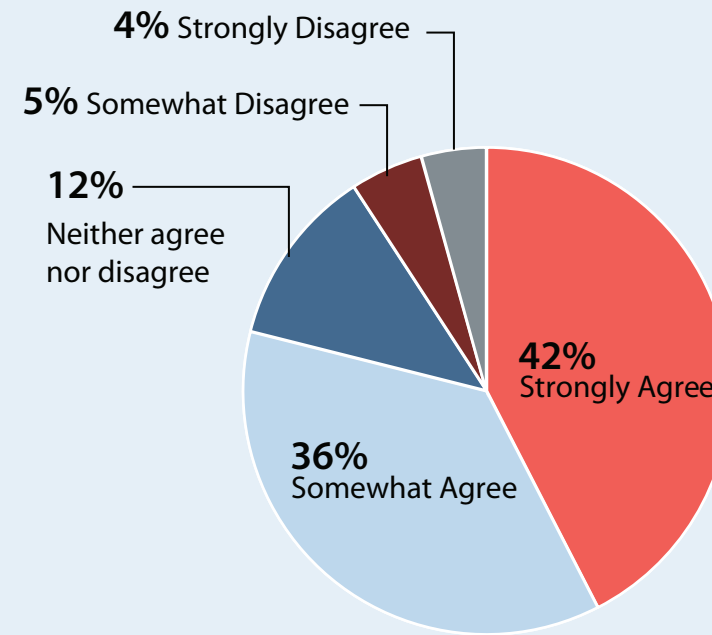
Includes issues such as cost of construction, cost of infrastructure, cost to rent



## Use and Use Allowances

Includes issues such as allowance in zone districts other than single unit, ownership of ADUs, short-term rentals, home offices

To what extent do you agree that these four general categories represent the issues correctly?



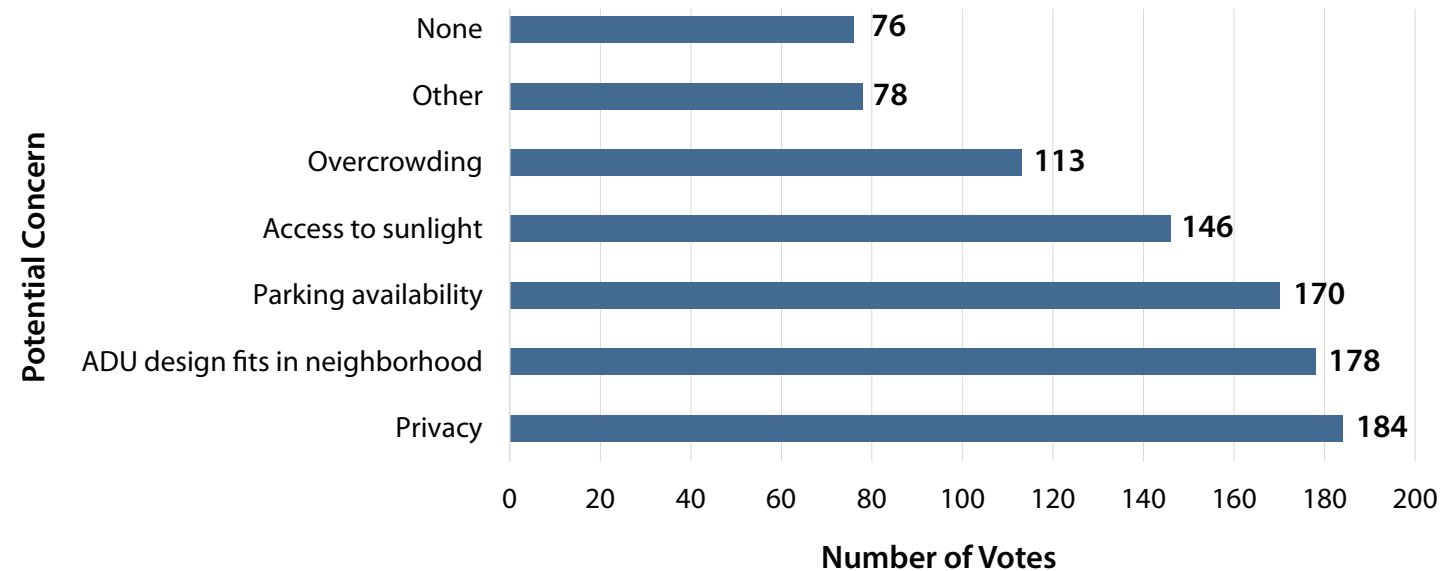
Are we missing anything from the categories and issues identified above?

- Issues regarding city processes, including uncertainty, length of time, and communication with staff
- Impact on utilities and other shared infrastructure
- Equity and social justice concerns surrounding housing affordability and the housing supply
- Impact on property values and tax implications
- Safety and potential crime
- Neighborhood density and overcrowding



## Impact on Neighbors/Community

If your neighbor were building an ADU, what concerns would you have? (Check all that apply)



\* Other category includes short-term rental, noise and safety, impact on utilities and other infrastructure, traffic, and a reduction in permeable surfaces and green space.

The ADUs in Denver project is considering applying different zoning regulations to ADUs in different neighborhood settings (urban, suburban, etc.) - meaning that ADUs in suburban neighborhoods might look different than ADUs in more urban neighborhoods.

What concerns might you have around suburban or urban ADUs knowing they are different environments?

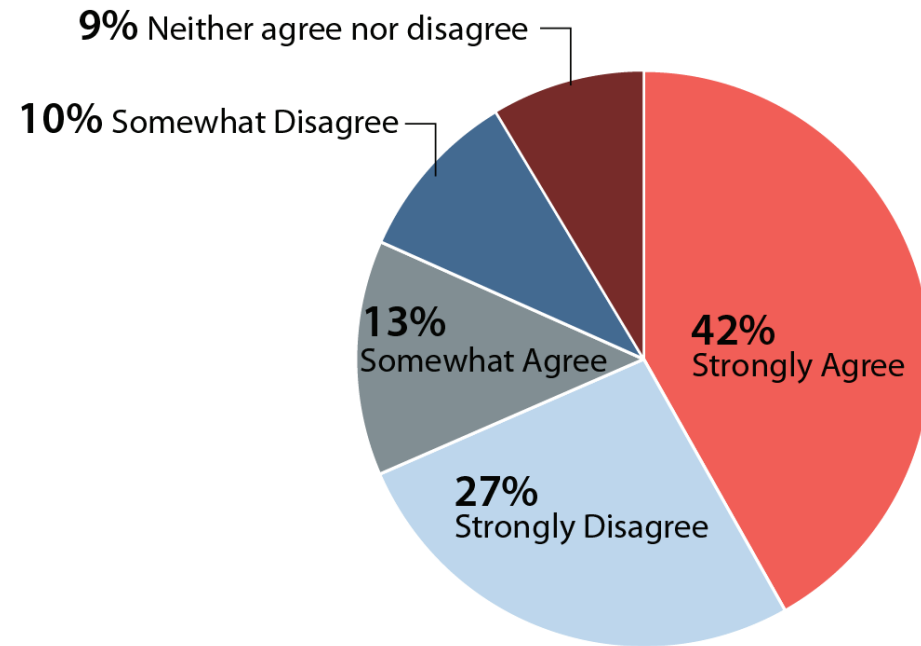
- Density of the neighborhood
- ADUs should be the appropriate size and scale depending on the neighborhood
- Varying parking and privacy needs
- Concern that varying zoning regulations by context for ADUs will increase confusion and complexity in the permitting and building process
- Concern that building height requirements are contextually appropriate
- Concerns surrounding property access (alley vs. no alley) and parking availability
- ~20% of respondents to this question reported they had no concerns



## Design/Construction/Buildability

### Minimum Lot Size

The zoning code currently does not allow detached ADUs on lots smaller than the zone district minimum, even when a property is zoned to allow an ADU. To what extent do you agree with reducing or removing minimum lot size standards?

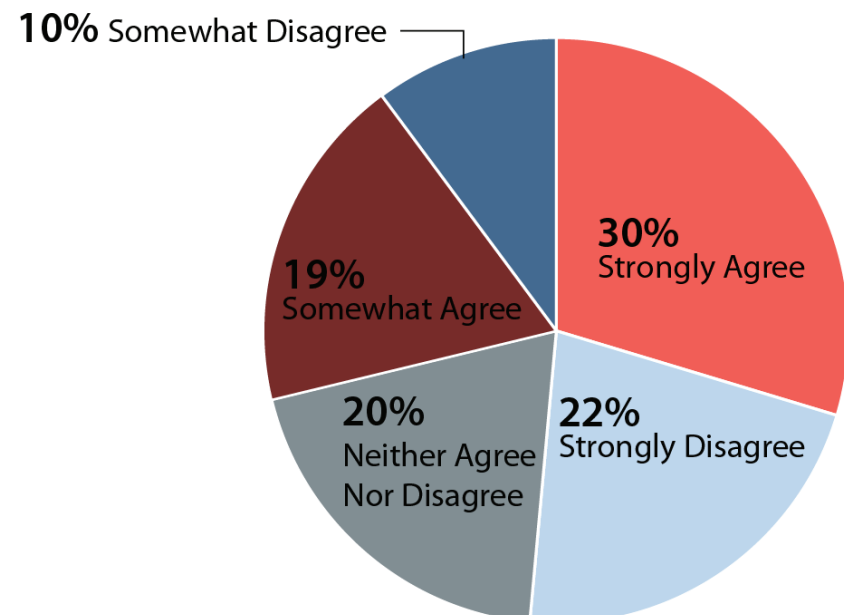


If you chose strongly disagree or somewhat disagree, what are your concerns with reducing or removing minimum lot size standards?

- Loss of green space
- Overcrowding and increasing density
- Loss of privacy
- Increased noise
- Reduced access to sunlight
- Parking availability

### Other Factors

ADUs are currently limited to 1.5 stories, which means the upper-story can only be 75% of the lower-story. To what extent do you agree that this is a barrier to ADU construction?



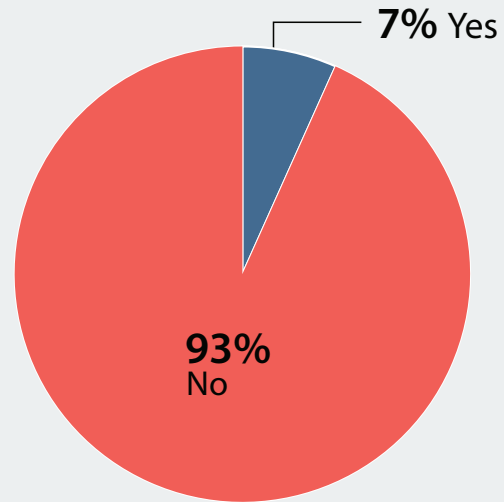
Are there other existing building standards that create barriers to building an ADU?

- Maximum size and footprint limitations
- Lot coverage requirement
- Bulk plane and building height requirements
- Setbacks, especially from alleys
- Owner-occupancy requirement
- Inability to convert existing structures that do not conform to current zoning standards
- Issues with building on lots with historic significance
- Time-consuming, costly, and confusing city processes
- ADUs may only be accessory to single-unit uses



## Building ADUs

Have you built an ADU on your property?



### If yes...

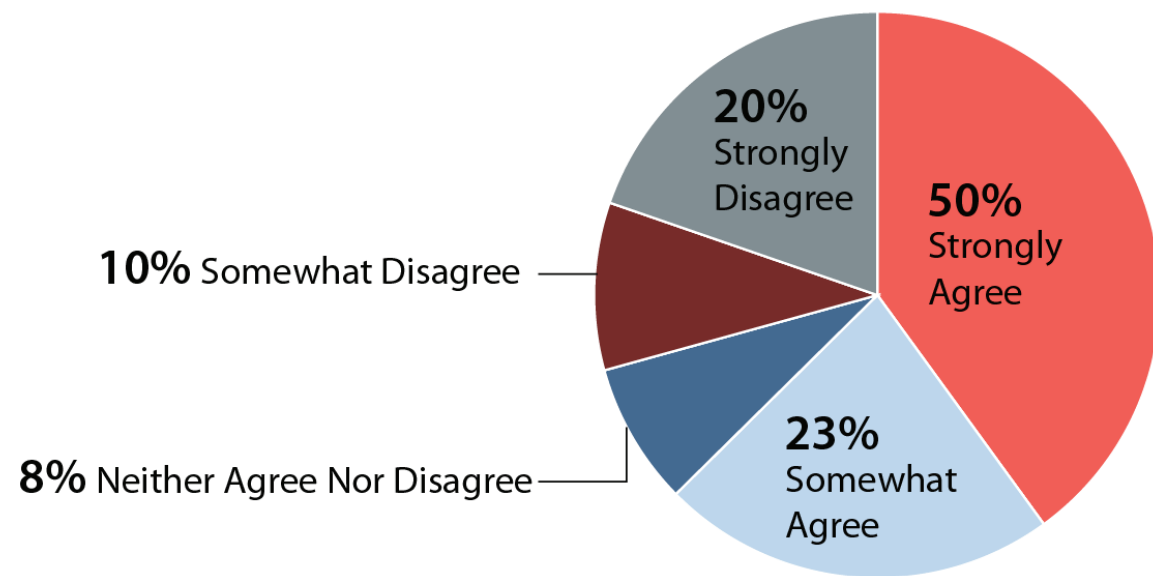
What were the highest construction costs you experienced, such as infrastructure, framing, or processes?

- Framing, as it is more expensive to frame 1.5 stories than 2
- Utilities
- Foundation
- Costs involved with city processes
- Building materials

What are some other challenges you experienced in the building process? These could relate to costs, zoning restrictions, accessibility issues, etc.

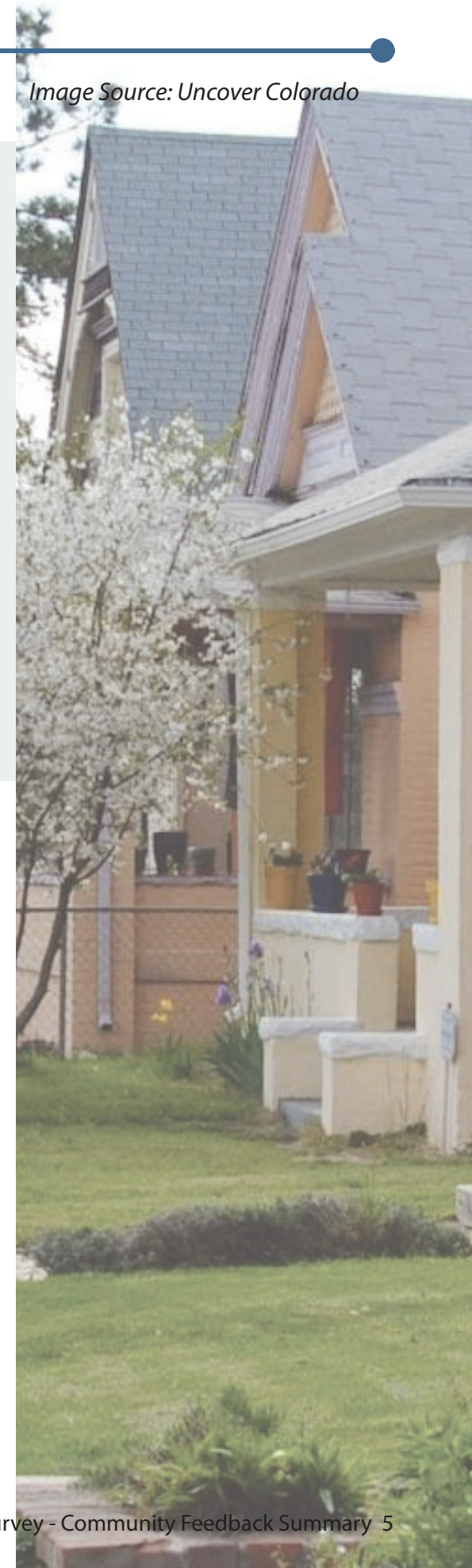
- Cost, including framing, building materials, and tap and SUDP fees
- Zoning restrictions including setbacks, inability to convert non-conforming structures, footprint and lot size, bulk plane, lot coverage, the 1.5 story requirement, and the requirement that ADUs are only accessory to single-unit uses
- Length of time of permitting process and plan review
- Difficulty navigating city processes and lack of accessibility to city staff for guidance.
- Disagreements with neighbors
- The requirement to use a general contractor

To what extent do you agree that adding ADUs to a neighborhood would make Denver housing more affordable?



The zoning code regulates things like setbacks, building footprint, height, stories, and lot coverage of ADUs. What can be done through zoning changes to lower the cost of building an ADU?

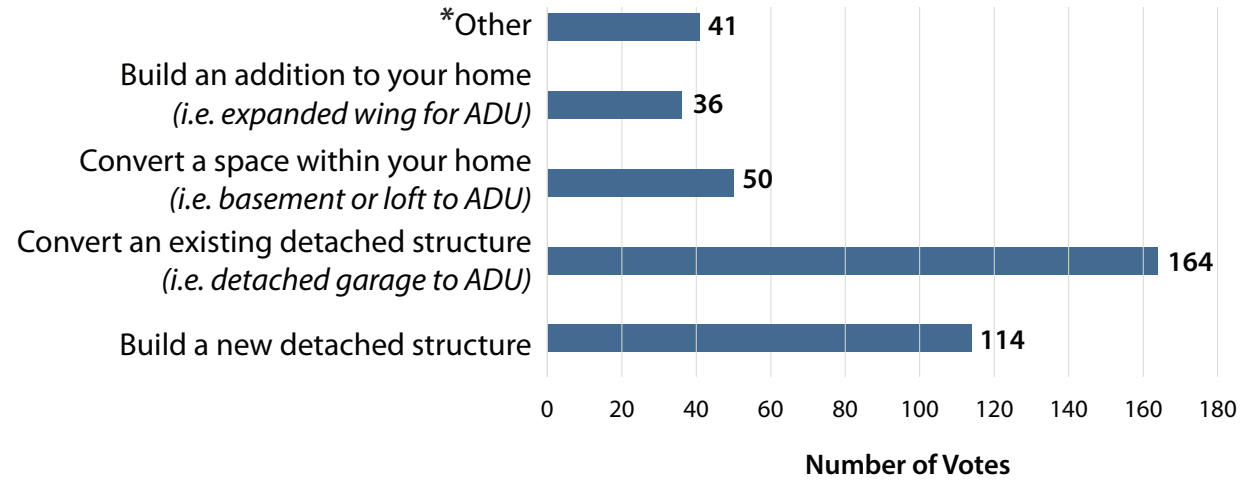
- Flexibility with zoning requirements including setbacks, lot coverage maximums, size, building height, and bulk plane requirements
- Allow two story ADUs or a full story above a garage
- Allow existing but non-conforming structures to be converted
- Charge lower and/or fewer costs associated with planning and permitting processes
- Speed up the timeline of city processes, as delays increases costs
- Allow pre-approved floor plans and pre-fabricated structures
- Provide financial incentives for ADUs to increase housing supply
- Allow homeowners to pull their own permits
- Allow ADUs citywide to eliminate costly and time-consuming individual rezonings for ADUs
- No changes should be made





## Cost and Affordability (continued)

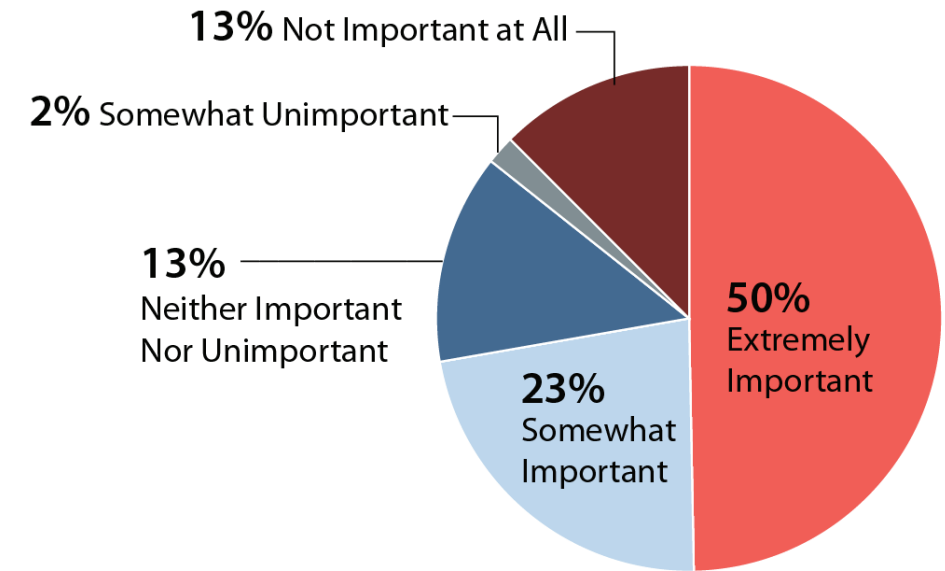
If you wanted to build an ADU, or have built an ADU, you would:



\*Other category includes:

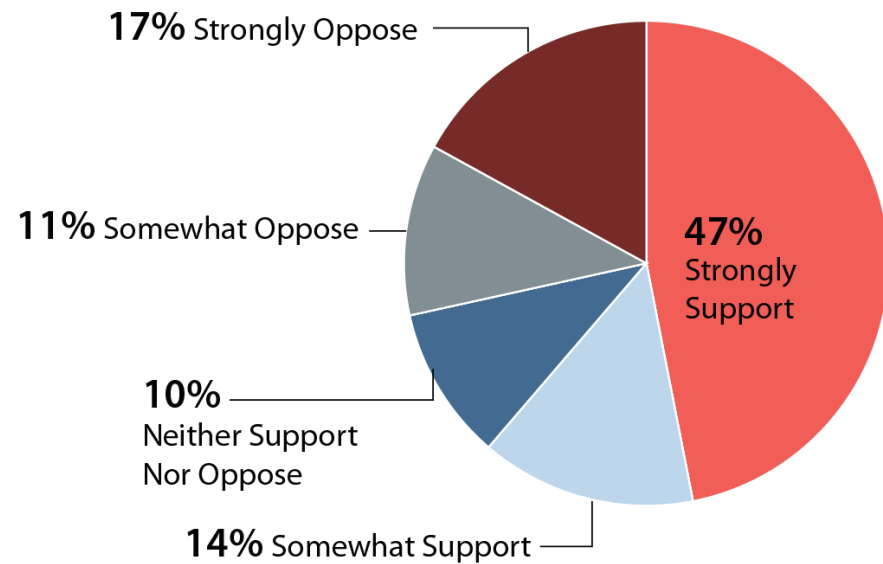
- Build ADU over detached garage
- Demolish current garage and replace with new ADU/garage structure
- I wouldn't build an ADU

How important is it to you that this project provide guidance to make it easier to reuse an existing structure to build an ADU?



## Use and Use Allowances

Currently, if a property has an ADU, the owner is required to reside on the property (either in the primary dwelling unit or in the ADU). To what extent do you support this regulation?



Currently, ADUs are only allowed to be built when the primary dwelling unit is a single-family home (a use allowance), even though other types of homes (such as duplexes or row houses) are zoned to allow them. To what extent do you agree that this project should allow ADUs with other types of homes?

