

Suburban Focus Group Notes

June 16, 2022, 5- 6:30 p.m.

Attendees:

- Stacy Schafer: University Hills
- Donna Wickham: Board of U Hills NA
- Donna: S. Mar Lee/Brentwood
- Stacy Rozansky: Wellshire East, worked for Habitat for Humanity, realtor that helps people buy ADU
- Elaine: U Hills, neighbor contemplating ADU, regularly attends AC mtgs
- Mark Orrs: president Hampden Heights NA
- Lynn: Harvey Park South
- Bill James: commercial real estate appraiser
- Emily Walker: president of U Hills NA

Notes:

- Josh provided an overview of the project.
- Elaine: are we looking at spot rezonings for individual rezonings? J: legislative rezonings are being applied to entire neighborhoods, but city is trying to implement Blueprint recommendation to remove barriers to ADUs
- Elaine: is Blueprint Denver being revised as it has policies that are exclusionary to ADUs with minimum lot sizes and Applying Low Residential? J: Blueprint is our citywide policy guidance and recommends allowing ADUs throughout city; Abe: this project won't expand where ADUs are allowed, but focuses on barriers
- Elaine: all neighborhoods should have a small area plan; spot zoning is a subjective process; this project is huge and we need to understand the uniqueness of neighborhoods before making global recommendations
- Donna: in our Advisory Committee mtgs, we've said we don't want cookie cutter rules and are considering allowances that vary based on neighborhood; called out discrepancy between 400 permitted ADUs vs. assessor data w/ ~1100 ADUs; J: the discrepancy represents illegal ADUs and we're not sure what these structures actually are
- Josh presented aerials and images of suburban context and talked about differences between garages and ADUs and their impacts on privacy and proximity
- Stacy Schafer: corner lots and the images shown don't represent the conditions in her neighborhood and she shared an image of a curvilinear street w/ no alley; she has a diagonal house that looks onto neighbor's lot where an ADU application is pending and the ADU standards should address unique circumstances; Abe: this is why we want to hear from you, to help us identify what's appropriate
- Donna Wickham: people have concerns regarding shade, height, etc and there should be differences among neighborhood contexts, like a 15' tall building more like a tiny house and there should be rules limiting a huge home from peering into someone's bedroom; J: the rules will be different based on contexts

- Stacy Rozansky: isn't there a rule that if you keep one wall of a garage, you can convert into ADU; J: no, not today
- Stacy R: maybe you could create some privacy w/ plants if you increased the setback; J: we're considering increasing the rear setback from 5' to 7'
- Abe: in the unique situation described earlier where a home faces a proposed ADU, would a greater setback or reduced height help
- Donna Wickham: attended community meeting where the unique situation was discussed and nobody talked about the options to making that ADU better; Abe: that's what we're trying to do here, change the rules to reduce the impacts of ADUs
- Stacy Schafer: a one-story building would be much better for ice, privacy, etc. and a deeper setback would help; waivers from lot size shouldn't be allowed
- Emily Walker: we should try to stay to one story on the back of the lot; when there are curvy streets and 1960 homes positioned diagonally on the property, maybe ADUs should be attached; which zones require shorter buildings in the rear of the lot? Abe: all zones except suburban
- Elaine: I think a single story is most appropriate in the suburban context; along Eastman St, you can see 2-story ADUs on top of garages;
- Donna Wickham: there are lots where a 2-story ADU isn't going to impact anyone while it's very impactful in other areas; Abe: we can look at how we would quantify when 2 stories would be okay
- Mark Orrs: we should error on the side of caution and create a policy that would be okay everywhere
- Josh presented a model and walked through some different scenarios, including one- and two-story ADUs and different setback depths
- Donna Wickham: varying setback depth doesn't make a difference
- Emily Walker: the height makes a much bigger difference than the setback
- Donna Wickham: what about window placement and configuration to avoid having ADUs look onto neighbors like only allowing transom windows; Josh: we don't regulate windows anywhere else in the code and don't want to conflict with building code regulations
- Lynn: regarding parking, that's my main issue and in southwest Denver we have carports and I could imagine someone trying to turn their carport into an ADU; we already have multiple cars parked on lots so how are we regulating parking; J: we don't require parking for single-unit dwellings and we're not going to require off-street parking for ADUs