



**TO:** Denver Planning Board  
**FROM:** Francisca Penafiel, Associate City Planner  
**DATE:** September 8, 2021  
**RE:** Official Zoning Map Amendment Application #2021I-000143

### Staff Report and Recommendation

Based on the criteria for review in the Denver Zoning Code, Staff recommends approval for Application #2021I-00143.

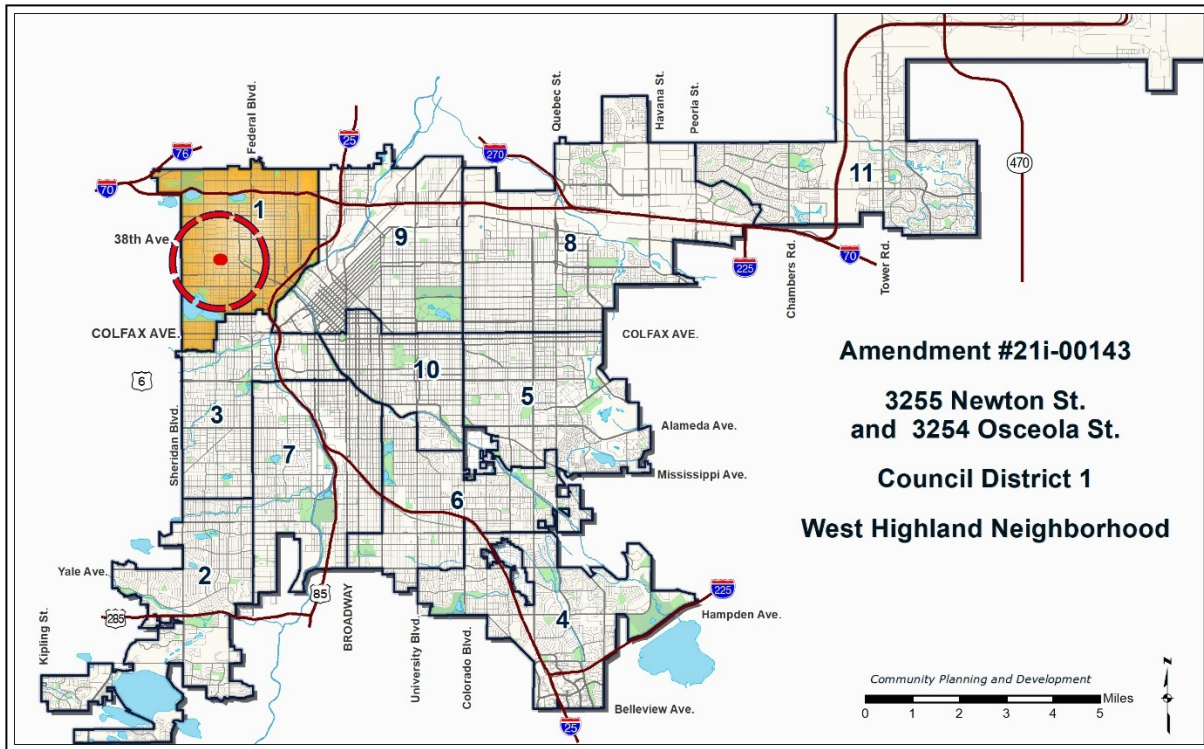
### Request for Rezoning

Address:	3255 North Newton Street & 3254 North Osceola Street
Neighborhood/Council District:	West Highland / Council District 1 – Amanda Sandoval
RNOs:	Inter-Neighborhood cooperation (INC), Denver for All, West Highland Neighborhood Association, District 1 Neighborhood Coalition, Inc
Area of Property:	6,250 + 6,870 = 13,120 square feet or 0.3 acres
Current Zoning:	U-SU-B
Proposed Zoning:	U-SU-B1
Property Owner(s):	Alex Lafleur, Timothy Hughes & Jessica Miranda Hughes
Owner Representative:	Alex Lafleur

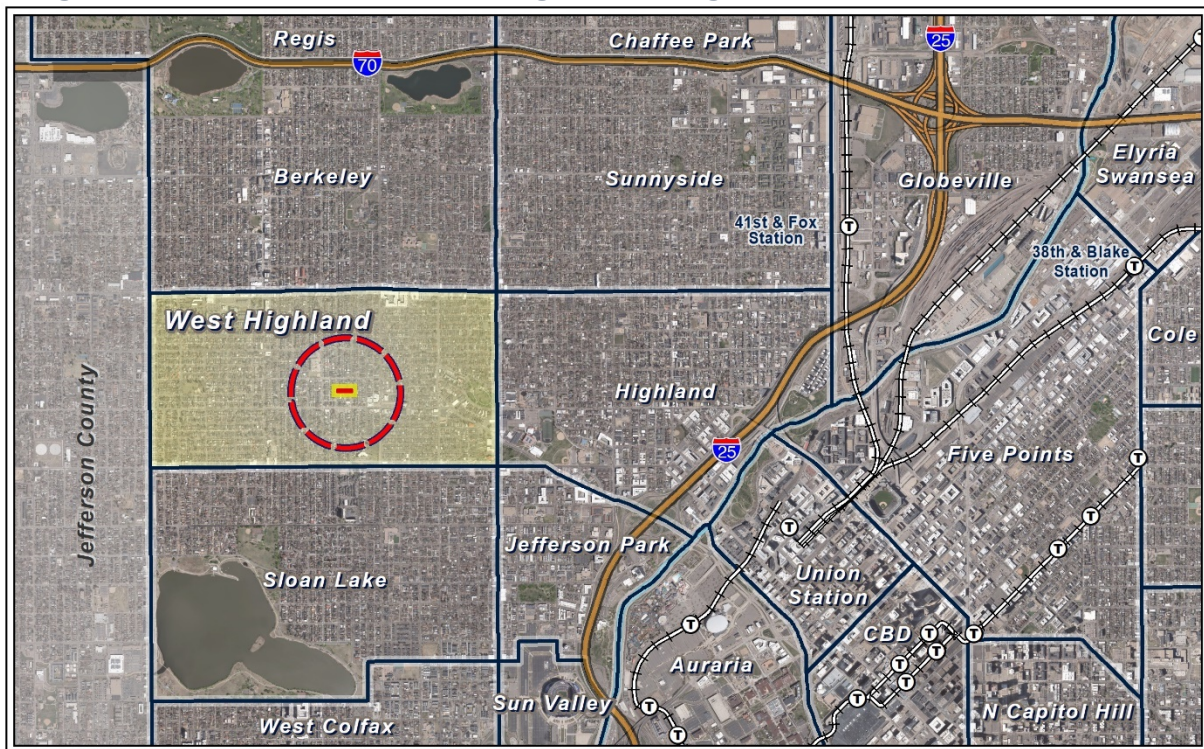
### Summary of Rezoning Request

- These two properties submitted a joint application for rezoning given the similarities of the sites. The applicants were made aware of the benefits and risks of bundling the sites into one application. While it would save them time and money, if one of the subject properties requesting to be rezoned was denied, the other property rezoning would also be denied.
- The subject properties are located on opposite sides of the alley between North Newton Street and North Osceola Street. Both of the properties contain a single-unit residence: the property located on North Newton Street was built in 1906 and the property located in North Osceola Street was built in 1916.
- The property owners are proposing to rezone the properties to allow for an accessory dwelling unit on each property.
- The proposed U-SU-B1, Urbane, Single-Unit, B1 (4,500 square feet minimum zone lot size allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs)), zone district is intended for use in the Urban Neighborhood Context which is characterized by single-unit and two-unit uses. Single-unit residential uses are typically located along local and arterial streets and structures are usually the Urban House building form. The maximum height of the Urban House building form is 30 to 35 feet for the front 65% of the zone lot, 17 to 19 feet in the rear 35% of the zone lot. The Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit form can be a maximum height of 24 feet. Further details of the requested zone district can be found in the proposed zone district section of the staff report (below) and in Article 5 of the Denver Zoning Code (DZC).

### City Location



### Neighborhood Location – West Highland Neighborhood





### Existing Context

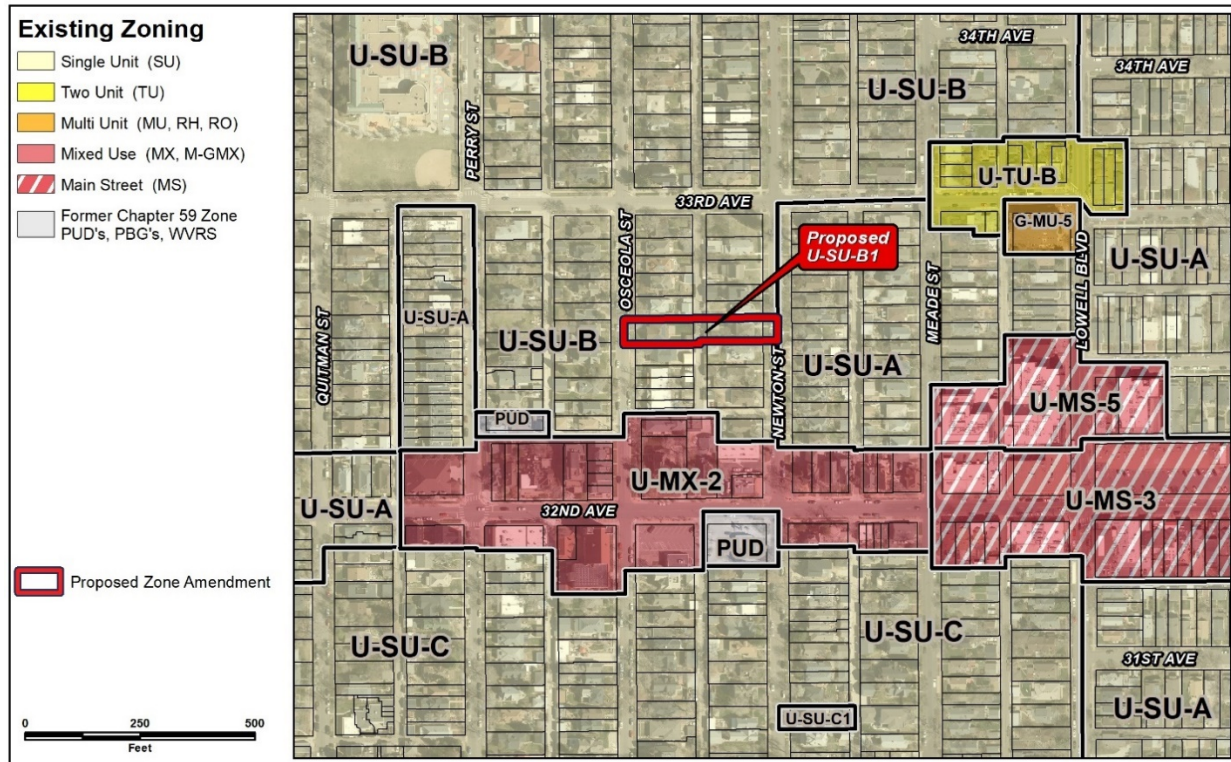


The subject properties are in the West Highland neighborhood, which is characterized primarily by single-unit and two-unit residential uses with some commercial/retail uses along West 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Generally, there is a pattern of rectangular blocks in a street grid pattern with alley access. The subject properties are located between West 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> avenues, and between North Osceola Street and North Newton Street. The properties are located half a block north from West 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue where the RTD bus route 32 travels. There is a shared roadway on North Perry Street, one block to the west, and a neighborhood bikeway on West 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a block and a half north of the properties.

The following table summarizes the existing context proximate to the properties:

	Existing Zoning	Existing Land Use	Existing Building Form/Scale	Existing Block, Lot, Street Pattern
Newton Street Site	U-SU-B	Single-unit Residential	2-story House with detached garage and alley access	Generally regular grid of streets. Block sizes and shapes are consistent and rectangular. Detached sidewalks with tree lawns and existing alleys. Garages and on-street vehicle parking.
Osceola Street Site	U-SU-B	Single-unit Residential	1-story brick bungalow with detached 2 car garage and alley access	
North	U-SU-B	Single-unit Residential	1-2 story Houses without detached garages	
South	U-SU-B	Single-unit Residential	1-1.5story Bungalows with alley access	
East	U-SU-A	Single-unit Residential	1.5 -story Houses with detached garages and alley access	
West	U-SU-B	Single-unit Residential	2 story House with garage and alley access	

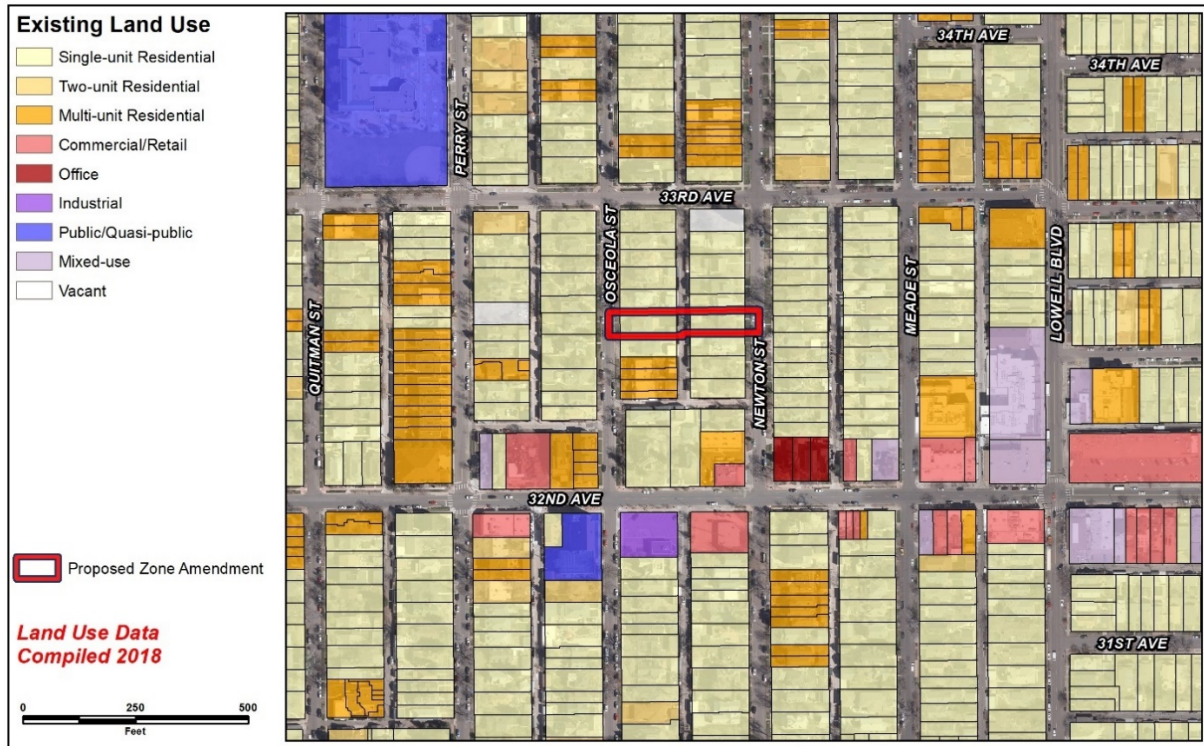
## Existing Zoning



The U-SU-B zone district is a single-unit residential district allowing only the Urban House primary building form on a minimum zone lot of 4,500 square feet. The maximum allowed height is 2.5 stories or 30 to 35 feet in the front 65% of the zone lot, 1 story and 17 to 19 feet in the rear 35% of the zone lot. It allows two accessory structure forms: Detached Garage and Other Detached Accessory Structure with a maximum height of 15 to 17 feet. The intent of the district is to promote and protect residential neighborhoods within the character of the Urban Neighborhood Context.



### Existing Land Use Map



### Existing Building Form and Scale (All images from Google Maps)



View of the subject property at 3255 North Newton Street, looking west.





View of the properties to the north of 3255 North Newton Street, looking west.



View of the property to the south of 3255 North Newton Street, looking west.



View of the subject property at 3255 North Newton Street looking northeast (from the alley).





View of the subject property at 3254 North Osceola Street, looking east.



View of the properties to the north of 3254 North Osceola Street, looking east.



View of the properties to the south of 3254 North Osceola Street, looking east.





View of the subject property at 3254 North Osceola Street looking northwest (from the alley).

### Proposed Zoning

The U-SU-B1 is a single unit zone district with a minimum zone lot size of 4,500 square feet that allows only an Urban House primary building form. A variety of residential and civic uses are permitted as primary uses in the U-SU-B1 district. The Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit building form has a maximum height of 1.5 stories or 24 feet. A bulk plane that raises 10 feet vertically from the side interior or side street zone lot line, then slopes 45 degrees also applies to the DADU building form. This form also allows an exemption from the 37.5% building coverage standard allowing the lesser of 50% or 500 square feet. The subject sites have lot sizes of 6,250 and 6,870 square feet, allowing a maximum building footprint of 864 square feet for the DADU's.

Primary building forms allowed in the existing zone district and the proposed zone district summary:

Design Standards	U-SU-B (Existing)	U-SU-B1 (Proposed)
Primary Building Forms Allowed	Urban House	Urban House
Maximum Height in Stories/Feet, Front 65% of Zone Lot*	2.5 stories / 30 feet	2.5 stories / 30 feet
Maximum Height in Stories/Feet, Rear 35% of Zone Lot*	1 story / 17 feet	1 story / 17 feet
DADU Maximum Height in Stories / Feet	DADUs not permitted	1.5 stories / 24 feet
Zone Lot Size (Min.)	4,500 square feet	4,500 square feet
Zone Lot Width (Min.)	37.5 Feet	37.5 feet
Primary Street Block Sensitive Setback Required / If not (Min.)	Yes / 20 feet	Yes / 20 feet
Side Street Setback (Min.) *	5 feet	5 feet
Side Interior Setback (Min.) *	5 feet	5 feet
Rear Setback, Alley / No Alley (Min.)	12 feet / 20 feet	12 feet / 20 feet
Building Coverage per Zone Lot including all accessory structures (Max.), not including exceptions	37.5 %	37.5%
Detached Accessory Building Forms Allowed	Detached Garage, Other Detached Accessory Structures	Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit, Detached Garage, Other Detached Accessory Structures

\*Based on subject properties with width of 50 feet and 55 feet.



### **Summary of City Agency Referral Comments**

As part of the DZC review process, the rezoning application is referred to potentially affected city agencies and departments for comment. A summary of agency referral responses follows:

**Assessor:** Approved – No Response.

**Asset Management:** Approved – No Comments.

**Development Services-Fire:** Approved – No Comments.

**Denver Public Schools:** Approved – No Response.

**Development Services - Project Coordination:** Approved – No Response.

**Development Services - Transportation:** Approve – No Response.

**Development Services - Wastewater:** Approved – No Response.

**Parks and Recreation:** Approved – No Comments.

**Public Health and Environment:** Approved – No Comments.

**Department of Transportation and Infrastructure – City Surveyor:** Approved – No Comments.



**Public Review Process**

	<b>Date</b>
CPD informational notice of receipt of the rezoning application to all affected members of City Council, registered neighborhood organizations, and property owners:	<b>07/22/2021</b>
Property legally posted for a period of 15 days and CPD written notice of the Planning Board public hearing sent to all affected members of City Council, registered neighborhood organizations, and property owners:	<b>08/31/2021</b>
Planning Board public hearing:	<b>09/15/2021</b>
CPD written notice of the Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting sent to all affected members of City Council and registered neighborhood organizations, at least ten working days before the meeting:	<b>09/07/2021</b>
Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the City Council (tentative):	<b>09/21/2021</b>
Property legally posted for a period of 21 days and CPD notice of the City Council public hearing sent to all affected members of City Council and registered neighborhood organizations (tentative):	<b>10/18/2021</b>
City Council Public Hearing (tentative):	<b>11/08/2021</b>

- **Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs)**  
 To date, staff has not received any letters from Registered Neighborhood Organizations.
  
- **Other Public Comment**  
 To date, staff has received no letters from the public



### **Criteria for Review / Staff Evaluation**

The criteria for review of this rezoning application are found in DZC, Sections 12.4.10.7 and 12.4.10.8, as follows:

#### **DZC Section 12.4.10.7**

1. Consistency with Adopted Plans
2. Uniformity of District Regulations and Restrictions
3. Public Health, Safety and General Welfare

#### **DZC Section 12.4.10.8**

1. Justifying Circumstances
2. Consistency with Neighborhood Context Description, Zone District Purpose and Intent Statements

#### **Consistency with Adopted Plans**

The following adopted plans apply to this application:

- Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040 (2019)
- Blueprint Denver (2019)

#### ***Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040***

The proposed rezoning is consistent with many of the adopted *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* strategies, including:

- Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive Goal 2, Strategy A – Create a greater mix of housing options in every neighborhood for all individuals and families (p. 28).

U-SU-B1 will allow the subject properties to build an additional dwelling unit that is accessory to the primary single-unit dwelling use. Accessory dwelling units can provide housing for individuals or families with different incomes, ages, and needs compatible with the single-unit homes found in the West Highland neighborhood.

- Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods Goal 1, Strategy B – Ensure neighborhoods offer a mix of housing types and services for a diverse population (p. 34).

The proposed rezoning would allow infill development appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood that broadens the range of housing types available.

- Environmentally Resilient Goal 8, Strategy A – Promote infill development where infrastructure and services are already in place (p. 54).

The proposed map amendment will allow an additional housing unit on the site of an existing home where infrastructure and services such as water, stormwater, and streets already exist. This allows Denver to grow responsibly and promotes land conservation.



### **Blueprint Denver**

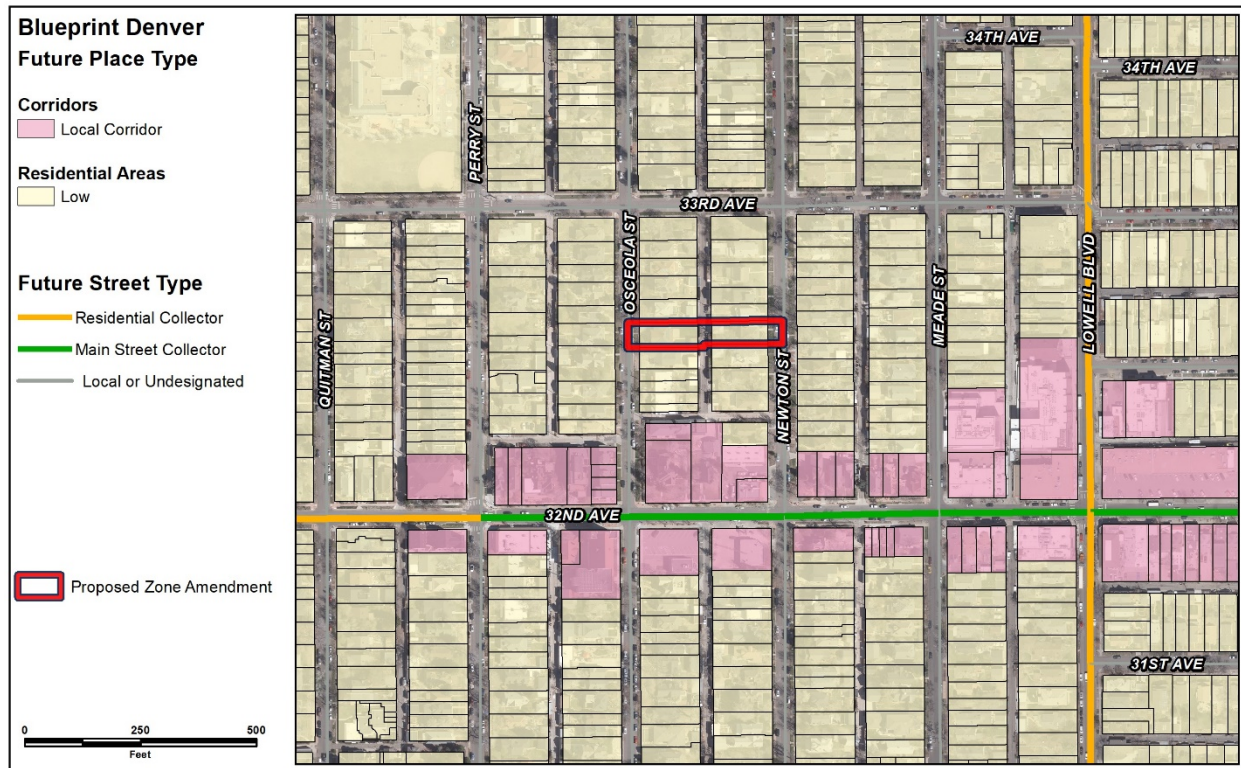
*Blueprint Denver* was adopted in 2019 as a supplement to *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and establishes an integrated framework for the city’s land use and transportation decisions. *Blueprint Denver* identifies the subject properties as part of a Low Residential place within the Urban Neighborhood Context and provides guidance on the future growth strategy for the city.

### **Blueprint Denver Future Neighborhood Context**



In *Blueprint Denver*, future neighborhood contexts are used to help understand differences between land use, built form, and mobility at a high scale, between neighborhoods. The subject sites are shown on the context map as Urban neighborhood context, the description of which is used to guide appropriate zone districts (p. 66). The Urban neighborhood context is described as containing “small multi-unit residential and low-intensity mixed-use buildings typically embedded in single-unit and two-unit residential areas” with grid block patterns and alley access (p. 222). U-SU-B1 is a zone district within the Urban neighborhood context and is “intended to promote and protect residential neighborhoods within the character of the Urban Neighborhood Context” and “the building form standards, design standards and uses work together to promote desirable residential areas” (DZC Section 5.2.2.1). The request U-SU-B1 zone district is consistent with the Blueprint future neighborhood context of Urban because it will promote the residential character by allowing single-unit residential uses with a low-scale accessory dwelling unit that will be compatible with the existing residential area.

### **Blueprint Denver Future Places**



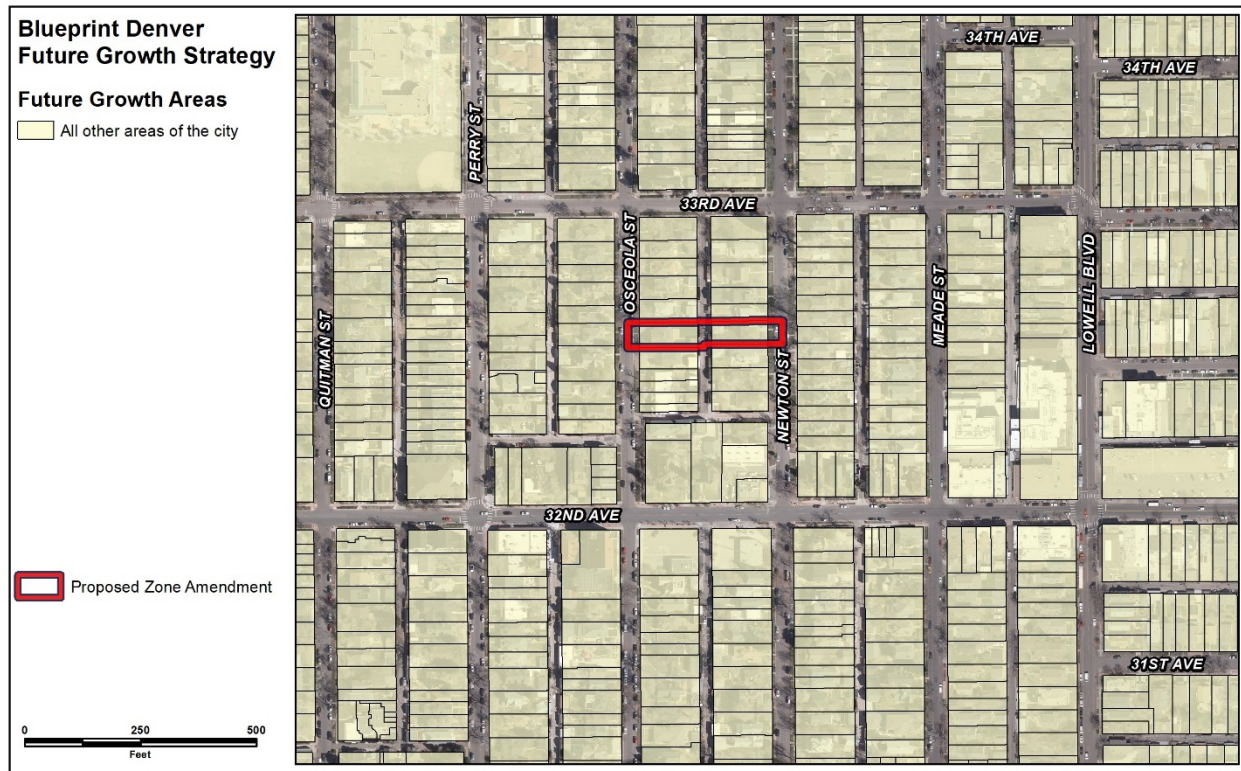
The subject sites are designated within a Low Residential future place type on the *Blueprint Denver* Future Places map. This place type is “predominately single- and two-unit uses on smaller lots. Accessory dwelling units and duplexes are appropriate and can be thoughtfully integrated where compatible,” and “building heights are generally up to 2.5 stories in height” (p. 230). U-SU-B1 is a single unit residential zone district that allows for an additional dwelling unit accessory to a legally established single-unit home, which is consistent with the Low Residential future place type description. It allows the Urban House building form, which has a maximum height of 2.5 stories and DADU building form which has a maximum height of 24 feet.

### **Blueprint Denver Street Types**

In *Blueprint Denver*, Future Street Types work in concert with the Future Places to evaluate the appropriate intensity of adjacent development (p. 67). *Blueprint Denver* classifies North Newton Street and North Osceola Street as Local or Undesignated Future Street Type, which “can vary in their land uses and are found in all neighborhood contexts. They are most often characterized by residential uses.” (p. 161). The proposed U-SU-B1 district is consistent with this street type because it allows for residential uses.



**Blueprint Denver Growth Strategy**



Blueprint Denver’s growth strategy map is a version of the future places map, showing the aspiration for distributing future growth in Denver (p. 51). The subject properties are part of the “All other areas of the city” growth area. These areas anticipate experiencing around 20% of new housing growth and 10% of new employment growth by 2040 (p. 51). These growth areas are “mostly residential areas with embedded local centers and corridors, [that] take a smaller amount of growth intended to strengthen the existing character of our neighborhoods” (p. 49). The proposed map amendment to U-SU-B1 will allow for low-intensity growth to the number of households in this area by allowing the development of a detached accessory dwelling unit on each zone lot.

**Uniformity of District Regulations and Restrictions**

The proposed rezoning to U-SU-B1 will result in the uniform application of zone district building form, use and design regulations.

## **Public Health, Safety and General Welfare**

The proposed official map amendment furthers the public health, safety, and general welfare of the city through implementation of the city's adopted land use plan which recommends "the expansion of accessory dwelling units throughout all residential areas" (p. 84). The proposed rezoning would also provide the benefit of two additional housing units that are compatibly integrated into the surrounding neighborhood.

## **Justifying Circumstance**

The application identifies the adoption of *Blueprint Denver* as the Justifying Circumstance under DZC Section 12.4.10.8.A.4, "Since the date of the approval of the existing Zone District, there has been a change to such as degree that the proposed rezoning is in the public interest. Such a change may include: Changed or changing conditions in a particular area, or in the city generally; or a city adopted plan; or that the city adopted the Denver Zoning Code and the property retained Former Chapter 59 zoning."

Recent physical changes within proximity to the subject sites include new streetscaping improvements along 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that prioritize pedestrians and increase safety along the corridor. Other changes include the construction of new multi-unit residential projects at Meade Street and Lowell Boulevard near the intersection with West 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. These changes demonstrate the transition from a low intensity residential neighborhood to a higher intensity residential and mixed-use neighborhood where residential uses are compatible, appropriate and complementary to existing uses.

Also, *Blueprint Denver* specifically recommends the city diversify housing choice through the expansion of accessory dwelling units throughout all residential areas. The plan was adopted after the date of approval of the existing zone districts. Therefore, these are appropriate justifying circumstances for the proposed rezoning.

## **Consistency with Neighborhood Context Description, Zone District Purpose and Intent Statement**

The requested U-SU-B1 zone district is within the Urban Neighborhood Context. The neighborhood context is "primarily characterized by single-unit and two-unit residential uses" and "single-unit residential structures are typically the Urban House building form" (DZC, Division 5.1). These areas consist of "regular pattern of block shapes" and "a consistent presence of alleys" (DZC, Division 5.1). The West Highland neighborhood consists of mostly single and two-unit residential uses in rectangular blocks with alley access. The proposed rezoning to U-SU-B1 is consistent with the neighborhood context description.

The general purpose of residential zone districts in this context is to promote and protect residential neighborhoods within the character of the Urban Neighborhood Context (DZC Section 5.2.2.1). The building form standards, design standards, and uses work together to promote desirable residential



areas. Common residential characteristics are recognized but variation is accommodated. The proposed U-SU-B1 district is consistent with the context description and the zone district general purpose because it will help preserve the existing single-unit use, form, and streetscape of the immediate area while allowing small-scale ADUs in rear yards.

The specific intent of the U-SU-B1 zone district is “a single unit district allowing urban houses and detached accessory dwelling units with a minimum zone lot area of 4,500 square feet. Setbacks and lot coverage standards accommodate front and side yards similar to U-SU-B but allowing a detached accessory dwelling unit building form in the rear yard” (DZC Section 5.2.2.2.E.) The subject sites are in areas where urban houses and lots ranging from 50 feet to 55 feet are common. The site at 3255 North Newton Street is 6,250 square feet with a width of 50 feet, and the site at 3254 North Osceola Street is 6,870 square feet with a width of 55 feet. The adopted plan direction recommends allowing detached accessory dwelling units. Therefore, rezoning this site would be consistent with the specific intent of the zone district.

## **Attachments**

1. Application