

# ADUS IN DENVER

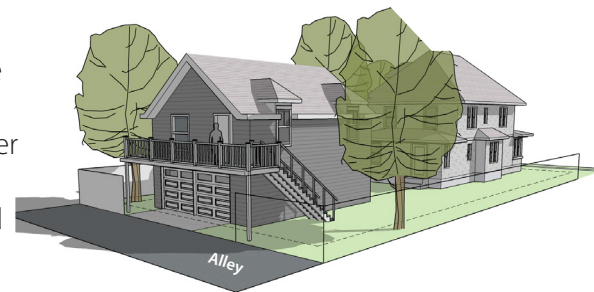
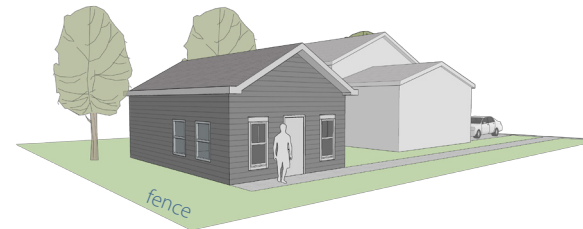
## RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

Denver's population has grown, and we need to make it easier to provide a range of housing options that fit in with existing neighborhoods. Accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, are self-contained, smaller living spaces that are an extension of an existing property. The ADUs in Denver project builds on adopted city policy to evaluate how ADUs are designed, how they fit in with different types of neighborhoods, and how updates to the zoning code may reduce barriers to creating ADUs. The project will **not** rezone any properties.

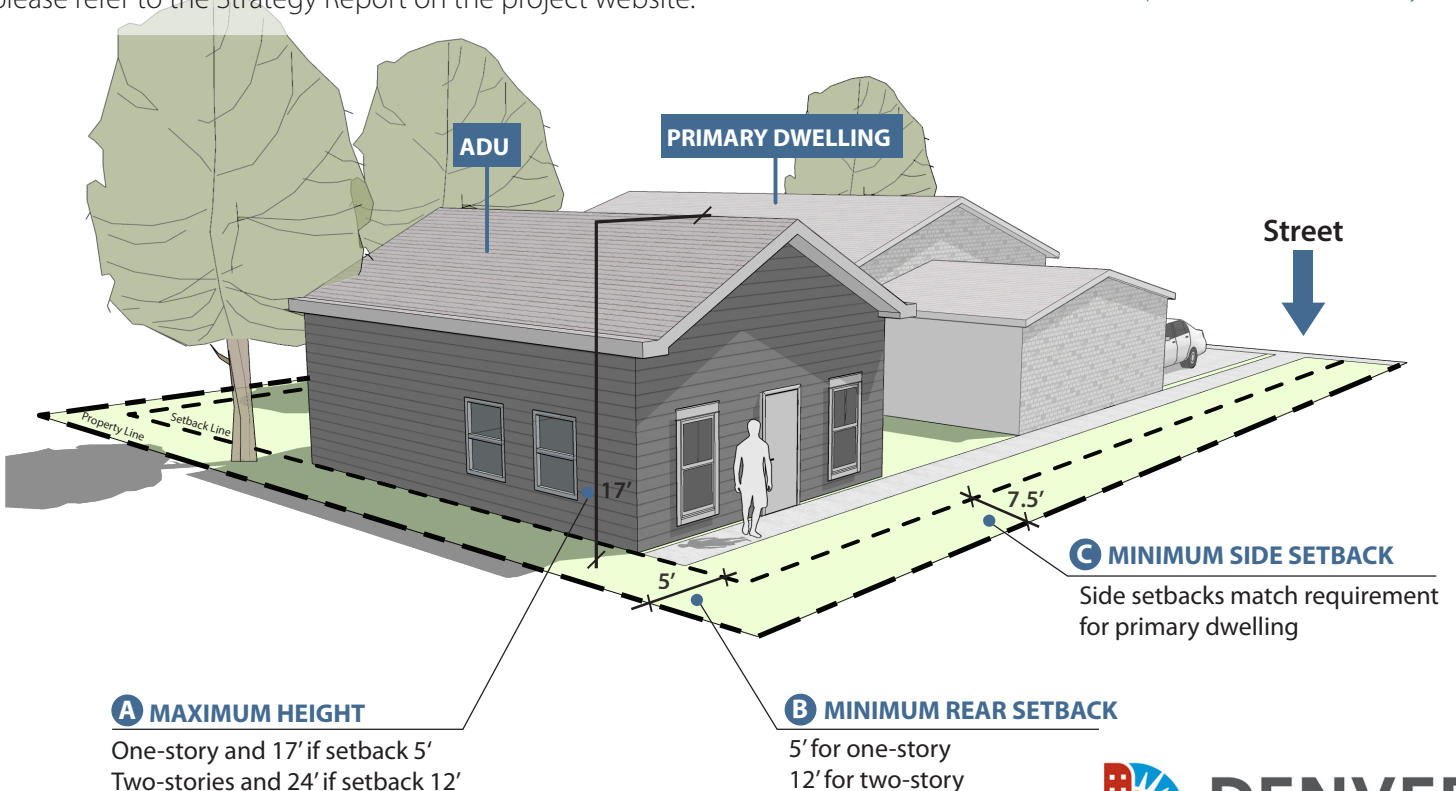
After a year of work with an Advisory Committee, focus groups, City Council members, and the public through surveys and open houses, the city has released recommendations to update the zoning code to allow more flexibility in the design of ADUs and make ADUs more responsive to different neighborhood contexts.

The recommendations for Urban and Urban Edge districts (zone districts U- or E-) would make it easier and less expensive to build one-story ADUs and to convert existing structures like garages. Detached ADUs on lots without alleys in Urban Edge districts (E- zone districts) would have increased setbacks to protect neighbor privacy, reflecting focus group feedback of residents in these neighborhoods. In Suburban districts (S- zone districts), the recommendations also respond to focus group feedback by requiring one-story ADUs with greater setbacks from neighboring properties. Through simple updates like these, the city will address a number of neighborhood concerns around ADU design and provide homeowners more flexibility for lower-cost ADU options, like reusing older, single-story detached garages.

These recommendations are summarized in the table on the next page and have informed the drafting of a proposed text amendment to the Denver Zoning Code. For more details and graphic diagrams of these recommendations, please refer to the Strategy Report on the project website.



ADU requirements would be different for Suburban (top), Urban (middle) and Urban Edge (bottom) zone districts. The Urban Edge illustration below shows requirements for a 7,500 square foot lot with no alley.



### A) MAXIMUM HEIGHT

One-story and 17' if setback 5'  
Two-stories and 24' if setback 12'

### B) MINIMUM REAR SETBACK

5' for one-story  
12' for two-story

### C) MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK

Side setbacks match requirement for primary dwelling

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**DENVER**  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
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# DRAFT DENVER ZONING CODE RECOMMENDATIONS: AT A GLANCE

Neighborhood Context	Existing	Suburban (S-)	Urban Edge (E-)	Urban (U-)
<b>Form Standards:</b>				
<b>A</b> Height (in Stories/feet)	1.5 / 24'	1 / 17' or 2/24' per rear setback distance	Reduced to 1 / 17' or Increased to 2 / 24' per rear setback distance	Increased to 2 / 24'
Bulk-Plane (Vertical Height at Side Lot Line)	10'	10'	Increased to 12' on lots 40' or less in width	Increased to 12' on lots 40' or less in width
<b>B</b> Rear Setback Distance	5'	10' for one-story ADUs or 20' for two-story ADUs	Increased to 12' for two-story ADUs with no alley	Removed if no garage door
<b>C</b> Side Setback Distance	Lots 30' wide or less: 3' Lots greater than 30' wide: 5'	Same as required setback for the primary structure	Same as required setback for the primary structure	Same as required setback for the primary structure
Decks and Balconies on a Detached ADU	Not permitted	Not permitted	100sf max allowance when overlooking a public alley	100sf max allowance when overlooking a public alley
Dormer Encroachments	Not permitted	Not permitted	Conditionally allowed to penetrate the Bulk Plan	Conditionally allowed to penetrate the Bulk Plane
Minimum Lot Size Requirement	3,000 - 10,000 sf, per district	N/A	Removed	Removed
Building Coverage Exemption	Not permitted, unless ground floor mostly serves as a garage	Extended to ADUs	Extended to ADUs	Extended to ADUs
<b>Use Standards:</b>				
Maximum Floor Area	On single-unit lots 6,000 sf or less: 650 sf	On single-unit lots 6,000 sf or less: 864 sf*	Increased on single-unit lots 6,000 sf or less to 864 sf*	Increased on single-unit lots 6,000 sf or less to 864 sf*
Maximum Structure Length	36'	N/A	Removed	Removed
Conversions of existing garages	Permitted only if structure meets ADU setback requirements	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
ADUs accessory to two-unit and multi-unit primary uses	Not permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Owner Occupancy of primary or secondary structure in single-unit zone districts	Continue to require owner occupancy in single-unit zone districts	Continue to require owner occupancy in single-unit zone districts with clarification on the definition of ownership		

\* This change is also proposed for Former Chapter 59 Zone Districts that allow ADUs.

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