



TO: Denver Planning Board
FROM: Analiese Hock, Senior City Planner
DATE: March 13, 2018
RE: Denver Zoning Code – The Slot Home Text Amendment #3 to create new and revised zoning standards to address side-by-side residential development, commonly known as Slot Homes.

CPD Recommendation

Based on the review criteria for text amendments stated in the Denver Zoning Code (DZC), Section 12.4.11 (Text Amendment), CPD staff recommends that the Planning Board recommend to the City Council approval of the Slot Home Text Amendment #3 to the Denver Zoning Code.

Summary and Purpose

In recent years, “slot homes” have been constructed in many neighborhoods throughout Denver, resulting in a new development pattern that can detract from the design quality and character of Denver’s neighborhoods. To address the identified problems with slot home development, Community Planning and Development (CPD) initiated a public process concluding with proposed amendments to the Denver Zoning Code.

The proposed Text Amendment creates a new Town House building form and improves the Garden Court and Row House building forms while eliminating the General, Shopfront and Apartment building forms as an option for developments that where a majority of residential dwelling units are constructed side-by-side. These changes are intended to engage the public realm, consider neighborhood character, address human scale, and minimize vehicular and neighbor impacts while ensuring solutions that provides equity, flexibility and predictability. If approved by City Council, the proposed Slot Home Text Amendment #3 will apply significant changes to Mixed Use (MX, MS, RX), Multi Unit (MU, RO), and Row House (RH, TH*) zone districts in the Urban Center (C), General Urban (G), Urban (U), Urban Edge (E) and Industrial (I) neighborhood context with minor changes to the Suburban (S) neighborhood context for purposes of code consistency and formatting.

The following is a high-level summary of the proposed changes:

Mixed Use (MX, MS, RX) Zone Districts		
Town House Building Form (New Building Form)	Shopfront Building Form (Existing Building Form)	General Building Form (Existing Building Form)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require dwelling units located near the street to be oriented to the street Require a porch or a canopy for dwelling units oriented to the street Reduce the maximum building height in feet Limit rooftop and second story decks in certain instances Increase the transparency standard Increase the primary street setback Increase the side setbacks Allow setback encroachments Revise build-to alternatives Reduce minimum driveway dimensions Allow encroachments for parking areas 	<p>Restrict the use of the building form for residential only development with a majority of side-by-side dwelling units.</p>	<p>Restrict the use of the building form for residential only development with a majority of side-by-side dwelling units.</p>
Multi Unit (MU, RO) Zone Districts		
Town House Building Form (New Building Form)	Garden Court Building Form (Existing Building Form)	Apartment Building Form (Existing Building Form)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require dwelling units located near the street to be oriented to the street Require a porch or a canopy for dwelling units oriented to the street Reduce the maximum building height in feet Limit rooftop and second story decks in certain instances Increase the transparency standard Limit the block sensitive setback Increase the side setbacks Allow setback encroachments Revise build-to alternatives Reduce minimum driveway dimensions Allow encroachments for parking areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the maximum building height in feet Revise the building height exceptions Increase pedestrian access standards Limit rooftop and second story decks in certain instances Introduce a transparency standard Increase street facing courtyard width Require residential units on three sides Introduce a landscaping standard Increase the minimum zone lot size and width Limit the block sensitive setback Reduce the minim driveway dimensions Limit vehicle use areas 	<p>Restrict the use of the building form for residential only development with a majority of side-by-side dwelling units.</p>
Row House (RH, TH*) Zone Districts		
Row House Building Form (Existing Building Form)	Garden Court Building Form (Existing Building Form)	Town House Building Form (Existing Building Form)
<p>Require all dwelling units to be oriented to the street</p>	<p>Eliminate the Garden Court building from the Row House zone districts</p>	<p>*Change the town house building form in TH zone districts to the row house building form and change the Town House (TH) zone district naming convention to Row House (RH) i.e. E-TH-2.5 will now be E-RH-2.5</p>

For a more details, please see the attached summary and redlined document.

Public Process

Below is a summary of the public process for the proposed amendments.

August 23, 2016	CPD News Release announcing Slot Home Evaluation and Text Amendment Project
January 10, 2017	Task Force Meeting #1: Focused on the role of the task force, discussed the initial problem statement
February 8, 2017	Task Force Meeting #2: Toured different neighborhoods where slot home development occurs to refine the problem statement and develop the criteria for successful solutions
March 8, 2018	Community Open House #1 at Scheitler Recreation Center: Over 70 community members attended to discuss the problems associated with slot home development
March 16, 2017	Task Force Meeting #3: Finalized the problem statement in response to community feedback and began to evaluate zoning tools to address the problem statement
April 6, 2017	Release the final Problem Identification Report
May 3, 2017	Planning Board Informational Item: Presented the project scope and problem statement
May 4, 2017	RNO Presentation: Curtis Park Neighbors (CPN)
May 23, 2017	Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee: Presented the project scope and problem statement
April 12, 2017	Task Force Meeting #4: Explore additional tools to apply to slot home development
April 16, 2017	RNO Presentation: Jefferson Park United Neighbors (JPUN) Land Use Committee
June 8, 2017	Task Force Meeting #5: Review and confirm recommended tools for Mixed Use zone districts
July 20, 2017	Task Force Meeting #6: Review and confirm recommended tools for Multi Unit and zone districts
August 24, 2017	Task Force Meeting #7: Review and confirm recommended tools for Row House zone districts
September 7, 2017	Community Open House #2 at the Colorado Health Foundation: Over 40 community members attended the meeting to review and provide feedback on the draft strategy report
October 19, 2017	Task Force Meeting #8: Review approach for effective date and revise draft strategy in response to external testing and community comments
November 1, 2017	Planning Board Informational Item: Presentation on the draft strategies
November 16, 2017	Task Force Meeting #9: Confirm the strategy and finalize the strategy report
November 28, 2017	LUTI Informational Item: Presentation on the draft strategies with discussion about the implementation approach
November 29, 2017	Final Strategy Report Released
December 12, 2017	RNO Presentation: Highlands United Neighbors Inc (HUNI)
December 14, 2017	RNO Presentation: Sunnyside United Neighbors Inc (SUNI)
January 9, 2018	RNO Presentation: West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WECAN)
January 9, 2018	RNO Presentation: West Highland Neighborhood Association (WHNA)

January 23, 2018	Task Force Meeting #10: Review the proposed redlines implementing the strategy report
January 24, 2018	RNO Presentation: Cherry Creek Steering Committee
January 27, 2018	RNO Presentation: Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation Zoning and Planning Committee (INC ZAP)
January 29, 2018	The draft DZC text amendment were posted to the CPD website for public and City agency review. Email notice was sent to all Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs).
February 1, 2018	Denver Metro Association of Realtors Presentation (DTC)
February 1, 2018	RNO Presentation: Jefferson Park United Neighbors (JPUN) Land Use Committee
February 20, 2018	RNO Presentation: Platt Park Peoples Association
February 26, 2018	Public Notification was sent for the March 21, 2018 Planning Board Public hearing. Notice was emailed to all RNOs and councilmembers
February 26, 2018	Office Hours: Wellington Webb Building from 2-5:30pm
February 27, 2018	Office Hours: Rodolfo Gonzales Library from 4-7pm
February 28, 2018	Office Hours: Cherry Creek Library from 12:30- 4pm
March 1, 2018	Office Hours: Mile High United Way from 1:30 – 4pm
March 14, 2018	RNO Presentation: Sloan’s Lake Citizen Group
March 21, 2018	Denver Metro Association of Realtors Presentation (Downtown)
March 21, 2018	Planning Board public hearing

For a complete meeting archive including meeting materials, agenda and summary see the attached Slot Home Strategy Report Appendix.

As of the date of this staff report, CPD has received 6 public comment emails.

- One letter is in support for the changes to the Row House Zone Districts.
- One letter is in support for the entire text amendment.
- Four letters do not state explicit support or opposition; however, they highlight some potential refinements to the proposed draft. Comments that are consistent with the strategy report and improve the overall clarity and predictability to the text amendment have been integrated into the Planning Board review draft.

Review Criteria and CPD Staff Evaluation

1. **Text Amendment is Consistent with the City’s Adopted Plans**

The Text Amendment is consistent with the City’s following adopted plans:

- Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000
- Blueprint Denver (2002)

Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000

Altering zoning standards to ensure that new infill development promotes excellent urban design is consistent with the guidance of Comprehensive Plan 2000 as highlighted below:

“Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood; that offers opportunities for increased density and more amenities; and that broadens the variety of compatible uses.” (pg. 60)

“Sustaining excellent urban design requires Denver to use its best legacies to guide the future. While new development need not conform to precise historical or architectural particulars, it must reflect the fine qualities of design and use of materials inherent in Denver’s unique natural setting and urban character. This applies to Downtown, smaller commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial corridors, and both new construction and rehabilitation.” (pg. 89)

“Identify community design and development issues and target specific concerns with appropriate controls and incentives.” (pg. 98)

“Ensure that the Zoning Code reinforces quality urban design.” (pg. 99)

“Ensure that plans for new development areas include traditional urban neighborhoods with well-designed, well-built homes affordable to middle-income households and close to work, shopping and services.” (pg. 117)

“Modify land-use regulations to ensure flexibility to accommodate changing demographics and lifestyles.” (pg. 150)

The Slot Home Text Amendment #3 is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as the proposed changes improve outcomes for infill development in a way that is consistent with the character of the neighborhood while offering opportunities for different housing types that reinforce quality urban design.

Blueprint Denver – 2002

Blueprint Denver recommends various regulatory changes to implement adopted plans and improve compatibility with existing character, including:

- “A change in the language of a zone district is one tool that can improve compatibility of buildings within an Area of Stability” (pg. 124)
- “Development standards regulate building dimensions and orientation to ensure that new development is compatible with its surroundings. Such standards include floor area ratio limits, bulk limits, parking and garage location, height limits, and setbacks.” (pg. 124)

Many of the areas mapped with Multi Unit or Row House zone districts are identified as Areas of Stability. The goal for Areas of Stability is to “identify and maintain the character of an area while accommodating some new development and redevelopment” (pg. 120). Relevant strategies provided on page 25 include:

- Compatibility between existing and new development, design and development standards
- Address edges between Areas of Stability and Areas of Change
- Diversity of housing type, size, and cost
- Uphold the legacy of walkable neighborhoods

Many of the areas mapped with Mixed Use zone districts are identified as Areas of Change. “Areas of Change are parts of the city where new growth or redevelopment can best be accommodated because of transportation choices and opportunities for mixed-use development. Channeling growth to older

industrial areas, districts close to downtown, major arterial corridors, historical trolley routes or existing and planned light rail stops will benefit the City as a whole.” (pg. 19).

Relevant Strategies provided on page 21 include:

- Compatibility between existing and new development
- Address edges between Areas of Stability and Areas of Change
- Pedestrian and transit supportive design and development standards
- Eliminate auto-oriented zoning standards
- Infill and redevelop vacant and underused properties
- Diversity of housing type, size, and cost

The Slot Home Text Amendment #3 is consistent with Blueprint Denver as the proposed changes improve the compatibility between the new and existing neighborhood context while maintaining a diversity of housing types and promoting the public realm.

2. Text Amendment Furthers the Public Health, Safety and Welfare

This text amendment furthers the general public health, safety, and welfare of Denver residents, land owners, and businesses by providing clarity and predictability in the zoning regulations, creating standards that reinforce the desired character of the neighborhood, and by implementing the city’s adopted comprehensive, land use and transportation plans through regulatory changes.

3. Text Amendment Results in Regulations that are Uniform Across the District

This text amendment will result in uniform regulations applicable to all new side-by-side residential projects within each zone district where they are allowed.

Attachments

1. Redline Draft of Slot Home Text Amendment #3 and found online here: www.denvergov.org/slothomes
2. The complete Slot Home Strategy Report and found online here: www.denvergov.org/slothomes
3. 6 public comment emails