



TO: Denver City Council
FROM: Rob Haigh, Senior City Planner
DATE: March 6, 2023
RE: Official Zoning Map Amendment Application #2022I-00175

Staff Report and Recommendation

Based on the criteria for review in the Denver Zoning Code, Staff recommends that Denver City Council Approve Official Map Amendment Application #2022I-00175.

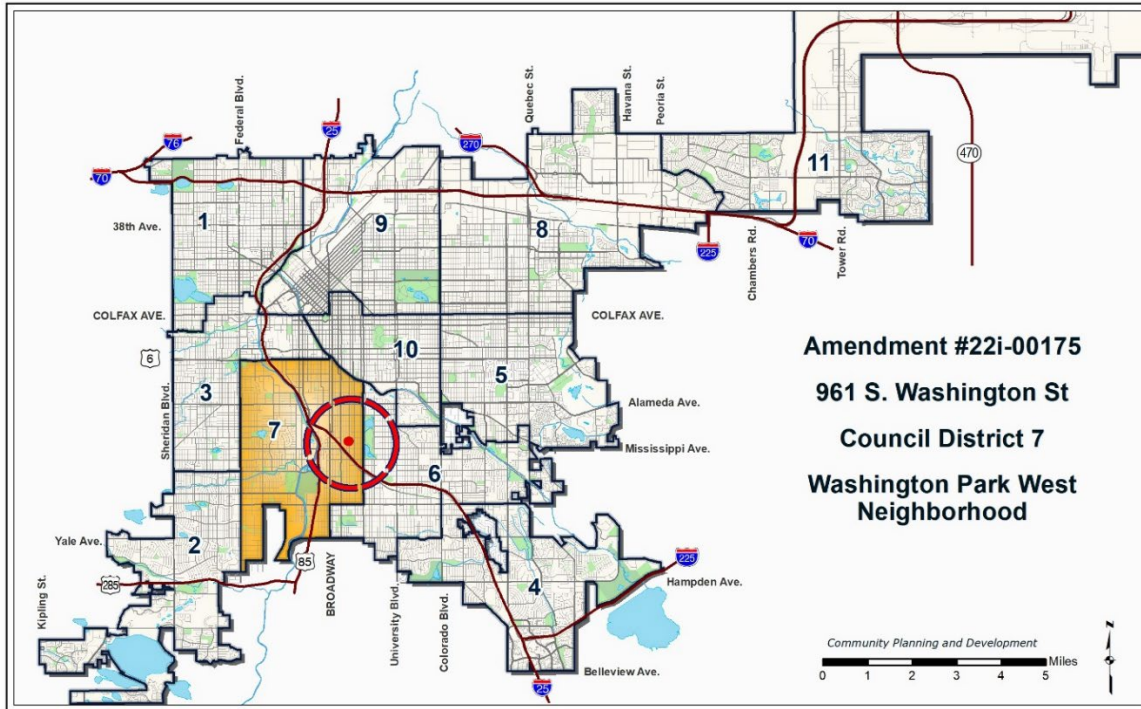
Request for Rezoning

Address:	961 South Washington Street
Neighborhood/Council District:	Washington Park West / Council District 7 – Jolon Clark
RNOs:	West Washington Park Neighborhood Association, Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC), Strong Denver
Area of Property:	6,250 square feet or .14 acres
Current Zoning:	U-SU-B, UO-3
Proposed Zoning:	U-SU-B1, UO-3
Property Owner(s):	Fraser, Robert Trust & Fraser, Barbara Trust
Property Representative:	Ken Cilia

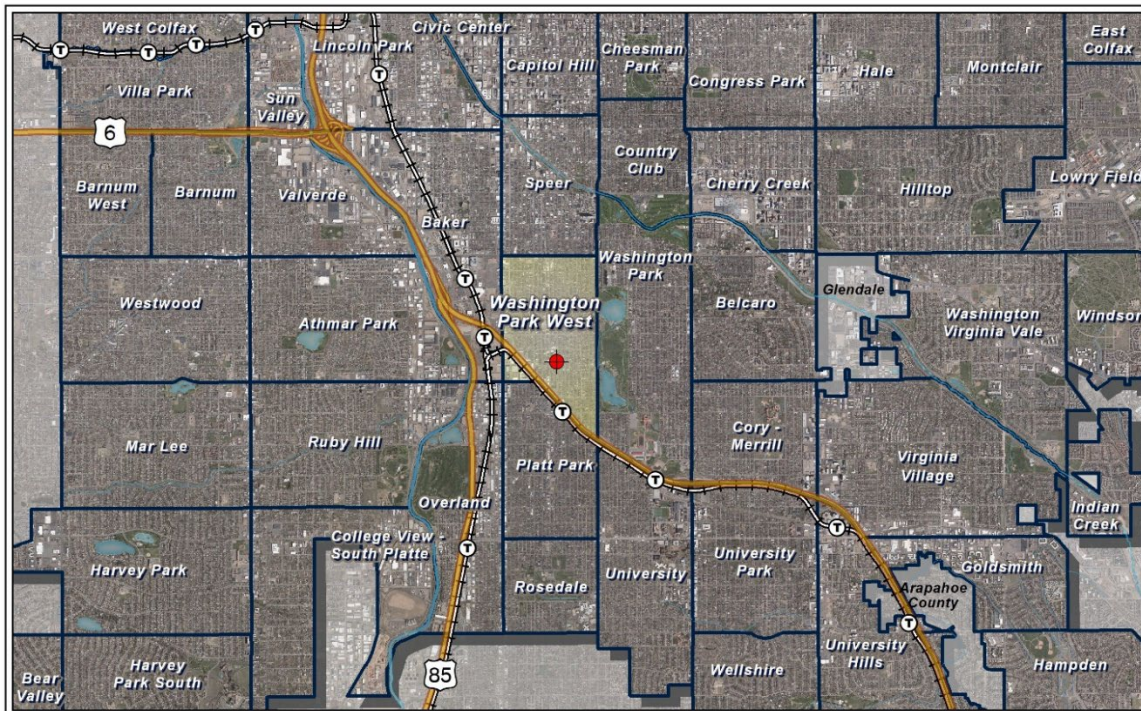
Summary of Rezoning Request

- The subject property contains a single-unit home built in 1890 located between East Tennessee Avenue and East Kentucky Avenue, along South Washington Street.
- The property owner is proposing to rezone the property to a district that would allow an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The proposed U-SU-B1, **U**rbane, **S**ingle-**U**nit, **B1** district allows urban houses and detached accessory dwelling units in the rear yard with a minimum zone lot area of 4,500 square feet. The 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 residential 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 building 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).
- The request also retains the Historic Structure Use Overlay District (UO-3) that currently exists on the subject property. This use overlay district provides limited flexibility by allowing certain commercial uses in existing Historic Structures.

City Location



Neighborhood Location – Washington Park West



Existing Context

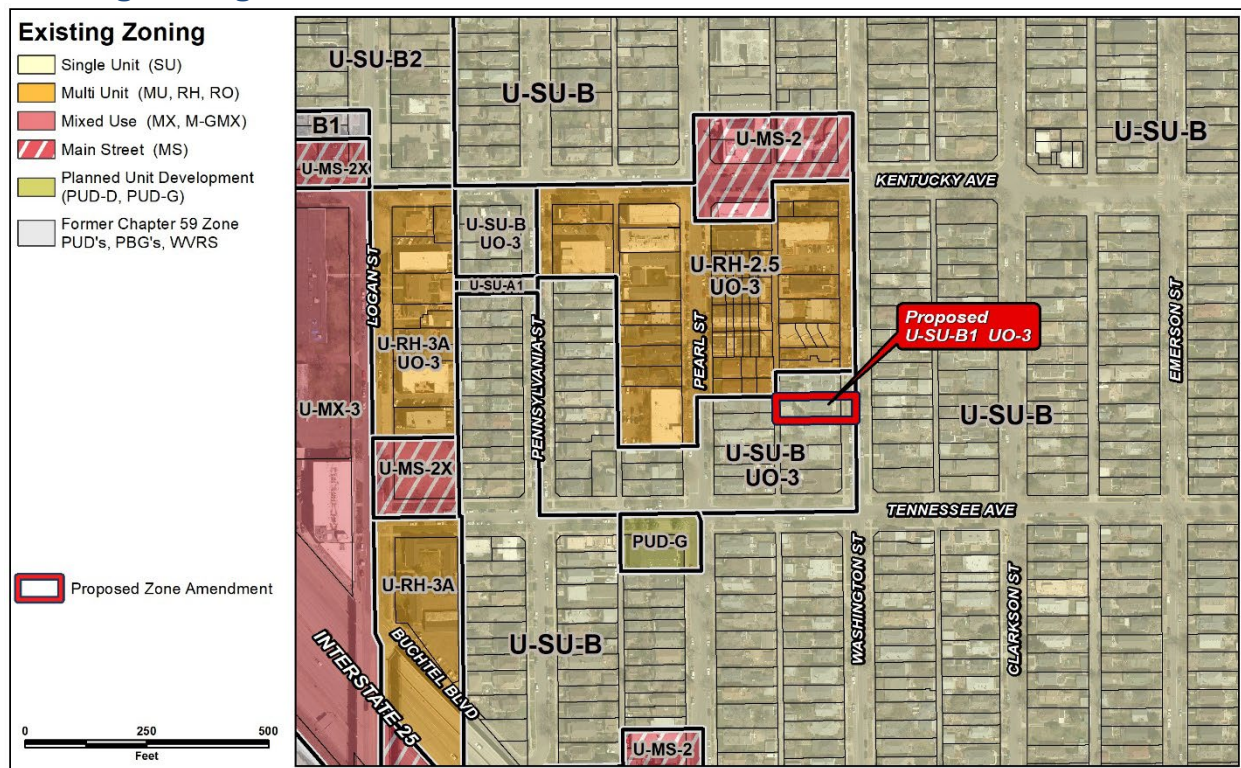


The subject property is in the Washington Park West statistical neighborhood, which is characterized mostly by single-unit residential uses, with interspersed two-unit and multi-unit residential uses, and nodes of neighborhood serving commercial/retail. There is a higher concentration of multi-unit residential uses on the block where the subject property is located. Generally, there is a pattern of rectangular blocks in a street grid pattern with alley access. The subject property is located 5 blocks west of Washington Park and $\frac{3}{4}$ miles north from the Denver South High School campus that serves the neighborhood. The Louisiana/Pearl Light Rail Transit station is located $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of the site and RTD Bus Route 12 runs north-south on Downing Street 5 blocks to the east with 30-minute headways.

The following table summarizes the existing context proximate to the subject site:

	Existing Zoning	Existing Land Use	Existing Building Form/Scale	Existing Block, Lot, Street Pattern
Site	U-SU-B, UO-3	Single-unit Residential	1-story single-unit dwelling with detached garage.	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.
North	U-SU-B, UO-3	Single-unit Residential	2-story single-unit dwelling with detached garage.	
South	U-SU-B, UO-3	Single-unit Residential	2-story single-unit dwelling with detached garage.	
East	U-SU-B	Single-unit Residential	1-story two-unit dwelling with detached garage.	
West	U-SU-B, UO-3	Single-unit Residential	2-story single-unit dwelling with detached garage.	

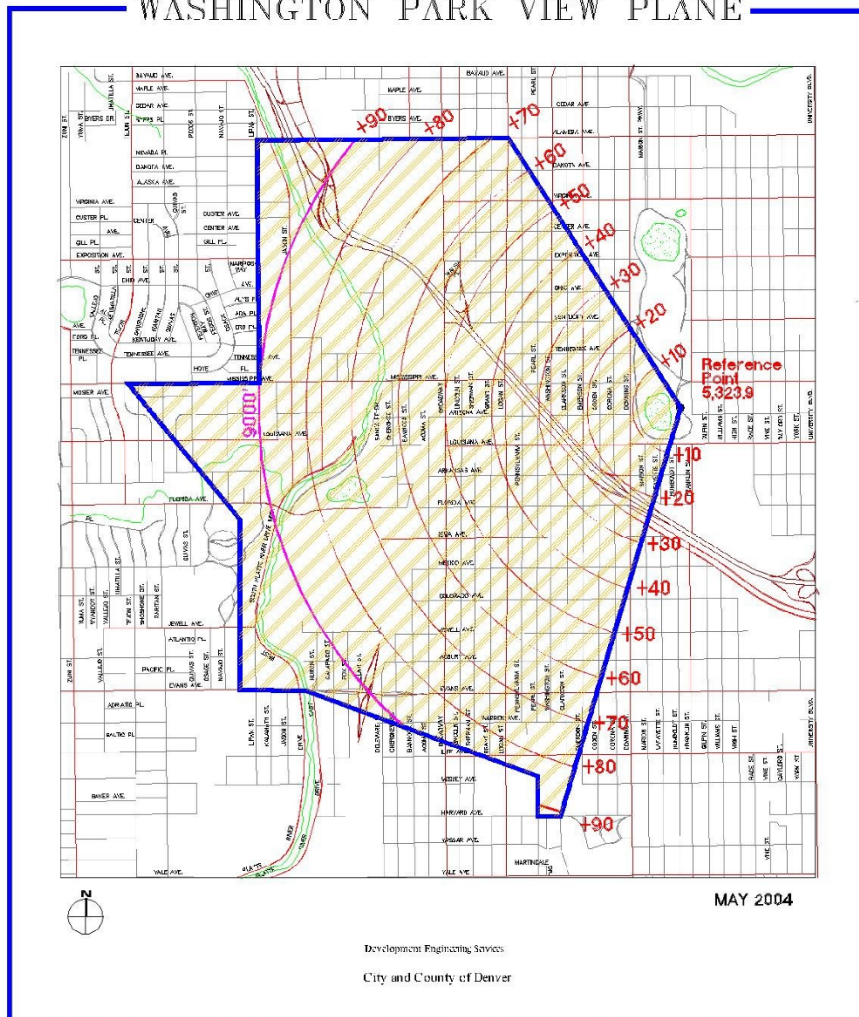
Existing Zoning



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.

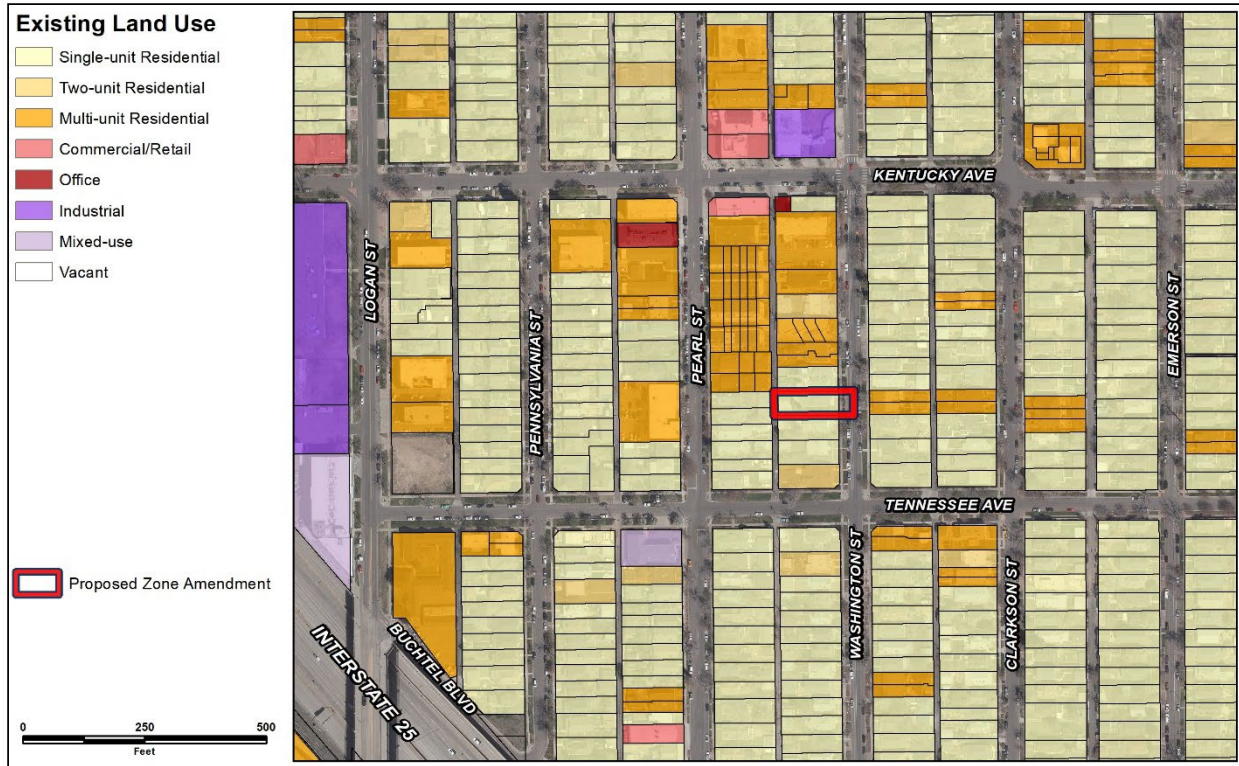
Washington Park View Plane

WASHINGTON PARK VIEW PLANE



The subject property is subject to the Washington Park View Plane as established in Section 10.61.5 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code. The Washington Park View Plan was adopted to ensure the preservation of certain western views from Washington Park and restricts structure heights within the applicable area described by the map above. The subject property is subject to a height restriction of approximately 79 feet. Since this height restriction is higher than the maximum allowed by the existing or proposed underlying zoning, it does not impact the rezoning request.

Existing Land Use Map



Existing Building Form and Scale (all images from Google Maps)



Subject Site - View of the subject property, looking west.



North - View of the properties to the north.



South - View of the properties to the south.



East - View of the properties to the east across South Washington Street.



West - View of the properties to the west (across the alley).

Proposed Zoning

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 district allows the Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit, Detached Garage, and Other Detached Accessory Structures as detached accessory building forms. The Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (DADU) 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 50% of the building footprint of the DADU to be excluded up to a maximum of 500 square feet. At 6,250 square feet, the subject property is more than the 4,500 square feet minimum zone lot size of the requested U-SU-B1.

The building forms allowed in the existing zone district and the proposed zone district are summarized below.

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 / 30-35 feet	2.5 stories / 30-35 feet
Maximum Height in Stories/Feet, Rear 35% of Zone Lot	1 story / 17-19 feet	1 story / 17-19 feet
DADU Maximum Height in Stories/Feet	DADUs not permitted	1.5 stories / 24 feet
Zone Lot (Min.)	4,500 square feet	4,500 square feet
Zone Lot Width (Min.)	35 feet	35 feet
Primary Street Block Sensitive Setback Required / If not	Yes / 20 feet	Yes / 20 feet
Side Street Setback (Min.)*	5 feet	5 feet
Side Interior Setback (Min.)*	5 feet	5 feet
Rear Alley / No Alley	12 feet / 20 feet	12 feet / 20 feet
DADU Rear Setback	DADUs not permitted	5 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 property width of 50 feet

UO-3 Historic Structure Use Overlay

The applicant also proposes to retain the UO-3 Historic Structure Use Overlay District on this site, which would be consistent with the zoning of surrounding properties. The UO-3 district is intended to encourage preservation, protection, adaptive reuse and enhancement of structures designated as City Landmarks, and may only be established in conjunction with an underlying Residential Zone District,

such as the proposed U-SU-B1. The overlay allows three commercial uses (with use limitations) in qualifying Historic Structures:

1. Office, not including dental/medical office or clinic
2. Art studio
3. Bed and breakfast lodging

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 Response.

Denver Public Schools: Approved – No Response.

Development Services - Project Coordination: Approved – No Response.

Development Services - Transportation: Approved – No Response.

Development Services - Wastewater: Approved – No Response.

Parks and Recreation: Approved – No Comments.

Public Health and Environment: Approve Rezoning Only - Will require additional information at Site Plan Review.

Denver Department of Public Health & Environment - Division of Environmental Quality (EQ) does not guarantee approval of any proposed development project at this site by providing a response to this Official Map Amendment Referral Agency Review Request. Future development is subject to existing land use controls and other environmental requirements in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal environmental regulations and statutes. EQ recommends the Property Owner conduct an environmental site assessment to determine the potential presence, nature, and extent of possible contamination on the site and to identify specific cleanup needs associated with future development. EQ may have additional information about localized potential environmental concerns at the site. However, providing such information about a specific site is beyond the scope of these zoning application comments.

Public Works – City Surveyor: Approved – See Comments Below

Recommend adding the quarter section, township, and range to the description. A revised .docx file is attached.

Public Review Process

	Date
CPD informational notice of receipt of the rezoning application to all affected members of City Council, registered neighborhood organizations, and property owners:	11/03/2022
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:	12/19/2022
Planning Board Public Hearing: <i>Forwarding Recommendation of Approval</i>	1/04/2023
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:	1/9/2023
Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the City Council:	1/24/2023
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:	2/13/2023
City Council Public Hearing:	3/06/2023

- **Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs)**
 - To date, staff has not received any letters from RNOs.
- **Other Public Comment**
 - To date, staff has not received any comment letters pertaining to this application.

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

1. Consistency with Adopted Plans

The following adopted plans apply to this application:

- Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040 (2019)
- Blueprint Denver (2019)
- West Washington Park Neighborhood Plan (1991)

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 allows for an additional dwelling unit that is accessory to the primary single-unit dwelling use and introduces a new housing type to a largely single-unit neighborhood. Accessory dwelling units can provide housing for individuals or families with different incomes, ages, and needs compatible with the single-unit homes that characterize most of the Washington Park West 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.

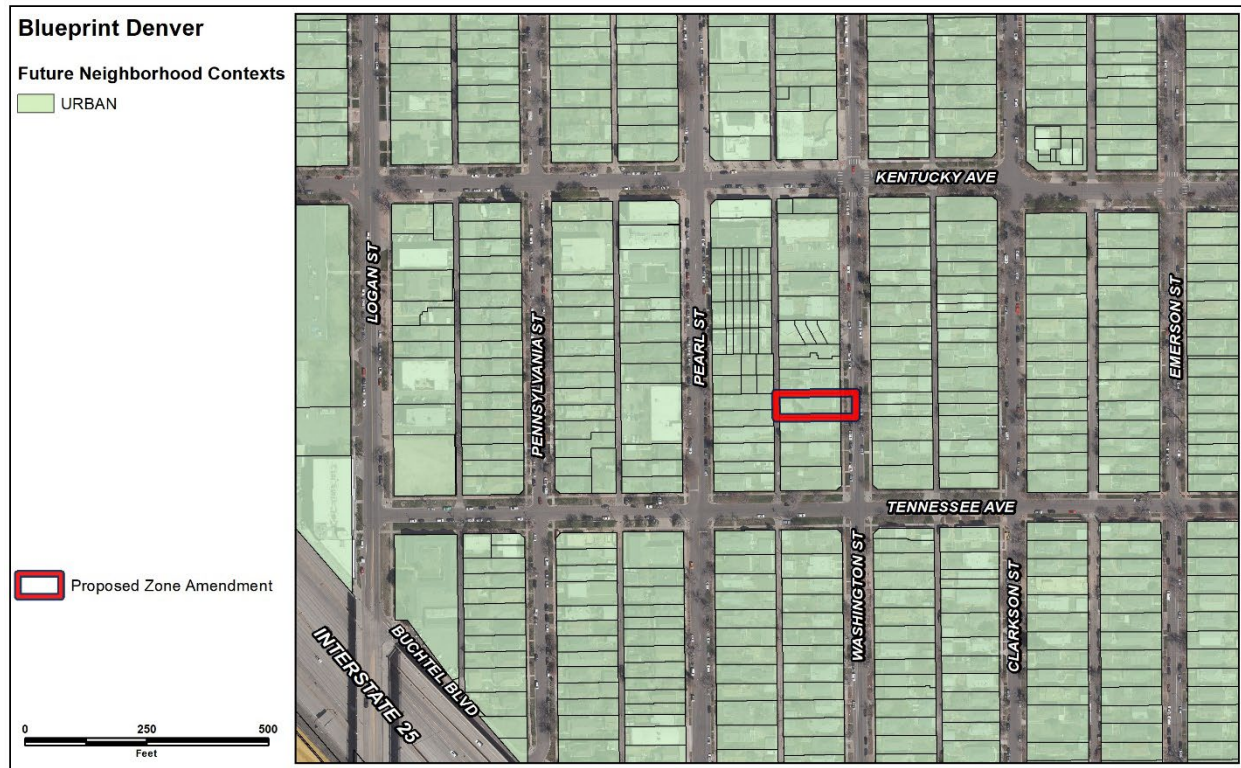
- Environmentally Resilient Goal 8, Strategy A – *Promote infill development where infrastructure and services are already in place* (p. 54).

The proposed map amendment will allow an additional housing unit on the site of an existing single-unit home where infrastructure and services such as electricity, natural gas, sewer, waste collection, 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 property as part of a Low Residential future place within the Urban future neighborhood context and provides guidance on the future growth strategy for the city.

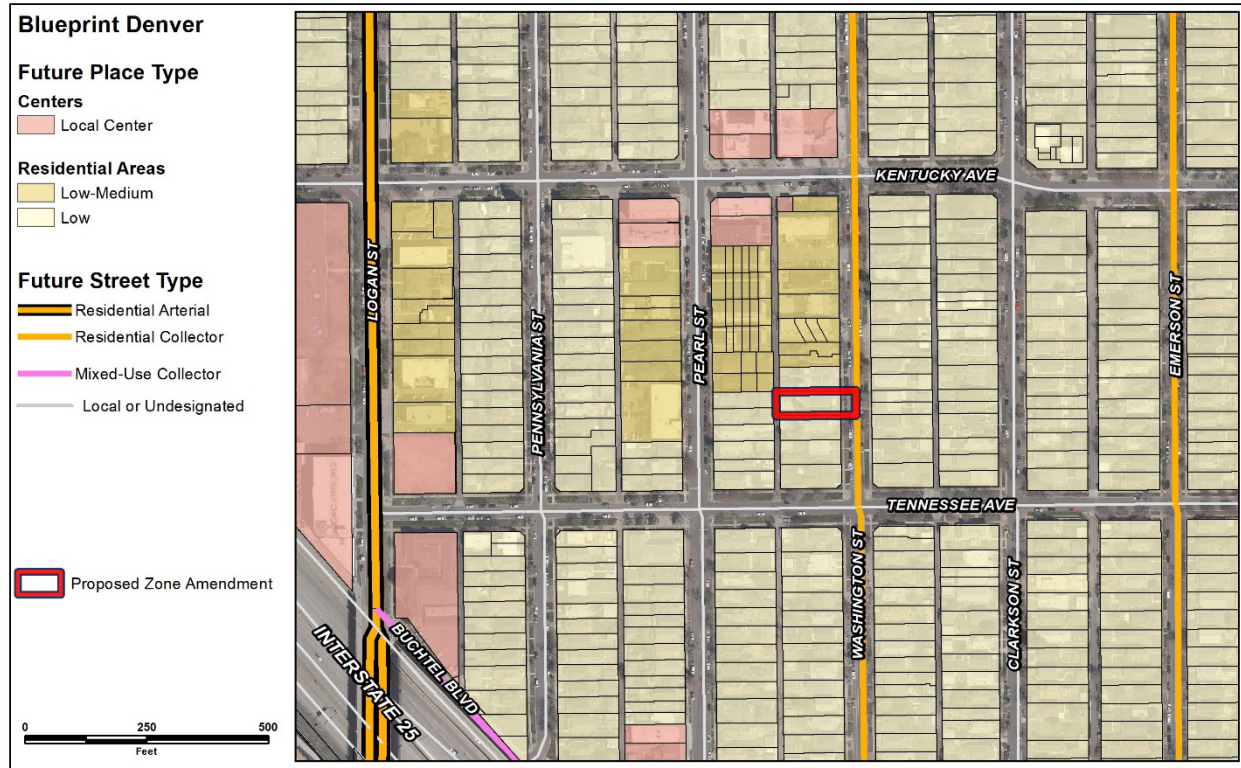
Blueprint Denver Future Neighborhood Context



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 site is 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 in the Denver Zoning Code. The Urban residential zone districts are “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 5.2.2.1). U-SU-B1 is consistent with the *Blueprint Denver* 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 Place

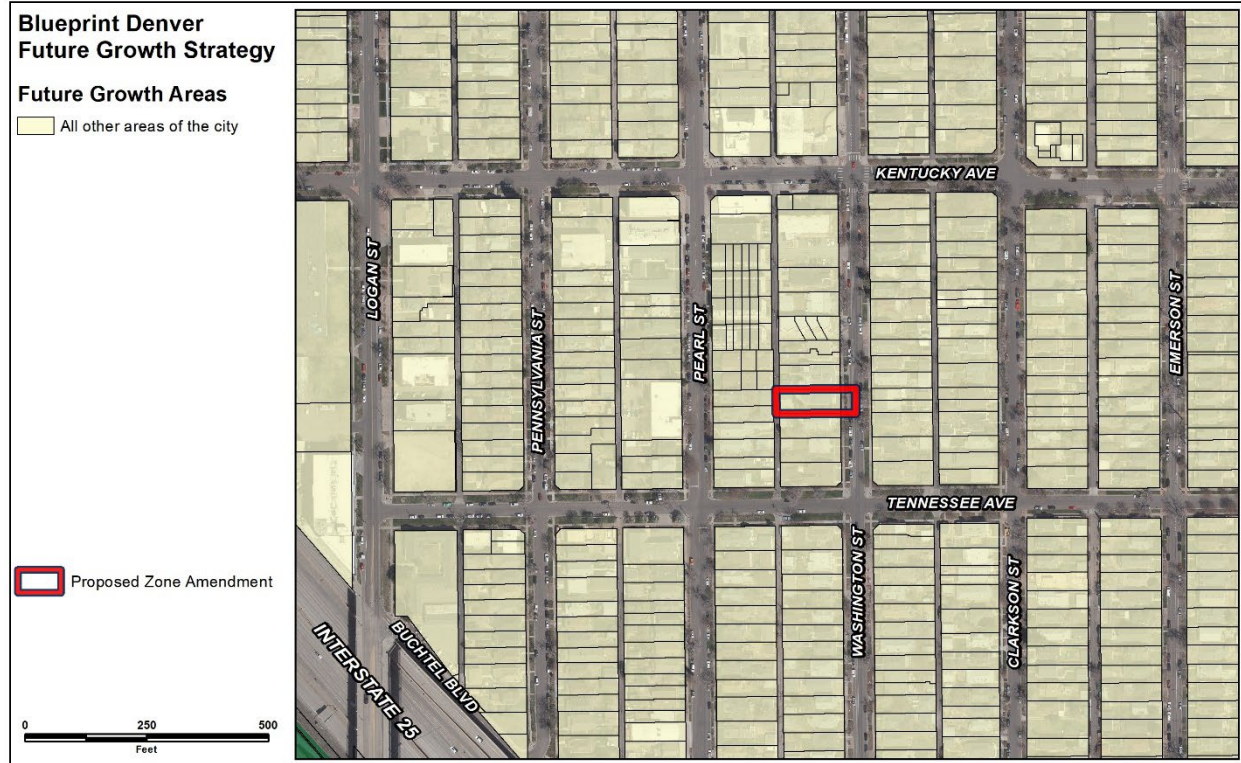


The subject site is designated within a Low Residential future place on the *Blueprint Denver* Future Place map. This place type is “predominately single- and two-unit uses on smaller lots. Accessory dwelling units and duplexes are appropriate and can be thoughtfully integrated where compatible,” and “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 primary single-unit residential use, which is consistent with the Low Residential future place description. It allows the Urban House building form, which has a maximum height of 2.5 stories, also consistent with the Future Place designation.

Blueprint Denver Future Street Types

In *Blueprint Denver*, street types work together with the future place to evaluate the appropriateness of the intensity of the adjacent development (p. 67). *Blueprint Denver* classifies South Washington Street as Residential Collector Future Street Type. As described in *Blueprint Denver*, Collector Streets “collect movement from local streets and convey it to arterial streets.” (p. 155). Additionally, Residential Street Types include “Primarily residential uses, but may also include schools, civic uses, parks, small retail nodes and other similar uses. Buildings on residential streets usually have a modest setback. The depth of the setback varies by neighborhood context” (p.161) The proposed U-SU-B1, UO-3 district is consistent with this description because it allows for primarily 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 property is 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). This growth area is “mostly residential areas with embedded local centers and corridors, 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 low-intensity growth to the number of households in this area by allowing an accessory dwelling unit and is therefore consistent with the growth strategy.

Blueprint Denver Strategies

Blueprint Denver provides additional recommendations related to rezoning to allow for ADUs.

- Policy 4 Strategy E - *A citywide approach to enable ADUs is preferred. Until a holistic approach is in place, individual rezonings to enable ADUs in all residential areas, specifically where proximate to transit, are appropriate. Unless there is a neighborhood plan supporting ADUs, rezonings should be small in area in order to minimize impacts to the surrounding residential area (p. 84).*

In this case, the requested rezoning would enable ADU construction on an individual zone lot in a residential area. The site is proximate to transit, as it is located ½ mile north of a light rail station and 5 blocks west of a bus route with 30-minute headways. This rezoning to an ADU zone district will have

minimal impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and is consistent with *Blueprint Denver* recommendations.

West Washington Park Neighborhood Plan (1991)

This neighborhood plan was adopted in 1991 and is applicable to the subject property. This plan is silent on ADUs specifically, however, the proposed rezoning is consistent with the following Residential Land Use Recommendations:

- **RLU-4:** *Maintain and improve existing residential uses and all historic and architecturally significant structures. New infill housing should be compatible with historic buildings and character... (p.18)*
 - The allowance of ADUs enables property owners to enhance their properties and create additional housing units in the existing historic structure or on the rear 35% of the zone lot. This promotes infill housing that is compatible with the existing historic buildings and character by allowing investment and additional housing units without necessitating the demolition of the existing single unit dwelling.
- **RLU-5:** *Include compatible setbacks, significant buffering, and landscaping in site plans for new moderate density residential development to ensure compatibility with adjacent low-density residential uses (p.18).*
 - The detached ADU building form was developed to specifically to consider the compatibility with the adjacent low-density residential uses and provides for appropriate setbacks between structures. ADUs provide for new moderate density within the primary structure or at the rear 35% of the zone lot, which further ensures that the resulting dwelling units are compatible with adjacent residential uses.

2. Uniformity of District Regulations and Restrictions

The proposed rezoning to U-SU-B1, UO-3 will result in the uniform application of zone district building form, use and design regulations.

3. 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" (*Blueprint Denver* p. 84). The proposed rezoning would also provide the benefit of an additional housing unit that is compatibly integrated into the surrounding neighborhood.

4. Justifying Circumstances

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."

As discussed above, *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 district. Therefore, this is an appropriate justifying circumstance for the proposed rezoning.

5. Consistency with Neighborhood Context Description, Zone District Purpose and Intent Statements

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, Section 5.1.1). This area consists of a “regular pattern of block shapes” and “a consistent presence of alleys” (DZC, Section 5.1.2). The Washington Park West 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.A). “The building form standards, design standards, and uses work together to promote desirable residential areas” (DZC Section 5.2.2.1.B). 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. Blocks typically have a consistent pattern of 37.5-foot-wide lots. 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 site at 961 South Washington Street is 6,250 square feet with a width of 50 feet. Therefore, rezoning this site would be consistent with the specific intent of the zone district.

The applicant has also requested to retain the UO-3 Historic Structure Use Overlay District to remain consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. The intent of the UO-3 is “to encourage preservation, protection, adaptive use, and enhancement of Historic Structures, or otherwise to promote the Landmark Preservation purposes as stated in DRMC Sec. 30-1” (DZC 9.4.4.8.B). The UO-3 may only be established in conjunction with an underlying residential zone district, as is the case with the surrounding neighborhood, containing homes and structures that date to the late 1800s. A residential zone district is proposed for this site, making this proposal consistent with the intent of the UO-3 Historic Structure Use Overlay District.

Attachments

1. Application