



## **City proposes a series of updates to the Denver zoning code text**

*Updated February 10, 2014*

The Denver Community Planning and Development department has proposed a series of updates to the Denver zoning code text to make it more modern, clear and user-friendly. Many of the updates come in direct response to feedback from permit customers and Denver residents. A few highlights of the proposed updates are included below.

In late 2013, Community Planning and Development made available a draft of the amendments for public review and comment, and reached out to the public via community meetings, walk-in office hours, email and web updates, and televised briefings on Denver8. A revised version of the code updates is now available and will be submitted as a proposed ordinance for Denver City Council review; to view it, [click here](#).

### **A Few Highlights of the Code Updates:**

- **Projecting Signs**  
One of the best types of ‘place-making’ signs — signs that hang perpendicularly from a storefront, oriented directly at pedestrians — is only allowed in limited areas of the city, including downtown, Cherry Creek North and the Golden Triangle. In other areas, they require a zoning variance. With this amendment, we are following in the footsteps of other pedestrian-friendly mixed-use areas by proposing that these signs be allowed without a variance. For details, see Public Review Draft – Group 2, Sections 10.10.4 and 10.10.7 thru 10.10.12.
- **Food Preparation as Home Occupation (Home Business):**  
In response to the state’s Cottage Foods Act (which exempts select at-home food preparation businesses from certain state licensing requirements), and a growing trend toward locally-sourced foods, this amendment proposes to allow commercial food preparation as a home business. On-site retail sales are not allowed. For more, see Public Review Draft – Group 4, Sections 11.9.4.9 and 11.12.8.2.7.
- **Opening Doors for Craft Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries**  
Denver and Colorado continue to lead the nation in producing great beers, wines and spirits. Responding to an industry trend toward smaller craft breweries, wineries and distilleries, a proposed amendment codifies preexisting allowances for these uses in

commercial mixed-use zone districts, within appropriate limits, and expands the definition of breweries and distilleries beyond the previous one-size-fits-all, industrial-scale definition. This change will mean less red tape for these businesses seeking to locate in Denver. For more, see Public Review Draft - Group 4, Use Tables and Sections 11.5.6, 11.5.7, and 11.12.5.3.

- **Organization**  
We continue make the zoning code more user-friendly! Putting things in the right place, grouping the right things together for less page-flipping, and having a 'section hierarchy' that makes sense — these are all things we're improving with this text amendment package. For example, in Group 4, Article 10, we put all of the bicycle parking standards in one section rather than mixed in with vehicle parking standards — after all, they are completely different animals.
- **Language**  
We often hear, "Why don't you just tell me what I can do?" Although the code is a technical legal document, we continue to refine our code language to make it easier to understand. For example, in Group 1, for all building forms, we've added a section to the form tables called "Uses" that clarifies which uses are allowed or not allowed in each building form.
- **Graphics**  
As the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." We agree! While the legal language remains, we have added new graphics wherever possible to help users visualize what the technical words mean. You'll see new graphics in most of the amendment "groups." For example, in Group 1, throughout the various neighborhood contexts (sections 3.3.7.2; 4.3.7.2; 5.3.7.2; 6.3.7.2; 7.3.7.3; 9.1.3.6.B; 9.7.6.2), we've added graphics to show alternatives to transparency, such as "windows outside the zone of transparency."