

**Proposed Ballot Title:**

**Shall the voters of the City and County of Denver adopt an ordinance permitting more affordable and sustainable housing forms within walking distance of existing transit lines and large parks?**

**Proposed Ordinance:**

*Be it enacted by the City and County of Denver,  
Section 59 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code is amended by the addition of Sec. 59-501 et seq. as follows:*

**Sec. 59-5. - Transit-oriented and Park-oriented sustainable homes**

**Sec. 59-501. - Legislative Intent**

(a) The People of the City and County of Denver find that:

(1) Denver has a significant shortage of housing options, which has led to involuntary displacement, high housing-cost burden, and diminished economic opportunities for Denverites;

(2) Denver's public transit system does not work as well as desired, leading to high transportation costs, unsafe and inaccessible roadways, poor air quality, and other harms;

(3) Experts in housing access, such as the Harvard Joint Center on Housing, the Berkeley Turner Center, the NYU Furman Center, and the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, roundly agree that more compact housing types are more directly affordable than large new single-family homes, often dubbed "McMansions," which can sell for \$1.5 million or more in Denver; they also roundly agree that adding more housing supply within existing residential lots reduces regional housing costs;

(4) Experts in environmental sustainability, such as the Sierra Club (national and Colorado chapter), the Rocky Mountain Institute, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("IPCC"), agree that increasing access to a variety of housing options in urban areas combats the environmental problems of sprawl, and makes transit, biking, and walking more viable modes of transportation, thereby reducing per-capita pollution related to vehicles and homes;

(5) Denver's current zoning rules as of 2026 are largely out of step with these academic findings, mandating the most-expensive kinds of new housing, entrenching dependence on private vehicles, and prohibiting access to less costly and more environmentally-friendly home types from being built throughout much of the city;

(6) The People of the City and County of Denver desire to change this state of affairs by making direct changes to the zoning code to better align with the academic consensus around how to promote more affordability and sustainability, by legalizing more compact housing types around existing transit lines and regional parks.

**Sec. 59-502. - Definitions**

(a) When used in this article:

(1) **G-MU-3x** is based on the current G-MU-3 zone district. It is defined as a zone district that allows three stories of residential in the form of apartments and garden courts, or four stories of affordable residential. *The x designation caps lot sizes at 12,500 sqft, limits lot coverage to 60%, sets FAR maximums at 1.5 (or 2 with affordable units), has 5ft setbacks from all lot lines, disallows townhomes but allows rowhomes, and allows commercial space on first floors, not to exceed 10% of building GFA;*

(2) **G-RX-5x** based on the current G-RX-5 zone district. It is defined as a zone district that allows five stories of residential with a 100% commercial 1st floor, or seven stories of affordable residential. *The x designation caps lot sizes at 12,500 sqft, limits lot coverage to 80%, sets FAR maximums at 3 (or 4 with affordable units), and has 3ft setbacks from all lot lines;*

(3) **C-MX-8x** based on the current C-MX-8 zone district. It is defined as a zone district that allows eight stories of mixed uses (residential, commercial, office) with 100% lot coverage, or 12 stories of affordable residential. *The x designation disallows drive-through service uses and drive-through restaurant uses;*

(4) “Bus Rapid Transit” is defined as in the Denver Moves Transit plan;

(5) “community parks” has the same meaning as in DRMC;

(6) “more permissibly zoned” means zoned for an equal or greater number of stories of residential development;

(7) “pattern book” is defined as

(8) “qualifying medium-frequency bus stops” means any bus stop that, as of January 1, 2026, was serviced by a public bus line with a peak frequency of at least two buses per hour that does not also fall along a “bus rapid transit bus line”;

(9) “regional parks” is defined as any parcel that is defined by the DRMC as such, or any park or open space that has a total area of more than ninety (90) acres within Denver;

(10) “RTD rail station” is defined as in the Denver Moves Transit plan.

### **Sec. 59-503. - Legalization of Transit-oriented and Park-oriented sustainable homes**

(a) All parcels wholly or partially within 660ft of qualifying medium-frequency bus stops or the borders of all Community Parks, within 1,320ft of BRT centerlines or the borders of all Regional Parks, or 1,980ft of RTD rail station boundaries are hereby rezoned G-MU-3x, unless they are

otherwise more permissibly zoned by this Section 59-5, pre-existing zoning, or any other law or ordinance.

(b) All parcels wholly or partially within 660ft of BRT centerlines or the borders of all Regional Parks, or 1,320ft of RTD rail station boundaries, are hereby rezoned G-RX-5x, unless they are otherwise more permissibly zoned by this Section 59-5, pre-existing zoning, or any other law or ordinance.

(c) All parcels wholly or partially within 660ft of RTD rail station boundaries are hereby rezoned to C-MX-8x, unless they are otherwise more permissively zoned by this Section 59-5, pre-existing zoning, or any other law or ordinance.

(d) All parcels affected by the Sec. 59-503 shall be subject to the Expanding Housing Affordability Ordinance.

(e) Former Rule 59 rules shall not apply to any parcels affected by this Sec. 59-503.

(f) Any overlay or restriction that renders these rezonings impossible, uneconomical, or otherwise impractical is superseded by this section. However, nothing in Sec. 59-5 et seq. prohibits the City and County of Denver from adopting “pattern books” or otherwise enacting cost-neutral design standards.

(g) Sec. 59-503 must be implemented and integrated into the DRMC by Jan 1, 2028.