Project:	Unlocking Housing Choices
Subject:	Advisory Committee Meeting #1
Meeting Date:	Wednesday, July 23, 2025
Meeting Time:	4:00pm - 6:00pm
Meeting Location:	Wellington Webb Municipal Building Room 4G2; Microsoft Teams

Meeting Notes

Meeting Objectives

- Allow Advisory Committee members to learn about each other and the various perspectives represented.
- Discuss Advisory Committee role and process
- Share an overview of the project and provide time for questions and comments from committee members

Attendance

- All 26 committee members were present.
- Denver Community Planning and Development staff members present included Rob Haigh, Andrew Webb, Alisa Childress, Joe Green, Josh Palmeri and Kyle Dalton.

Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting participants introduced themselves by sharing their name and affiliations (e.g. neighborhood representatives, developers, designers, housing advocates, etc.). The project team also introduced themselves.

CPD Presentation

- Rob Haigh presented the meeting agenda and a high-level overview of the project. These included a brief description of the issue and need for housing, defined terms the committee should be aware of, and the goals of the project. The UHC project aims to implement adopted plan guidance to allow more small- or "house"-scale multi-unit development, sometimes referred to as "missing middle" housing, in Denver. It will also update building form design requirements to promote compatibility of new housing in scale with existing neighborhoods, incentivize preservation of existing homes. Finally, the project team will explore incentives or requirements for onsite affordability in added housing. The project is expected to impact single-unit (SU), two-unit (TU) and Row House (RH) districts in the Denver Zoning Code, as well as similar districts in the Former Ch. 59 code that affects about 15% of the city.
- After a pause for questions, Andrew Webb shared information about how the committee was assembled, including the process for identifying interested community members and narrowing the group down to a manageable size that reflects Denver's diverse populations and viewpoints.
- After another pause for questions, Rob Haigh shared the anticipated project schedule and the topics for the second Advisory Committee meeting, which is scheduled for Tuesday, August 26 from 4 to 6 p.m. (same location as the first meeting, as noted above).

Advisory Committee Questions & General Statements

Advisory Committee members shared general thoughts on the project, as well as many questions. These comments and questions are paraphrased below, along with brief staff responses where warranted. The project team will

provide more thorough responses to committee members' questions in advance of the next meeting. If not already addressed, staff will add questions and responses to the project website FAQ.

Questions:

- Will this project include Former Ch. 59 zoning?
    - *Staff response: yes, as has been the case with other Denver Zoning Code text amendments, we plan to "bridge" these changes into areas that retain zoning from that older code.*
- Will this project promote or incentivize for-sale units, for-rent units, or both?
    - *Staff response: while the city can't require different types of housing tenure, the team will work closely with partners in the Dept of Housing Stability (HOST) and other stakeholders to ensure zoning changes allow a mix of housing types for would-be owners and renters at a variety of income levels.*
- Will this project look at building code changes?
    - *Staff Response: While our team is primarily focused on zoning regulations, we agree that building codes also present limitations and disincentives to missing middle housing. We are already working with colleagues who interpret, enforce and update those codes, and will track and share potential code changes for their consideration.*
- Will changes to the zoning code require a public hearing?
    - *Staff Response: Yes, all amendments to the Denver Zoning Code require public hearings before Planning Board and City Council.*
- Some area plans (such as Neighborhood Planning Initiative, or NPI plans) have specific language around missing middle housing, single-unit neighborhoods and introducing higher density development. How will this citywide project address conflicting regulations?
    - *The project team is currently analyzing citywide and area plan guidance and will bring an overview as well as some preliminary thoughts around how the project will reconcile conflicting guidance to the next Advisory Committee meeting for feedback and discussion.*
- Can we look at other cities' efforts and learn from developer response and displacement outcomes?
    - *Yes, staff has completed a study of peer city missing middle projects (link) which we will present and discuss at the second Advisory Committee meeting in August.*
- Will we look at how bulk plane requirements, and lot coverage maximums prevent expanding existing single-family homes to better accommodate additional density (often multigenerational households)?
    - *Staff response: Yes, this project will explore how the zoning code's building form requirements might be updated to incentivize missing middle housing.*

Comments:

- This project needs to focus on getting out of the way of regulating housing. We need to solve it now so our children don't have to leave the city to find housing.
- Existing low-density areas can absorb some new housing, but this is just one piece of the larger housing puzzle.
- Bedroom counts are very important – we need housing for families, not just studios and one-bedrooms.
- Please inform the committee about how many units we're expecting this project to provide.

- Research has shown that missing middle housing can help divert demand from low-income areas that have interest from mid-high income folks. This could alleviate gentrification pressure in those areas by allowing folks to buy in areas that they couldn't before.
- This project should also enable and encourage conversion of houses and individual dwelling units into multiple separate dwelling units.
- Where possible, this project should consider the perspective of people who work in Denver but can't afford to live here.
- Zoning changes interact with the larger policy framework, including stronger tenant protections, rent control and property rehabilitation programs. It is important to understand how all the policies effect this project. Supply is important, but there are a lot of other aspects of housing stability and we need to have a holistic discussion.
- We need to make sure we're addressing the needs of affordable (deed-restricted) housing developers and land trusts.
- This project should consider allowing pre-approved plans and designs, as well as modular construction.
- It's vital that we test the feasibility of proposals as we go along.
- This project should update tandem housing so it has similar flexibility to accessory dwelling units.
- Middle-sized housing does not necessarily translate to attainability or affordability.
- We need to study the relationship between zoning and permitting times. Lengthy permit processes won't help the city get its desired result.
- It will be important to ensure sensitivity of new development to existing neighborhood and block fabric.
- All areas of the city can accommodate growth without being made to look the same.
- It would be interesting to study the impact of removing parking minimums on housing development.
- We should discern between income-restricted "Affordable" housing and other attainable, lower-cost housing.
- This project should recommend policies to combat gentrification and displacement.
- The city should simplify the Site Development Plan process for missing middle development.