

Group Living Text Amendment

Overview: Equity and the Denver Zoning Code
September 2020



Equity: Blueprint Denver and Comprehensive Plan 2040

“Equity means everyone, regardless of who they are or where they are from, has the opportunity to thrive. Where there is equity, a person’s identity does not determine their outcome”

- **Improve access to opportunity**
 - Flexible housing in “complete” neighborhoods
 - Make neighborhoods accessible to people of all ages and abilities
- **Reduce vulnerability to displacement**
 - Allow people to live with “chosen” family or share housing.
 - Avoid incentivizing investor acquisition of houses
 - Increase housing options for Denver’s most vulnerable populations
- **Expand Housing and Jobs Diversity**
 - Support housing as a continuum to serve residents across a range of incomes, ages and needs
 - Allow more unrelated people to live as a housekeeping unit in any home
 - Expand places where residential care providers can serve Denver’s most vulnerable residents



Equity: Household Regulations and the definition of “family”

Single-Unit (“Detached”) house regulations have grown more restrictive over time...

1925: “any number of individuals living together in a single housekeeping unit, and doing their cooking on the premises.”

- When Denver first adopted zoning in, the city did not regulate who could live in a house.

1954: “one individual or group of two (2) or more persons related by blood or marriage living together as a single housekeeping unit and doing their cooking on the premises as distinguished from a group occupying a boarding house, lodging house...”

- By 1954, that language had evolved to prohibit unrelated people, including LGBTQ and interracial couples, who were not legally allowed to marry in Colorado at this time.



Equity: Household Regulations and the definition of “family”

Single-Unit (“Detached”) house regulations have grown more restrictive over time (cont.)...

1968: “husband, wife, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, son, daughter, sister, brother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepsister, stepbrother, stepmother, stepfather, grandson, granddaughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece, plus domestic servants employed for services on the premises”

- By the late 1960s, zoning was even more specific about who can be considered a “family”

1989: “A husband and wife or 2 or Fewer Unrelated Individuals,” with other relatives.

- This vote toward more inclusive housing just barely passed - City Council voted 7 to 6 to permit two unrelated people for the first time since the 1950s

2018: “Two Partners or Two Unrelated Adults,” with other relatives from the existing list

- Updated in 2018 to be gender-neutral



Equity: Household Regulations and the definition of “family”

...While multi-unit regulations have remained less restrictive.



1925: “any number of individuals living together in a single housekeeping unit, and doing their cooking on the premises.”

- When Denver first adopted zoning, the city did not regulate who could live in a house.

1954: “5 or fewer unrelated individuals,” plus relatives to each (reduced to 4 in 1982).

- By 1954, zoning only permitted people who were related to each other to live together in single unit houses, while multi-unit houses (duplexes, apartments, condominiums), typically smaller units in denser areas of the city, were permitted to house more unrelated adults.
- Redlining practices pushed rental units in Black and brown neighborhoods
- Today, Black and Latinx neighborhoods account for 72% of Denver households with 5 or more adults.

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Equity: Household Regulations and the definition of “family”

Where can non-traditional families, families sharing housing or unrelated people who choose to live together live legally?

- Approximately **340,000** households in Denver
 - ~134,000 households (about 39%) live in single-unit (typical detached) houses
 - Average House Size: 1,600 ft²
 - ~140,000 apartments
 - Average Apartment Size: 842 ft²
 - ~66,000 duplexes, condominiums and other types of housing
- Approximately **77%** of land in Denver is zoned for single-unit residential uses.

Household Size in Denver

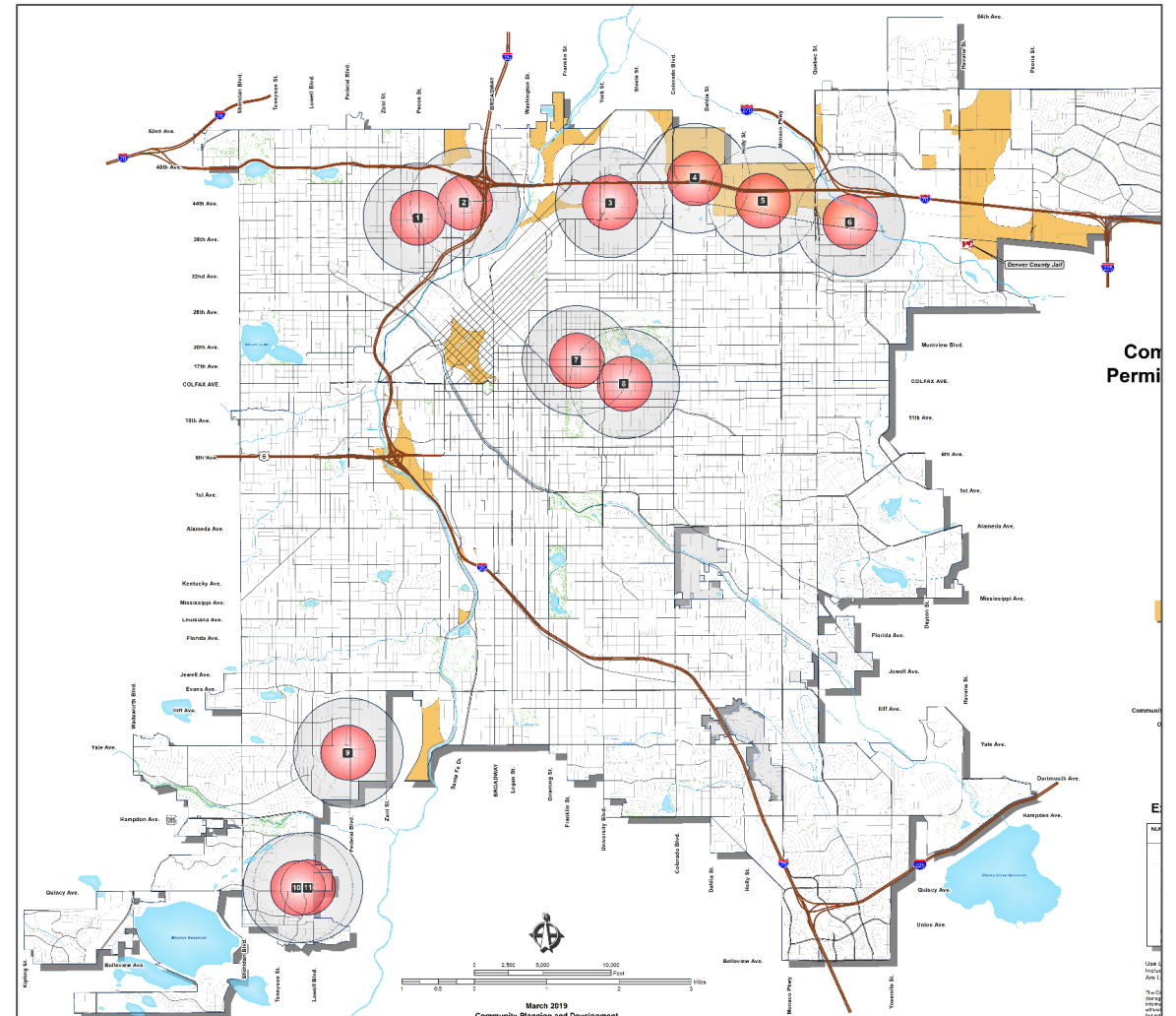
- Average Denver Household Size: 2.31 people
- Number of houses with 6 or more adults: Approx. 0.29%
- Percent of those households that are Black or Latinx: Approx. 80%

Equity: Residential Care and exclusion of populations



How does the Zoning Code exclude populations and services?

- Restricts uses deemed “undesirable” to locations adjacent to and within neighborhoods that were predominately non-white when these codes were initially written.
- Distant from transit, jobs, parks, groceries and services
- Arbitrary spacing and buffering requirements
- Permitting requirements that don’t work in practice, like oversight committees
- Current notification and permit process procedures like Zoning Permit with Informational Notice (or ZPIN) favor neighborhoods with most resources



Areas where Community Corrections facilities could currently be established