

Public Hearing Comments – Accessory Dwelling Units.

September 2, 2021

To the village plan commission,

I am writing to applaud measures that increase or maintain the stock of affordable housing in the Village. To the extent that permitting accessory units does this, I support proposed changes to zoning requirements. I do not know if the assignment of an address for an accessory unit falls under the purview of the Plan Commission, nor whether use of accessory units for short-term rentals would also be appropriate to clarify.

Another related issue is the conversion of multifamily units into single-family homes. As in Chicago, this practice has been a primary source of loss of affordable units within the village. I hope the commission would consider possible strategies the village could use to stem this loss, for example, increased education, added permit or other fees to mitigate the loss of units, or encouragement to retain features that allow for reconversion back to multiple units in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Rupa Datta

Good afternoon:

As an Oak Park resident, I support the planning commission's proposed changes to the Village code to allow accessory dwelling units. I would only encourage the planning commission to consider making the final changes to the zoning ordinance less restrictive with regards to the specific requirements that the ADUs will be required to meet.

Best regards,
Adam Harsha

I think that this is a great idea to increase affordable housing in the village.

-Amanda Jenkins

Dear Committee:

I don't object to allowing the rental of accessory dwelling units, but I feel very strongly that all additional vehicles be accommodated on that property. People who have chosen to live on streets with SFH's should not have to deal with additional cars parking on the street. I am particularly concerned about this should the overnight ban, which I support, be lifted at some

point in the future. If the renter has a car(s), it should be a requirement that parking be provided on the SFH property for that vehicle.

Thank you,

JJA

Good Afternoon,

I am a resident of Oak Park and would like to provide my comments on the proposed ADU Zoning Code Text Amendment. I have commented on ADUs more generally in the past, but I would like to provide more specific comments regarding the specific text.

First, I would like to reiterate my support of ADUs. They will broaden the housing stock in the Village and help increase affordability, both for renters and homeowners who can have a new source of income. Additionally, they are a way to add EAV without significantly changing the character of neighborhoods.

On the specific text of the amendment:

- Is it really necessary to have a minimum lot size? As I read the text amendment, the ADU would need to be within the buildable area. As such, a homeowner could expand their house anyhow. Therefore, the restriction doesn't seem to serve any purpose. It won't affect the form of the housing and it does nothing to control for population density (indeed, you could have a house with 6 residents or a couple renting out an ADU to a single person). The restriction would only seem to limit ADUs without providing any benefit.
- We restrict ADUs to single-family dwelling units. I have not had a chance to read the entire Zoning Ordinance, but it seems that we don't restrict the unit density in multi-family zones? As such, they could add additional units by right? I ask because many municipalities have ADU regulations for multi-family zones. Indeed, we have multi-family buildings with detached garages where a coach house could be applicable. I think it would be appropriate to permit them there, but they may already be permitted.
- How would we distinguish between Attached Accessory Dwelling Units and Interior Accessory Dwelling Units? It seems perhaps a bit symantec. If the goal is to preserve the form of the single-family neighborhoods, I'm not sure this distinction achieves this. After all, someone can add an addition to their house to allow the basement to become an ADU. It would have the same externalities on the neighborhoods as if they added an addition for the ADU itself.

I am grateful for all of the work that Staff and the Plan Commission have done on this. I think ADUs (and, perhaps at some point in the future, Accessory Commercial Units) are a good addition to our zoning code.

Thanks,

Alex

To Whom It May Concern:

As a resident of Oak Park, 603 South Euclid and a community development professional, I strongly support the inclusion of accessory dwelling units and the proposed changes in the Village Code. However, one cannot conclude that the addition of ADUs in code will necessarily increase the number of affordable housing units. While I commend the Village for this change, the Village needs to go well beyond that in order to address the issue of affordable housing in Oak Park. A related issue: because many homeowners may now be landlords and may or may not have the expertise, the Village could provide training or partner with a nonprofit counseling agency to provide training for those owners. A related question: will the Village require that new ADUs be included in the inclusionary zoning requirement?

Congrats!

Dawn Stockmo

Dear Plan Commission,

I am writing to strongly encourage you to approve the proposed changes to Village code that would allow additional independent housing units on residential properties.

My family lives in south Oak Park, where my husband's family has lived for four generations. We chose to live in south Oak Park because of the wonderful community, proximity to schools, parks and pools, and easy access to public transportation and the highway.

We love our location and our community - however, we are also facing a challenge that many of our friends are facing now - caring for aging parents. Currently my father is living in a memory care facility, with no plans for him to be able to return home. My mother is living in their home, and the work of keeping up the house, spending time with my father, still full-time working, and carving out time to see her grandchildren has created incredible pressure on her and all of us. We would love for my mom to be able to move closer to us - however, the cost of homes in our neighborhood makes this option impossible for her (especially as she is considering the ongoing cost of my father's care). With a change in the Independent Housing Unit code, we would look to build a garage apartment for my mother - this would significantly improve her quality of life, reduce the financial pressures of ensuring my father is well-cared for, and allow my mom to spend more quality time with her young grandchildren.

I am sure that we are not the only family in Oak Park facing these types of challenges, and I know from talking to many friends and colleagues that concerns about caring for aging parents are very real. A change in the Village code to allow for more independent housing units would allow residents of Oak Park to remain in their homes and neighborhoods, while creating opportunities for family members to be closer to them at a crucial stage in life.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing about the decision on this matter.

Sincerely,

Marthe Druska Golden

September 1, 2021

To the Plan Commission:

The Advocacy Committee of Arbor West Neighbors (AWN) thanks the Village of Oak Park for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Zoning Code affecting accessory dwelling units (ADUs). AWN is a grassroots organization of residents that supports and enriches aging through community building and advocacy. One of our major concerns is the availability of affordable, accessible, and preferably intergenerational housing for older adults in Oak Park and other near western communities.

Nationally there has been increasing interest in expanding the housing supply for older adults through the development of ADUs. In the Chicago metropolitan area, both the Cities of Chicago and Evanston have recently undertaken major revisions to their zoning codes to facilitate the development of ADUs. AWN supports the Village of Oak Park's efforts in this area. The proposed changes to the zoning code are welcome and overdue.

ADUs can offer many potential benefits to the older residents of Oak Park as they age in place. For example, an older couple who are financially strapped could rent out a portion of their existing home or a newly built ADU on their property as source of income that could enable them to age in place in their current home and neighborhood. Alternatively, an older couple could sell their existing home to a relative and remain on the property in an ADU that is more appropriately sized and accessible. ADUs can also be used for intergenerational housing that would enable the older resident to lease out a portion of their home to a younger family member or caregiver who can assist them with the activities of daily living.

While AWN is in general support of the proposed changes to the Zoning Code, we offer the following suggestions to enhance the Village's efforts:

- The proposed changes to the Zoning Code would limit ADUs in coach houses and attached ADUs to lots that have a minimum of 6,500 square feet, e.g., a lot of 50' x 130'. This greatly limits the number of lots in Oak Park that would qualify. AWN recommends that the Village consider reducing this minimum requirement to lots of 5,000 square feet or more (e.g., a lot of approximately 38' x 130'). This may better reflect the prevailing lot sizes in the community.
- ADUs to be built in a coach house are restricted to the second floor. This is going to pose accessibility challenges for older adults and may also require that owners install a lift to assist the occupants in accessing the second story. This may be cost-prohibitive for many middle-income residents.
- Many communities that have encouraged ADUs have simultaneously amended their building code to facilitate the use of modular or prefab construction. Oak Park should review its codes to

ensure that modern modular housing construction practices are permitted. This can be done without compromising the Village's construction standards.

We appreciate the Plan Commission's outreach to the community's residents as it explores this issue. If we can be of any assistance to the Village in this effort, please do not hesitate to contact Edward Solan of the Advocacy Committee of AWN at 708-870-9420 or at edsolan@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Edward Solan

Advocacy Committee of Arbor West Neighbors