

CITY COUNCIL  
*City and County of Denver*



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**Jeanne Robb**  
Councilwoman, District Ten

February 8, 2008,

Dear Resident and/or Property Owner,

Although there are no official notification requirements, I want to alert you to upcoming changes that could affect your property under Language Amendment L-1154 to the Denver Zoning Code (Chapter 59 of the Denver Municipal Code). The proposed ordinance would revise sections 59-117 and 59-118 to specifically allow existing multi-unit dwellings in the R-0 and R-1 zone districts to be modified, subject to limitations.

Now let me explain in plain English. Right now, single family residences predominate in both the R-0 and R-1 zone districts, and neither the R-0 nor R-1 district account for or allow duplexes or small multi-unit dwellings. However, we all know that these exist in our neighborhoods in small numbers.

In fact, across the city, approximately 780 multi-unit dwellings have been identified in R-0 and R-1 zone districts. In District 10, the Planning Department's best count indicates there are 111 of these multi-unit dwellings (86 of these are duplexes), all presumably predating the 1956 zoning ordinance that restricted them. Since 1956, they have been known as "nonconforming" uses and as such, the owners cannot expand them. There have been several recent cases where frustrated multi-unit property owners in R-0 and R-1 zone districts have either gained or sought rezoning to PUD or other districts to simply add a garage or a mudroom.

The proposed change would:

- Make the existing nonconforming multi-unit dwellings conforming and thus, allow them to be expanded, modified, or demolished and rebuilt.
- Prohibit increasing the number of units beyond that which exists today in such multi-unit buildings in R0 and R1 districts.
- Prohibit expanding the size of the zone lot containing a multi-unit dwelling in an R0 or R1 zone district.
- Prohibit any variance to the requirement that there must be 3,000 sq. ft per dwelling unit on a zone lot

Thus, existing duplexes and multi-unit dwellings will be able to expand but not increase the number of units or the size of the lot. Any expansion would have to conform to existing size standards in R-0 and R-1, which also govern single family dwellings.



You can view a PDF of Language Amendment L-1154 by going to [www.denvergov.org](http://www.denvergov.org) and typing in L-1154 in the search box in the upper right corner. You can also view streaming video of the most recent Blueprint Denver Committee meeting discussing this issue on Denver 8 TV by clicking on "On Demand" in the upper right corner and selecting the January 9, 2008 Blueprint Denver Committee meeting.

I believe that the proposed changes would allow reinvestment in properties and if you own one of these properties, this ordinance will directly affect you. I have struggled to identify consequences that may not be desirable. Some people think the existing code discourages multi-unit dwellings in R-0 and encourages them to "go away" or revert to single family uses. To some that's a desirable outcome and to others it's an undesirable outcome of the existing code. But undeniably in over 50 years, 111 have not "gone away."

I am interested in what you think and what your experience has been. This letter is intended to serve as a courtesy communication to you as an affected property owner. The public hearing on the proposed language amendment at Denver City Council is scheduled for February 19, 2008. If you have further questions, please contact my office (303-377-1807) or email me at [Jeanne.Robb@denvergov.org](mailto:Jeanne.Robb@denvergov.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Robb". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jeanne Robb  
Councilwoman, District 10