



ADUs: The Durango Experience

SCOTT L. SHINE, AICP



Big Mountains

★ DENVER

★ DURANGO!

COLORADO
0 km 25 50 75 km
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NEW MEXICO

OKLAHOMA

A
Great
Place
to Live!



Housing Issues

- ▶ Many second homes
- ▶ 48% of Durango's housing units are rentals
- ▶ Strong tourism market = Lots of service industry jobs
- ▶ Projected to grow 52% over the next 20 years = demand for 15,700 housing units in La Plata County

Two interrelated issues

- ▶ New ADUs
- ▶ Pre- Existing (Illegal) Units



Lots of Public Meetings & Study Sessions



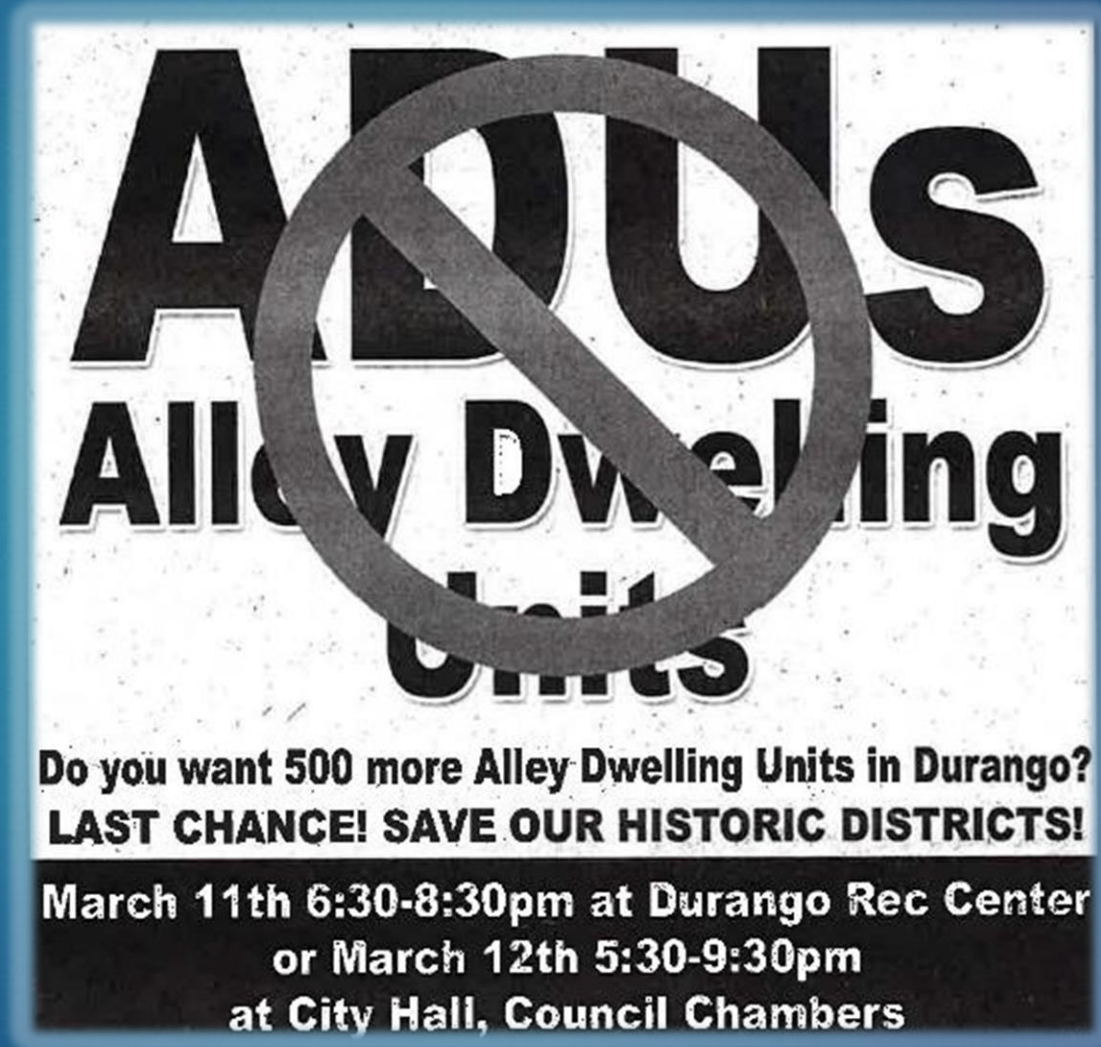
Neighbor Uprising

- ▶ Neighborhood advocacy group created (**CHEN – Citizens for Healthy Established Neighborhoods**)
- ▶ Comprised of some of our most **prominent citizen activists**
- ▶ **Long-term residents** who feel entitled
- ▶ Constantly pointing to the **deficiency in enforcement** against existing illegal units.
- ▶ Organized **many anti-ADU activities** including letter-writing campaign and petitions.



Slums or affordable housing?

Neighbor Uprising



Neighbor Uprising

Then things got very interesting!

durangoherald.com ★ CLASSIFIEDS

Lots & Acreage



Price Reduced to \$160,000. 0.73 acres in the city limits on Tech Center Drive. All entitlements. Approved commercial. Ready to build. Sidewalk & curb are in. MLS #663558. Scott 970-749-0099 Keller Williams Realty

ABSOLUTELY FREE BUILDING LOTS

IN DURANGO, COLORADO
for up to 500 lucky people.
Call 970-375-4850
to see if you could be a winner.

Mobile Homes for Sale

2002 Beautiful 28x70 doublewide. affordable. Well-maint N end of Dgo, 4bd/3bth, all appl, ample clst/strg, tape/text, open flr plan, bkfst bar, den, Fenced yd, lg shed, Min

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Studio apt
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Neighbor Uprising

Picketed
our
Office!

Really?!?

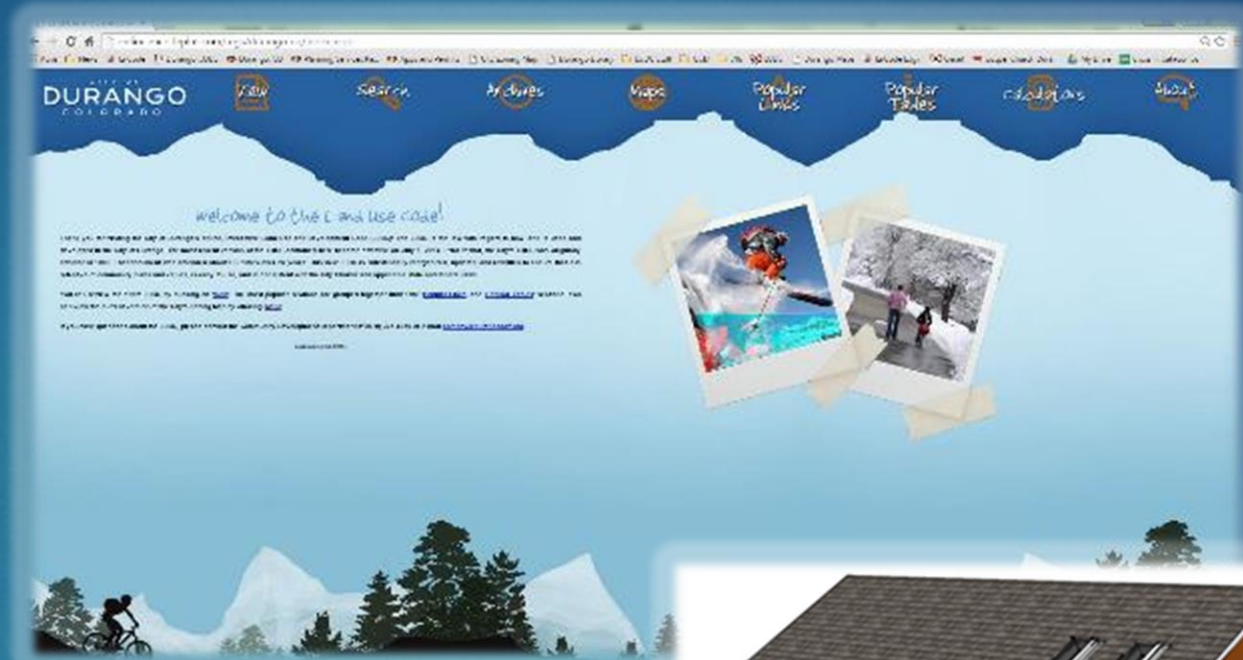


So How Did We Compromise?

- ▶ Size of Unit
 - ▶ Definition of Family/Occupancy Limits
 - ▶ Lot Size
 - ▶ Design Standards
 - ▶ No Variances
 - ▶ Promised Enforcement
- ...Final Piece of the Puzzle!
- ▶ Owner Occupancy

Durango's New Code

- ▶ Fully web-based
- ▶ Searchable
- ▶ Visual



Managing Existing Units?

- ▶ ~~ADU Amnesty Program~~
- ▶ ~~Punitive ADU Program~~
- ▶ ~~Illegal Housing Initiative~~
- ▶ ~~Housing Fees Extortion Effort~~
- ▶ **Pre-Existing Unit Voluntary Registration**



Program Summary

- ▶ **Voluntary Registration Period** with incentives followed by Proactive Enforcement
 - ▶ Four months...then 10 months...then 16 months of voluntary registration.
 - ▶ Age-based fees, not current fees (Can be a difference of up to \$4,300).
 - ▶ Separated into three main age categories based on legal history.
 - ▶ Owner gets a recorded document that clearly establishes legitimacy.

Innovative Implementation Tools

- ▶ Visual media
- ▶ Mass mailings




Innovative Implementation Tools

- Online registration form
- GIS Integration

ADU Request for Pre-Application Meeting Sign in to Save Progress

Property Owner Information

 **Property Owner First Name*** **Property Owner Last Name***

You must be the property owner of record to apply for a permit for an existing ADU.

Property Owner Mailing Address

Property Owner Address Number* **Property Owner Address Street Direction*** **Property Owner Address Street Name*** **Property Owner Address Street Type***

Property Owner Address Unit Number **Property Owner Address City*** **Property Owner Address State*** **Property Owner Address Zip Code***

Property Owner Phone Number* **Property Owner E-mail Address***

ADU ADDRESS

If the ADU does not have a separate address, list the address of the primary residence.

ADU Address Number* **ADU Address Street Direction*** **ADU Address Street Name*** **ADU Address Street Type***

ADU Address Unit Number

How's It Going?

- ▶ **Lots of registrations!** Over 260...But definitely not getting all units.
- ▶ **Only 9 applications for new ADUs** since July 2014.
- ▶ Controversy has died down.
- ▶ **Some confusion exists...**ADUs vs. Duplexes.
- ▶ Voluntary registration period has ended. **Enforcement gearing up.**
- ▶ **Spin-off projects:** housing code, housing strategy, etc.

Lessons Learned

- ▶ **Size limits and design** are crucial considerations.
- ▶ Primary neighbor concerns are **noise, loss of privacy, and traffic/parking**.
- ▶ **Owner-occupancy** requirement alleviates many concerns, but will be hard to track.
- ▶ One part of a more comprehensive housing strategy...**not a silver bullet**.
- ▶ Financing is complicated.
- ▶ ADUs are developed **gradually over time**. Perceptions of a 'rush' appear to be unfounded.



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Unit or Not a Unit?