ADUs: The Durango Experience
A Great Place to Live!
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.
Do you want 500 more Alley Dwelling Units in Durango?
LAST CHANCE! SAVE OUR HISTORIC DISTRICTS!

March 11th 6:30-8:30pm at Durango Rec Center
or March 12th 5:30-9:30pm
at City Hall, Council Chambers
Neighbor Uprising

Then things got very interesting!
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
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
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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SCOTT L. SHINE, AICP
Unit or Not a Unit?