

Community Council Office

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April 20, 2018

Saint Paul Planning Commission
15 Kellogg Blvd W
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Planning Commissioners:

The District 1 Community Council writes to express its support for the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) study currently underway. Planning staff visited our Land Use Committee to explain the study in-depth and also provided information that was displayed at our Annual Meetings in March.

The Housing Chapter of the District 1 Community Plan includes language supporting this study:

“H3.6 Explore the potential for accessory dwelling units in all single-family residential zoning districts, including what impacts this would have on both the zoning districts and the community.”


We understand that the scope of the current study is limited to the locational requirement of the ordinance, the expansion of which we support, however there were additional aspects that were discussed that we would like addressed in the future. The first is the requirement that occupants of the ADU must, when taken together with the occupants of the principal structure, comprise a family under the code. We would support removing that requirement entirely, especially when the principal structure is owner-occupied.

Additionally, we have broader concerns about the definition of family in the zoning code. Many of our residents are cost-burdened and can only afford housing when several unrelated adults share a housing unit. We are aware that there are housing units in our district that have more than four unrelated adults occupying them, and that does not significantly impact our neighborhoods negatively. The reality of multi-generational families also can run afoul of this requirement which disproportionately harms immigrant families in our district.

Finally, the requirement of the state building code to separately connect an ADU directly to the sanitary sewer unreasonably increases the cost of ADU construction, and thus reduces the feasibility of ADUs in our district.

Thank you for the opportunity to consider an expansion of ADUs. We look forward to continuing to work with planning staff to address additional issues regarding ADUs and other provisions of the zoning code.

Sincerely,



Paul Sawyer
President and Interim Land Use Chair

DISTRICT 2 COMMUNITY COUNCIL

1365 Prosperity Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55106-2108
Phone: (651) 774-2220
Fax: (651) 774-2135

April 19, 2018

To: Jamie Radel, Dept of PED

From: Lisa Theis, Program Director

RE: Comments on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Thank you for allowing all District Councils/Neighborhoods to weigh in on the issue. On April 11, 2018 the District 2 Community Council land use committee met to discuss the proposed zoning changes for ADUs the committee had several concerns.

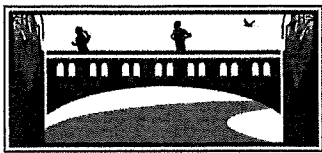
Our land use committee expressed concerns about the amount of time that has been spent and is continued being spent on the “phasing in” of Accessory Dwelling Units. It was felt that the zoning code should be consistent throughout the City of Saint Paul and to have a particular type of housing stock allowed in one area and not others was questionable and not the best policy. Even our discussion and concerns were tempered because the units proposed would not be allowed in District 2. The Committee felt that it was difficult to be invested in the discussion that isn’t going to impact our neighborhood today, but may in a year or five years but also may never impact our neighborhood.

On the propose legislation itself, the committee’s primary concern was the issue of variances. Although the proposed lot sizes and principle structure requirements were reasonable, the concern is that with the use of the property frequently being actual mother-in-laws and grandmothers will make it far too easy to grant variances based on personal family needs and hardships that have lasting impact on the property long after that particular family has moved on. The committee would strongly urge language in the ordinance that would make variances more difficult.

Another concern brought up by the committee was there was no inclusion of information on certificates of occupancies or the inspection of these proposed properties. The committee made the assumption that the units would be exempt since the City doesn’t inspect duplexes that are owner occupied in one of the units which could lead to health and safety issues. With these units being as small as they are and with the building owner not being experienced in rental property, the lack of oversight by the City for inspections of safety and health of individuals living in the dwelling unit would be quite concerning to our committee.

Finally, the last concern was about parking and the committee was unsure that one off street parking spot for the two units would be enough. This, they believed must also be addressed in the final ordinance.

Thank you again for allowing all District Councils to weigh in on the proposed ordinance. Although the committee see many positive opportunities for affordable housing within the proposal, there are many concerns over phasing in the ordinance citywide, clarification on inspections and variances and potential parking issues that must be addressed.



Payne-Phalen

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

567 Payne Avenue, St. Paul MN 55130 www.paynephallen.org 651-774-5234 district5@paynephallen.org

April 6, 2018

Saint Paul Planning Commission
25 West 4th Street, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: Accessory Dwelling Units

Dear Commissioners:

The Payne-Phalen Community Council was fortunate to have Ms. Jamie Radel at our recent board meeting to present the City of Saint Paul's zoning study for accessory dwelling units in five new neighborhood areas. Our Board of Directors supports the study of ADU's city wide, including our neighborhood.

We see ADUs as one potential solution to several problems that we face as a neighborhood. In Payne-Phalen we have multiple commercial corridors, but each one has several building vacancies. In our draft neighborhood plan we outline a goal to increase density in order to support new and existing businesses along our commercial corridors. Allowing ADUs would potentially increase our population density without necessarily adding large apartment buildings.

Across the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis vacancy levels are very low. This increases competition for homes for sale and rent, which drives prices up. Allowing ADUs would potentially provide an increase in housing supply, again without dramatically changing the land use and character of our existing neighborhoods.

Finally, many people see ADUs as a convenient solution for our aging population. ADUs provide an opportunity for multi-generational living on the same property but in separate living spaces. Additionally, as residents age they often want to downsize, and ADUs could allow them to continue living on their own property but in a smaller home.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Lissa Jones-Lofgren, Interim Executive Director

North End Neighborhood Organization (District 6)
171 Front Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55117
651-488-4485 ed@nenostpaul.org

April 17, 2018

Jamie Radel, Senior Planner
Department of Planning & Economic Development
25 West 4th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: Accessory Dwelling Units

The North End Neighborhood Organization is requesting to be included in neighborhoods that will have the option of allowing Accessory Dwelling Units. With the growing population in St Paul, finding responsible ways to accommodate the need for housing falls into many categories. Higher density units i.e. apartments, condos and townhomes provide one set of housing choices as well as Accessory Dwelling Units for single family home owners. The zoning code should be consistent throughout the city of Saint Paul and to have a particular type of housing stock allowed in one area and not others is questionable and not the best policy.

Across the metro ADU's are growing in popularity because of the economic, aging in place, and family solutions they provide when multiple generations reside together. Allowing ADUs in neighborhoods is vital to the growth and stability of our neighborhoods.

The North End has numerous parcels that would fall within the lot size required for an ADU. If a homeowner in the North End wishes to construct an ADU they should have that choice available if all defined standards and conditions are met.

Thank-you for the opportunity and if you have questions, please feel free to contact us at the numbers above.

Best:

Rich Holst

Rich Holst
Chair

cc: Ward 1
Ward 5



District 10 Como Community Council
1224 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, MN 55103
651.644.3889
district10@district10comopark.org
www.district10comopark.org

April 19, 2018

Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. W
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Commissioners:

The Como Community Council board voted on April 17 to urge you to make more areas of the city eligible for accessory dwelling units, and to include District 10 among eligible areas.

Accessory dwelling units provide options for local residents to age in place and allow for creative housing solutions for inter-generational living in the city. ADUs have the potential to help address a lack of affordable housing in the city and allow for increased density without disturbing the residential feel of a neighborhood. ADUs support these and other goals in our neighborhood plan, and we look forward to having them available as option for future development.

Sincerely,

Michael Kuchta
Executive Director

Cc: Council Member Dai Thao, Council Member Samantha Henningson, Council Member Amy Brendmoen



UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

1602 Selby Avenue, Suite 10, Saint Paul, MN 55104

651.645.6887 | info@unionparkdc.org | www.unionparkdc.org

An Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer

April 18, 2018

Jamie Radel, Senior Planner
City of Saint Paul
25 West 4th Street
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Jamie:

Thank you so much for presenting at the April 16 meeting of the Union Park District Council Committee on Land Use and Economic Development.

At the meeting, the Committee unanimously supported the following recommendations related to Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance changes:

- The Committee supports the expansion of the area in which ADUs are allowed to include all of the Union Park District Council area, and all of the City of Saint Paul.
- The Committee supports allowing ADUs on parcels smaller than 5000 square feet, as long as the ADU is within the existing structure.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie Reiter, Executive Director
Union Park District Council



320 South Griggs Street
St. Paul, MN 55105
www.macgrove.org

651-695-4000
mgcc@macgrove.org

April 19, 2018

Ms. Jamie Radel
Department of Planning and Economic Development
City of Saint Paul
25 W. Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Ms. Radel:

On April 5th, 2018, the Housing and Land Use Committee ("HLU") of the Macalester Groveland Community Council ("MGCC") held a public meeting, at which it heard a City presentation regarding the potential expansion of Accessory Dwelling Units ("ADUs") into the D14 (MGCC) area. Prior to the meeting, two comments were received in favor of the expansion. At the meeting, attendees spoke in favor of and in opposition to the expansion.

After consulting the Macalester-Groveland Long Range plan, considering neighborhood feedback and assessing the merits of the proposal, the HLU passed the following resolution on an 11 – 6 vote:

*****The Macalester-Groveland Community Council supports the expansion of Accessory Dwelling Units into the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood*****

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Liz Boyer
Executive Director
Macalester-Groveland Community Council

cc (via email): Ward 3, City of Saint Paul

Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)

From: VICTORIA ERHART <verhart@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 1:34 PM
To: Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul); Rue, Karen
Subject: Expansion of ADU's

Jamie: This email is to let you know about my strong support for city-wide ADU's. I live in North Saint Anthony Park, was involved with a trial project developing theoretical ADU's, with architects giving time pro bono, and I have been dismayed at the reluctance of the city to move forward on these. I had planned to develop one for my mother, found out that I could not (although I live across the street from houses where ADU's are legal), and she ended up in an assisted living unit. Is this reasonable?

As we look to decrease sprawl by increasing urban density, these units make absolute sense. And, having visited many cities on the West Coast, I know that they can be beautiful. Count me among the many people I know who support the expansion of the legality of these completely sensible units.

Thanks for your time,

Victoria Erhart

1301 Chelmsford St

Saint Paul, MN 55108

Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)

From: Hietala, Dori <Dori.Hietala@AndersenCorp.com>
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2018 2:50 PM
To: Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)
Subject: RE: ADU's in MacGroveland

Dear Jamie,

I am writing this e-mail in support of allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ACU) in the MacGroveland neighborhood of St. Paul.

I believe this change will provide options for community members to offer physical and financial assistance to aging and young families struggling with health, mobility and/or financial issues while continuing to build a financially stable economy in St. Paul. My personal desire is to provide a living space for my 82 year old father that will offer him independence and allow me to monitor and assist him as he ages. It would also allow an opportunity for parents to provide support to young families while maintaining each clans personal space.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dori Hietala
1324 Sargent Ave
St. Paul, MN. 55105
dorihietala@gmail.com
763.227.7645

From: Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul) [mailto:jamie.radel@ci.stpaul.mn.us]
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2018 2:12 PM
To: Hietala, Dori <Dori.Hietala@AndersenCorp.com>; Liz Boyer <liz@macgrove.org>
Subject: RE: ADU's in MacGroveland

If you send me an email that states your position, I can include that as testimony; it will be provided to the planning commissioners.

Regards,
Jamie

April 18, 2018

I am writing to urge the City of Saint Paul to allow, encourage, and truly embrace the development of Accessory Dwelling Units. We need them.

Here's why.

Cost/Effectiveness: Building an ADU is hands down the most cost-effective way for homeowners to increase their property values, and gives them the potential to recoup their investment BEFORE they sell. ADUs add finished square feet of living space to a homeowner's property. This is much more valuable than, say, a kitchen remodel, and can pay for itself through owner-occupied and owner-supervised rentals.

Affordability: At the same time, a property that contains an ADU is intrinsically MORE affordable than a property without one, since there is the potential for rental income to offset the mortgage cost. This is important, especially in Saint Paul, because we have a housing equity issue.

Housing Equity: Saint Paul has 44.8% nonwhite residents (compared to 21.6% in Minneapolis and 22.5% overall in the Midwest.)¹ However, our non-white populations appear to be clumped together rather than dispersed more equitably. The Thomas/Dale area has 81.6% non-white residents. Payne/Phalen, Dayton's Bluff, and the North End are all sitting at about 61% non-white, and Battle Creek, West Side, and Summit-University are in the mid-50% range. Compare this to Como, Mac/Groveland, and Summit Hill – all below 15% non-white residents.

This is interesting to me. I grew up in Mac/Groveland, and to be honest, I didn't see many people of color until I moved away to college. I didn't move back to Saint Paul until I was in my early 50s, after having lived and traveled across the country and around the world, and then deliberately chose to live in the Mounds Park area of Dayton's Bluff on Saint Paul's East Side. It's real here. My neighbors come from a wide range of income and education levels, races and ethnicities. We watch out for each other. We have a 30-year tradition of neighborhood progressive dinners. I get to live in a 1910 Victorian fairytale home that I have poured thousands of dollars into – income that I generated from welcoming guests from around the world through Airbnb. My house is on the Twin Cities home tour this year – number 49. You should come see it.

So what does this have to do with equity? Well – I still visit Mac/Groveland occasionally and still don't see much affordable housing there. It's not that we really have a shortage of affordable housing in Saint Paul – affordable homes are out there. They're just not... dispersed. Increasing access to ADUs, allowing people to increase the value of their homes while at the same time making homes more affordable for buyers and increasing the availability of affordable rental housing, will mainstream diversity in Saint Paul and bring us closer to housing equity.

And that would be a good thing. There is absolutely no substitute for the actual connection that comes from living side by side when trying to bridge gaps. Trust happens through small kindnesses, like when you shovel your neighbor's walkway and another neighbor plows out your driveway (this happened to me this past winter). People stop being stereotypes when you get to know their names, and say hi to their kids. We have such need for connection across our ethnic and racial divisions.

¹ <https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Minnesota/St-Paul/Race-and-Ethnicity> Chart #25.

Living in community with one another is one way to decrease our fear of the unknown. The Other. Saint Paul is uniquely diverse in the Midwest, but has not embraced this.

Yet.

ADUs can help with this.

Small is big. And getting bigger. A few years ago, when my 80-something dad was beginning to realize that his two-bedroom apartment was too big for him, he wanted to downsize. He was looking for a small home that wouldn't need much maintenance. My siblings and I desperately wanted him to retain his privacy and dignity as he aged, but also worried that he would not be safe living on his own much longer. Assisted living in a senior center was not remotely appealing to this proud gentleman who had served in Allied Intelligence during WWII. Eventually, I did major remodeling on my home in Wisconsin to accommodate his physical needs, and invited him to live with me. Dad stayed in my home with me for a year, dying peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family as he wished.

Not everyone or every family can deal with bringing a relative into their home when there is a need. (Truth be told, it was quite challenging at times having dad live WITH me.) However, with ADUs, families can accommodate housing needs of loved ones without sacrificing privacy. This is a gift across generations. In another example, friends who had built an apartment over their garage in Hudson, WI, had planned to use it as an office and had done the remodel as an investment. When their niece and her infant daughter needed emergency housing because of a family crisis, however, they were able to offer her a welcoming and private space free of charge.

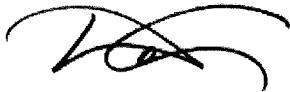
Because they lived in Hudson. They could also have had this option in Minneapolis. But not in Saint Paul.

Really?

It's time to *Accessorize* Saint Paul housing. We have many wonderful homes here, filled with character and charm. I, personally, would never dream of living in Woodbury. However, we need more flexibility in our housing options. Not everyone needs or wants 2,000 sf. Tiny houses are gaining in popularity, but there is also the option of *not-so-big* rather than tiny. Beautiful and graceful homes that are in the 600 – 900 sf range can be incredibly attractive and unique additions to their neighborhoods. Small does not mean poor quality. Small allows for good materials and thoughtful designs. Design can and should be regulated. ADUs can be extraordinary additions to their neighborhoods, adding a unique charm *because of*, not despite, their small size.

And when we invite these little ADU gems to populate our fair city, we will also be inviting cultural and ethnic diversity, transforming the very fabric of our neighborhoods.

Thank you.



Trudy Ohnsorg
1125 Burns Avenue, Saint Paul
TrudyOhnsorg@gmail.com
651-399-4887

Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)

From: Mark Thieroff <markthieroff@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 18, 2018 10:47 PM
To: Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Comment on ADU proposal

Hi Jamie,

Below is my comment on ADUs for the Planning Commission.

Thank you.

Mark Thieroff

Dear members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for allowing all three types of ADUs, citywide. I support allowing ADUs for many of the typical reasons, which you will have heard from many others. I will therefore use my comment to explain why you should not be swayed by the reasons cited in opposition to ADUs.

I was on the St. Anthony Park ADU task force a couple of years back, and as part of that year long process I participated in 10 work sessions of the task force and two public meetings that we held. The meetings were well attended, by people on all sides of the issue. After all of those meetings I was forced to conclude that much of the opposition is based on opposition to change in general and opposition to rental housing in particular. Opponents would talk about the impact on the character of the neighborhood, yet our neighborhood has an increasing number of massive garages that are completely out of character, yet uncontroversial. Opponents would talk about the loss in greenery that might be caused by ADUs, yet property owners can and do already remove trees for additions, accessory structures and, yes, those massive garages. (And we are talking about private property after all.) Opponents would raise fears of a parking shortage, until data from the City demonstrated there is a volume of available on-street parking in our neighborhood that could never be consumed by ADU dwellers. There were also concerns about party houses and other nuisance issues, but this is adequately addressed by the owner occupancy requirement. On and on it went.

We have a housing shortage. ADUs will not alone solve that problem, or even make a large dent in the problem. But they can be part of the solution, while also providing a new option for those looking to age in place or live with extended family. Adding modest amounts of additional density can also provide a small boost to transit ridership and neighborhood businesses.

The last point I want to make is that this is a citywide issue and should not be decided on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis.

Thank you for considering my views.

Mark Thieroff
1438 Chelmsford St.

Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)

From: Rhona Wilson <rhonawilson@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2018 10:57 AM
To: Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Re: ADUs

No concerns at all. I'm at 1438 Chelmsford St, 55108.

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

> On Apr 19, 2018, at 10:46 AM, Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul) <jamie.radel@ci.stpaul.mn.us> wrote:
>
> Hi Rhona-
>
> If you want this to be included in the official record, I need your address to be included. If you have concerns about that, I will redact it before it is distributed.
>
> Jamie
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Rhona Wilson [mailto:rhonawilson@icloud.com]
> Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2018 9:05 AM
> To: Radel, Jamie (CI-StPaul) <jamie.radel@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
> Subject: ADUs
>
> Hello Jamie,
>
> Ahead of tomorrow's meeting on ADUs with the Planning Commission, I wanted to voice my support for ADUs being permitted throughout the city of St. Paul. I'm not sure why only 5 areas of the city are being considered for this, and think this should be under consideration for all areas of St. Paul. I especially like the options that ADUs open up to families that wish to accommodate relatives at different stages of life, such as boomerang children, grandparents, family members with disabilities, in a tight and expensive housing market.
>
> Thank you for considering my point of view.
>
> Rhona Wilson (St Paul resident in 55108)
>

April 19, 2018

To the Saint Paul Planning Commission
RE: Accessory Dwelling Unit Study

As a new resident in Ward 2, I'd like to share some thoughts about accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for your consideration. I am in support of ADUs in all of Saint Paul.

We recently bought a home on the East Side. Prior to purchasing our home, we were looking only in Minneapolis and the area around University Avenue because of the ability to build ADUs. We have aging parents and want to plan for a future that includes them, and accessory dwellings would be a welcome possibility. Also, we wanted more potential flexibility to have additional income if we were in need.

One of the reasons we were comfortable making the decision to buy a house on the East Side was that we found one on a double lot, which we could split if needed, and essentially have an ADU-type arrangement. I recognize that standard lots are by far the most common in the neighborhood, and feel that everybody should have the opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of ADUs.

I believe that with reasonable considerations in the ordinance language, the fears that many people have, such as low-quality buildings and absentee landlords, can be minimized.

Thank you for reading this and please support ADUs not just in the Planning Districts being discussed, but throughout the City.

Sincerely,

Haley Richardson
2250 Maryland Ave E
Saint Paul, MN 55119



Frogtown Neighborhood Association (District 7)

501 North Dale Street, Saint Paul, MN 55103
651-236-8699 www.frogtown.org

April 23, 2018

Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. W
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Planning Commission Members,


Frogtown Neighborhood Association strongly supports the expansion of the ADU area throughout the City. The Community and the organization are deeply concerned about our ADU's and need the kind of support this policy contemplates giving to our alley houses. They are culturally significant and will serve the same folks they were built to serve; Frogtowners!


The alley houses remain an important and underutilized source of naturally occurring affordable housing and so one more tool we can use in our struggle against the market forces of gentrification.

They are also again structures that can be used for our elders who are in serious need of affordable housing.

Thank you for working on this important policy and for ensuring the expansion reaches the communities that need it the most.

Very Sincerely,


Caty Royce
Co-Director FNA


Tia Williams
Co-Director FNA



West 7th/Fort Road Federation

974 West 7th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

651-298-5599

FortRoadFederation.org

April 23, 2018

TO: Jamie Radel, Senior Planner
Department of Planning & Economic Development

CC: Councilmember Rebecca Noecker
310 City Hall

FROM: Becky Yust, President
Fort Road Federation

[via email]

RE: Accessory Dwelling Units expansion

Thank you for presenting information about the expansion of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) at the March meeting of the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors. We also had information available at our April annual meeting.

The Board nor the community took an official position on the expansion. Generally, we see the zoning as an opportunity for some households to provide an additional living unit, however, issues of parking could be a concern.

HAMLIN MIDWAY COALITION
DISTRICT COUNCIL 11
1558 W MINNEHAHA AVENUE,
ST. PAUL MN 55104
651.494.7682 | www.hamlinmidway.org



April 17, 2018

Jamie Radel, Senior Planner
Department of Planning & Economic Development
City of Saint Paul

To Whom It May Concern:

Hamline Midway Coalition supports changes to Saint Paul's Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance to allow for the construction of ADU's in suitable areas throughout the entire city.

HMC also recommends the elimination of the minimum lot size requirement for attached ADU's.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 651-494-7682 or michaeljon@hamlinmidway.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Jon Olson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Jon Olson, Executive Director

April 20, 2018

To: Jamie Radel, Planning and Economic Development, City of Saint Paul
Fr: Kathleen Kelso, Saint Paul Advisory Committee on Aging
Re: Zoning Changes to Allow City-Wide Accessory Dwelling Units

The Saint Paul Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) supports the proposed amendments to the zoning code that would permit accessory dwelling units in the R1 – RM2 and T1 – T3 zoning districts. We support regulations that establish standards and conditions, including conditions related to lot location, minimum lot size, number of accessory units, unit occupancy, unit characteristics, access and entrances, parking, and ownership.

The Saint Paul Advisory Committee on Aging seeks opportunities for community-wide discussions about the future of affordable and life-cycle housing in the metropolitan region. We look forward to thoughtful and intentional strategies to advance the stated policy priority of the Metro Council in Thrive 2040: *Create housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes.*

We are all aging. Affordable and life-cycle housing as it relates to aging is not just about “boomers” but whole neighborhoods. As we age, the demographic shift will drive housing demand. Housing that is built or modified for aging households sends a message to people of all ages: Saint Paul supports neighbors as we age in our communities.

We consider this public discussion on ADUs and proposed amendments to the zoning code as the beginning of a city wide public discussion about “aging in community” and what that means – socially, culturally and economically.

The accelerating teardown phenomenon affecting the two metro central cities clearly reflects the increasing premium on living in urban locations where a wide range of amenities are available to people of all ages. Both Minneapolis and St. Paul are essentially “built out,” thus ADUs offer a definite option for increasing housing stock.

ADUs provide a number of benefits for residents of both the primary and accessory units:

- Accessory units intended as rental housing are a source of additional income for primary unit owners, and would provide one or more additional sets of security “eyes” on a primary unit and adjacent properties. This would serve as a means to assist an older adult(s) to reside in his/her home safely.
- ADUs could house paid caregivers providing support for/assistance to residents in the primary unit who have various health/mobility limitations.
- ACOA strongly supports intergenerational living as a way to encourage and sustain aging in one’s own community. There has been clear, definite growth in family “intergenerational” living in the U.S. in the past decade, and ADUs would readily

promote those opportunities. These arrangements may involve rental payments, but may more commonly involve housing at no or little charge for family members.

- Owners of a primary unit might choose to continue living there while family members (or others) move into the accessory unit. Or younger family members could move into the primary unit when the property owners relocate to the accessory unit. This option can be particularly important when the primary unit has accessibility problems for the owners, and the accessory unit can incorporate universal design features.
- Increasingly, groups of older adults, couples and/or singles, are discussing and seeking to contract for purchase, to modify or to design and build a custom home in residential areas. With an ADU, if the primary unit doesn't have adequate layout and/or accessibility for all involved, one or more in the group could live in the primary unit and the others in the accessory unit. This arrangement could facilitate care and support if/as health/medical conditions of certain members in a group change over time. These arrangements may involve various members renting from owners of the primary unit or living rent-free, or perhaps all parties have an ownership share.

The ACOA encourages public conversations and public policy debates such as this one to acknowledge that people of all ages are at all times aging and that life-needs are constantly changing. We hope that neighbors will recognize the value of older adults in their neighborhoods by enabling all neighbors to live there and age in their community as long as it is possible.

The ACOA uses the term *aging in community* intentionally and often to reframe our way of thinking about aging. We encourage public discussion that shifts the focus from the dwelling place toward *relationships* that create the *social and community support* necessary for people of all ages to thrive in their communities.

The *Aging in Community* concept “...encourages a proactive strategy to create supportive neighborhoods and networks. Thus, the well-being and quality of life for elders at home becomes a measure of the success of the community “([Thomas, 2014](#)). *Aging in Community* is the viable alternative to institutionalization; it is a way of life that at its heart recognizes that aging is the reality for all of us, and that whether it's the youngest among us, Millennials or Boomers, everyone is acknowledged and treated as a valuable resource in their community.

With the right set of policies for housing, including enforceable regulations for ADUs, older adults aging **in** community would be allowed to remain as integral members of that community.