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# City of Boulder Accessory Dwelling Unit Survey Summary of Results

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## Summary of Results

### Survey Background

The City of Boulder's Planning & Development Services Department contracted with National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) to conduct a survey about accessory units within the city. The purpose of the survey was to help understand how these units contribute to housing opportunities within the city and also to determine how the current program might be improved.

An accessory unit is a secondary living unit that is located within a residence or in an accessory building on the same property. Most often, accessory units are created through the conversion of basement or attic space, or space above a garage. The Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance makes a distinction between Accessory Dwelling Units, Owner's Accessory Units and Limited Dwelling Units. However, for the purposes of this study, all three were referred to as accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

City staff crafted a first draft of the questions to be asked on the survey. These were refined through an iterative process with NRC staff. Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was programmed to be available online if recipients preferred to complete the survey on the internet rather than the hard copy.

All 133 households in the City's records shown to maintain an accessory dwelling unit were selected to receive the survey. First, these households were sent a pre-notification postcard that introduced the survey and explained its importance. A few days after the postcard was mailed, selected households were sent a survey packet. This packet included the survey, a cover letter from the Executive Director of Community Planning & Sustainability explaining the study and a postage-paid pre-addressed envelope in which to return the completed survey. The cover letter included a Web link to the survey for those who preferred to complete the survey online. A reminder packet was sent to all households about one week after the first packet, asking those that had not yet completed the survey to please do so.

Of the 133 addresses to which a survey was mailed, four were found to be vacant or otherwise undeliverable by the post office. A total of 75 completed surveys were received, for a response rate of 58%. Of the 75 completed surveys, eight were completed online and 67 were mailed hard copies.

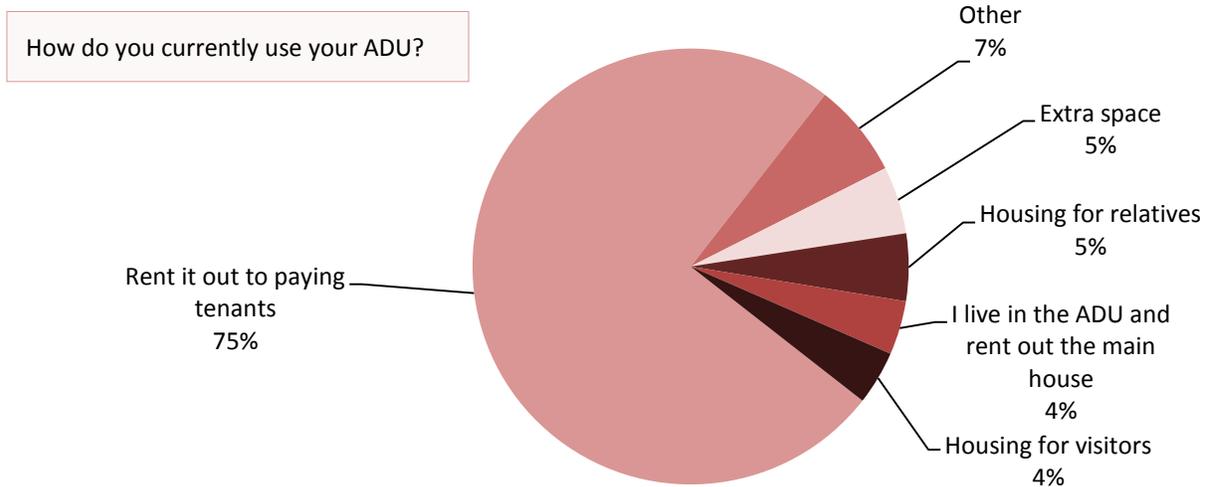
Highlights of the survey results are provided on the following pages, and the full set of responses can be found in *Appendix A: Responses to Survey Questions*. Several questions on the survey were "open-ended" questions; that is, respondents could respond in their own words. In addition, some questions had a list of responses from which respondents could choose their answer, including an "other" option, with an adjacent blank space in which respondents could write in a response in their own words. Both types of written-in responses are listed in their entirety in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-Ended Questions*. *Appendix C: Survey Materials* contains a copy of the mailed version of the survey and the cover letter that accompanied the first survey packet mailing.

## Highlights of the Survey Results

- **Most of those completing the survey (75%) were currently renting their ADU to paying tenants.**

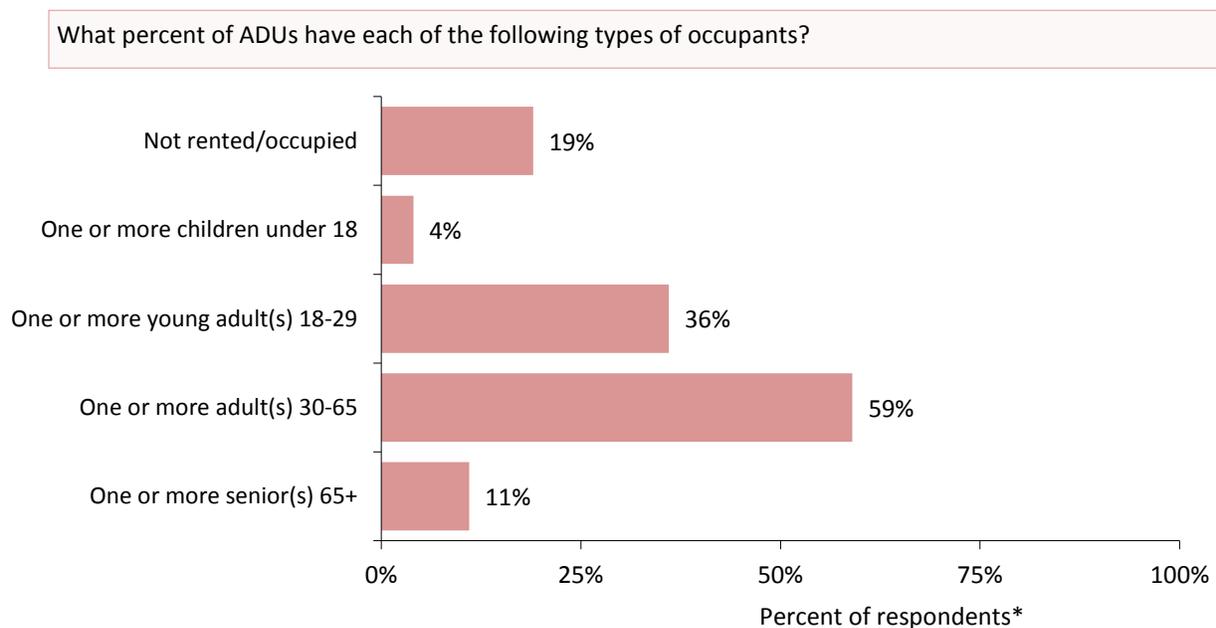
For most respondents (69%), supplemental income through rental of the ADU was the reason they had created or retained the ADU (see Table 5). Supplemental income was seen as the primary benefit of the ADU by nearly all (91%) of respondents (see Table 7).

**Figure 1: Current Use of the ADU**



- **Adults (age 30 to 59) or young adults (age 18 to 29) were the primary ADU occupants.** Among occupied units, the average occupancy was 1.39 persons (see Table 8).

**Figure 2: Age of Occupants of ADUs**



\*Percents may add to more than 100% as ADUs could have more than one occupant.

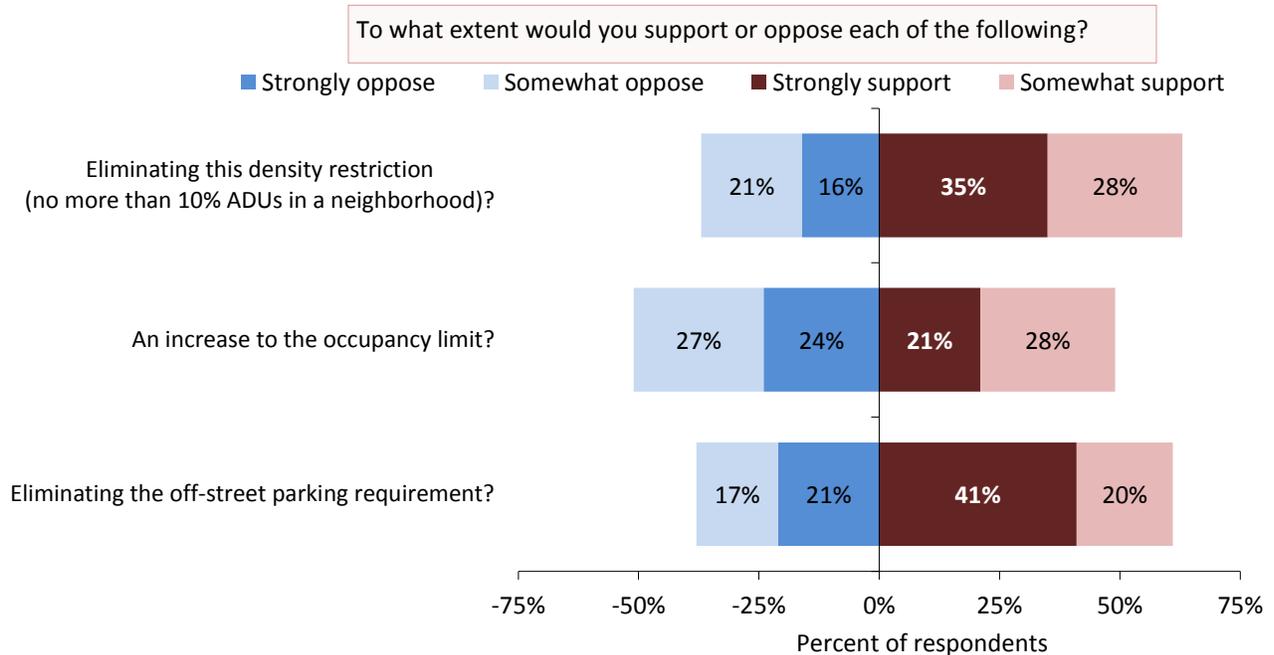
➤ **The average monthly rent for renter-occupied ADUs was about \$1,000.** Just over 20% of units rented for under \$800 per month, and just over 20% of units rented for more than \$1,300 per month (see Table 11). For most units (85%), the rent included utilities (see Table 12). In a few cases (9%), other compensation was provided by the tenant in return for living in the ADU (see Table 14).

➤ **When respondents were able to make an estimate of the household income of their ADU tenants, 51% were estimated to have annual household incomes of \$40,000 or less.** Only about half of survey respondents who had occupied ADUs were able to make an estimate of their tenants’ annual household income. Among those for whom estimates were made, 17% were estimated as less than \$20,000; 34% as between \$20,000 and \$40,000; 41% as between \$40,000 and \$80,000; and 7% as more than \$80,000 (see Table 16).

When asked the occupations of the adult tenants, about 20% were reported to be students. Another 41% were professionals, while 17% were service workers or restaurant or retail workers. Just under 10% were retired, and the others were something else (see Table 17).

➤ **A majority of respondents supported eliminating the density restriction and the off-street parking requirement for ADUs (although over a third of respondents opposed each), while a slight majority opposed increasing the occupancy limit.** Those completing the questionnaire were asked to what extent they supported or opposed changing several elements of the ADU ordinance. The figure below shows the proportion of respondents with an opinion who supported or opposed each potential modification.

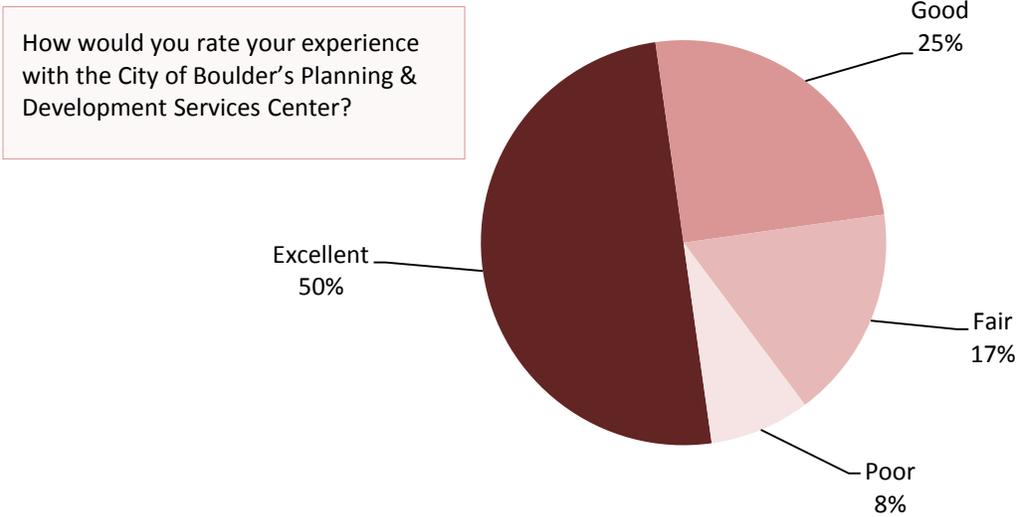
**Figure 3: Support or Opposition to Various Possible Changes to the ADU Ordinance**



- **Three-quarters of respondents who had interacted with the City of Boulder’s Planning & Development Services Center regarding their ADU rated the interaction as excellent or good.**

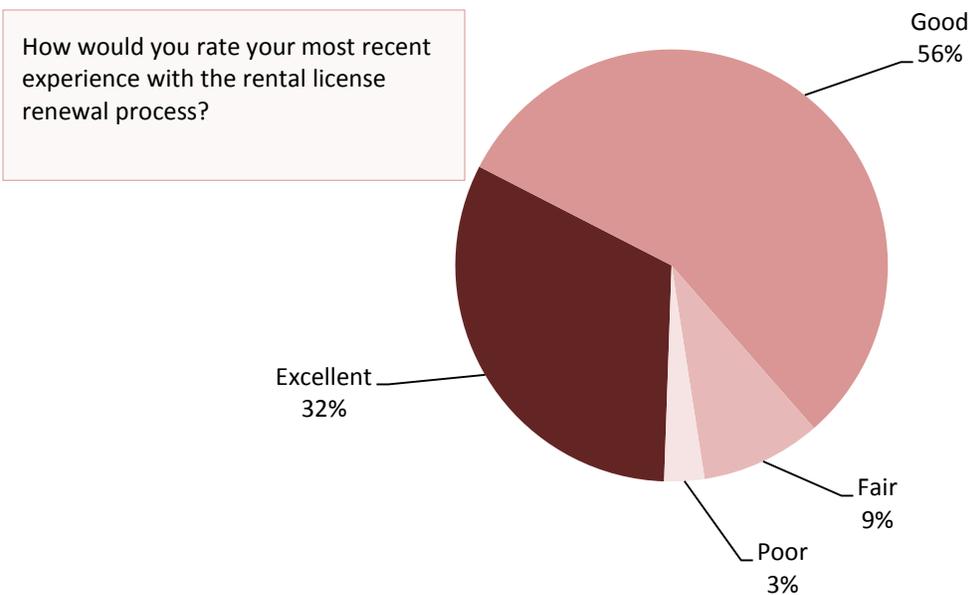
Among the 17% of respondents who had interaction with the City of Boulder’s Planning & Development Services Center in the last 12 months regarding their ADU (see Table 25), most rated their interaction positively (see Table 27).

**Figure 4: Ratings of Experience with the City of Boulder’s Planning & Development Services Center**



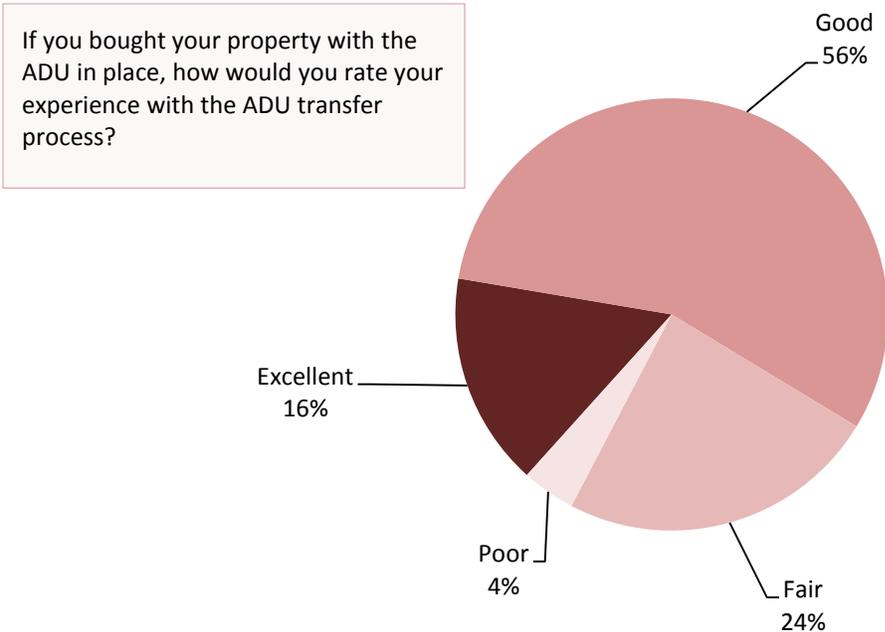
- **More than three-quarters of respondents rated their most recent experience with the rental license renewal process as excellent or good.**

**Figure 5: Ratings of Rental License Renewal Process**



- **About two-thirds of respondents who had bought the property with the ADU in place rated their experience with the transfer process as excellent or good.**

Figure 6: Ratings of ADU Transfer Process



- **Most of those responding to the survey had created the ADU on their property themselves, and about half had done so since 2000.**
  - When asked if they had created the ADU or if it existed when they bought the property, two-thirds of respondents said they had created the ADU while one-third said it already existed when they acquired the property (see Table 1).
  - Just under half (46%) of respondents said their ADU had been created in the year 2000 or later, while 37% said their ADU had been created between 1980 and 1999. Only 1% said their ADU had been created prior to 1980, and 15% weren't sure when their ADU had been created (see Table 2).
  - Nearly half of the ADUs (48%) were in the basement of the building, with another 17% on the first floor and 13% in a separate building (see Table 3).
  - About 40% of the ADUs were between 500 and 800 square feet in area. Another 30% were between 800 and 1,000 square feet. About 17% were smaller than 500 square feet, and only 9% were larger than 1,000 square feet (see Table 4).

## Appendix A: Responses to Survey Questions

The full set of responses to each survey question is displayed in the tables below.

**Table 1: Question #1**

<b>Did you create the ADU or did it exist when you purchased the property?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
I/we created the ADU	67%
It existed when I purchased the property	33%
I/we no longer have an ADU on this property	0%
Total	100%

**Table 2: Question #2**

<b>When was the ADU created?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Before 1980	1%
Between 1980 and 1989	19%
Between 1990 and 1999	18%
Between 2000 and 2009	41%
Between 2010 and 2012	5%
I don't know	15%
Total	100%

**Table 3: Question #3**

<b>Where is the ADU located?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Basement	48%
First floor	17%
Separate building	13%
Other**	9%
Over garage	7%
Second floor	5%
Total	100%

*\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.*

**Table 4: Question #4**

<b>About what size is the ADU?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Less than 500 square feet	17%
Between 501-800 square feet	41%
Between 801-1,000 square feet	29%
Between 1,001 and 1,200 square feet	8%
Over 1,200 square feet	1%
I don't know	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5: Question #5**

<b>What was your primary reason for adding or retaining the ADU?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Supplemental income	69%
Other**	12%
Housing for relatives	11%
Housing for caretakers	4%
Housing for visitors	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.*

**Table 6: Question #6**

<b>How do you currently use your ADU?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Rent it out to paying tenants	75%
Other**	7%
Extra space	5%
Housing for relatives	5%
I live in the ADU and rent out the main house	4%
Housing for visitors	4%
Rent it out in return for other services (e.g., childcare, yard work, etc.)	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.*

**Table 7: Question #7**

What do you consider to be the primary benefits of maintaining an ADU? (Please check all that apply.)	Percent of Respondents*
Supplemental income	91%
Space for relatives	29%
Space for visitors	25%
Other**	17%
Security/companionship of a tenant	16%

\*Percents may add to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 8: Question #8**

How many persons in each age category currently occupy the ADU?	Average Number of People
Children under 18	.07
Young adult(s) 18-29	.50
adult(s) 30-65	.71
Senior(s) 65+	.11
Total number of people living in ADU	1.39

**Table 9: Question #8**

What percent of ADUs have each of the following types of occupants?	Percent of ADUs
Percent of ADUs that are not rented/occupied	19%
Percent of ADUs with one or more children under 18	4%
Percent of ADUs with one or more young adult(s) 18-29	36%
Percent of ADUs with one or more adult(s) 30-65	59%
Percent of ADUs with one or more senior(s) 65+	11%

\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 10: Question #9**

What is the current monthly rent, or if not occupied, the anticipated rent?	Average Rent
What is the current monthly rent, or if not occupied, the anticipated rent?	\$1,064

**Table 11: Question #9**

What is the current monthly rent, or if not occupied, the anticipated rent?	Percent of Respondents
500	2%
585	2%
625	2%
700	2%
710	2%
750	8%
755	2%
780	2%
800	5%
850	3%
875	2%
900	2%
950	8%
975	2%
980	2%
1000	9%
1080	2%
1100	11%
1200	9%
1250	6%
1275	3%
1350	3%
1390	2%
1400	3%
1415	2%
1475	2%
1485	2%
1500	3%
1600	2%
1745	2%
Total	100%

**Table 12: Question #9a**

Does this rent include utilities?	Percent of Respondents
No	15%
Yes	85%
Total	100%

**Table 13: Question #9b**

Which utilities? (Check all that apply.)	Percent of Respondents Who Include Utilities in Rent*
Water	100%
Waste	100%
Electric	95%
Gas	93%

\*Percents may add to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

**Table 14: Question #10**

Is other compensation provided by the tenant in return for living in the ADU?	Percent of Respondents
No	91%
Yes	9%
Total	100%

**Table 15: Question #10a**

What kind of compensation? (Check all that apply.)	Percent of Respondents Whose Tenants Provide Other Compensation*
Other**	50%
House care	38%
Pet caretaking	38%
Child care	13%
Senior care	13%

\*Percents may add to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 16: Question #12**

What is the approximate annual household income of the tenant(s) of the ADU?	Percent of Respondents	Percent of ADUs where income was estimated
Less than \$20,000	7%	17%
About \$20,000 to \$40,000	14%	34%
About \$40,000 to \$80,000	17%	41%
About \$80,000 or more	3%	7%
I don't know	46%	
Other**	3%	
The unit is not currently rented/occupied	10%	
Total	100%	100%

\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 17: Question #13**

What is the occupation of the adult resident(s) of the ADU? (Please check all that apply if more than one adult resident.)	Percent of Respondents*
Professional	41%
Student	20%
Service Worker/Retail/Restaurant	17%
The unit is not currently rented/occupied	11%
Other**	10%
Retired	9%
Caretaker/Caregiver for household	4%

\*Percents may add to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 18: Question #14**

Have your neighbors expressed an opinion about your ADU?	Percent of Respondents
No, they haven't mentioned anything	52%
In general, they approve	40%
Other**	4%
They are unaware of the ADU	3%
Occasional complaints	1%
Total	100%

\*\*The specified "other" responses can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 19: Question #15 (with “No opinion”)**

<b>Currently, one additional off-street parking space is required for an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose eliminating the off-street parking requirement?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Strongly support	39%
Somewhat support	19%
Somewhat oppose	16%
Strongly oppose	20%
No opinion	7%
Total	100%

**Table 20: Question #15 (without “No opinion”)**

<b>Currently, one additional off-street parking space is required for an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose eliminating the off-street parking requirement?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents with an Opinion</b>
Strongly support	41%
Somewhat support	20%
Somewhat oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	21%
Total	100%

**Table 21: Question #16 (with “No opinion”)**

<b>Currently, only 2 residents may occupy an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose an increase to the occupancy limit?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Strongly support	19%
Somewhat support	25%
Somewhat oppose	24%
Strongly oppose	21%
No opinion	11%
Total	100%

**Table 22: Question #16 (without “No opinion”)**

<b>Currently, only 2 residents may occupy an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose an increase to the occupancy limit?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents with an Opinion</b>
Strongly support	21%
Somewhat support	28%
Somewhat oppose	27%
Strongly oppose	24%
Total	100%

**Table 23: Question #17 (with “No opinion”)**

<b>Currently, only 10% of properties in a neighborhood are allowed to have an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose eliminating this density restriction?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Strongly support	32%
Somewhat support	25%
Somewhat oppose	19%
Strongly oppose	15%
No opinion	9%
Total	100%

**Table 24: Question #17 (without “No opinion”)**

<b>Currently, only 10% of properties in a neighborhood are allowed to have an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose eliminating this density restriction?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents with an Opinion</b>
Strongly support	35%
Somewhat support	28%
Somewhat oppose	21%
Strongly oppose	16%
Total	100%

**Table 25: Question #18**

<b>Have you had any interaction with the City of Boulder’s Planning &amp; Development Services Center in the last 12 months regarding your ADU?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
No	83%
Yes	17%
Total	100%

**Table 26: Question #18a (with “No opinion”)**

<b>How would you rate your experience with the City of Boulder’s Planning &amp; Development Services Center?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents Who Had Had an Interaction</b>
Excellent	46%
Good	23%
Fair	15%
Poor	8%
No opinion	8%
Total	100%

**Table 27: Question #18a (without “No opinion”)**

<b>How would you rate your experience with the City of Boulder’s Planning &amp; Development Services Center?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents with an Opinion Who Had Had an Interaction</b>
Excellent	50%
Good	25%
Fair	17%
Poor	8%
Total	100%

**Table 28: Question #19**

<b>How would you rate your most recent experience with the rental license renewal process?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Excellent	29%
Good	51%
Fair	8%
Poor	3%
Have not had to renew the rental license	9%
Total	100%

**Table 29: Question #19**

<b>How would you rate your most recent experience with the rental license renewal process?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents with an Opinion</b>
Excellent	32%
Good	56%
Fair	9%
Poor	3%
Total	100%

**Table 30: Question #20**

<b>If you bought your property with the ADU in place, how would you rate your experience with the ADU transfer process?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Excellent	7%
Good	23%
Fair	10%
Poor	2%
Have not transferred the ADU	58%
Total	100%

**Table 31: Question #20**

<b>If you bought your property with the ADU in place, how would you rate your experience with the ADU transfer process?</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents with an Opinion</b>
Excellent	16%
Good	56%
Fair	24%
Poor	4%
Total	100%

## **Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-Ended Questions**

Several questions on the survey were “open-ended” questions; that is, respondents could respond in their own words. Other questions had a list of responses from which respondents could choose their answer, but one of the options was “other” in which the respondent could write-in their own response in their own words. These written-in responses are provided in this appendix.

### **Question #3. Where is the ADU located? (Other responses)**

- Behind garage, main floor
- Garage
- Garage converted to ADU attached to house.
- Garden level
- Walk out basement level
- Walkout - lower level

### **Question #5. What was your primary reason for adding or retaining the ADU? (Other responses)**

- All of the above
- Create more housing in Boulder.
- For parents, then for rent.
- House is bigger than what I need.
- Improve the basement.
- Initially for income, currently for visitors, future for relative.
- Move into while remodeling home, then help pay for the garage teardown & rebuild.
- Options
- Was in place at time of property purchase.

### **Question # 6. How do you currently use your ADU? (Other responses)**

- Caretaker
- For rent
- Garage - parking
- Guests, non-profit organization meetings.
- Occasional s/t renters

### **Question #7. What do you consider to be the primary benefits of maintaining an ADU? (Please check all that apply.) (Other responses)**

- Caretaker
- Cheaper than tearing it out
- Flexible lifestyle
- Future space for aging parents
- Increases value of my home
- Maximizing housing downtown.

- More housing in Boulder
- Offer affordable hip place for a person to live downtown.
- Resale value
- Retirement downsizing + increase rental income from "main" house
- Space to live in for couple during house rebuild
- Take care of things in our absence
- Use of unused space

**Question # 10a. What kind of other compensation provided by the tenant in return for living in the ADU? (Check all that apply.) (Other responses)**

- Collect mail & papers
- I am disabled, tenants assist w/snow shoveling and trash take out.
- Lawn mowing
- Rent
- When away plant caretaking when I am away.

**Question #12. What is the approximate annual household income of the tenant(s) of the ADU? (Other responses)**

- 1
- Student

**Question #13. What is the occupation of the adult resident(s) of the ADU? (Please check all that apply if more than one adult resident.) (Other responses)**

- 1
- Mother passed Dec. 2011
- Fitness instructor City of Boulder
- Nanny
- Bookkeeper
- Part-time professional

**Question #14. Have your neighbors expressed an opinion about your ADU? (Other responses)**

- My neighbors are all perfectly fine with the ADU. My tenants are always perfectly accepted in the neighborhood
- Neighbors, friends, others are always looking for a short-term (month-to-month) housing
- One complained (automatically; they are very grumpy), the City explained it was legal, they are fine now.
- One nuisance neighbor complained to harass one about an ancillary issue. All other neighbors approve.
- They have asked in general that no one park in front of their house (1 neighbor - senior couple).
- They have made friends with 2 of our tenants

- We only rent to quiet, responsible tenants, therefore, our neighbors have never complained.
- When first proposed one neighbor took out a petition against. They have since moved & current neighbors seem fine with it.

**Question #21. What, if any, changes would you recommend to the ADU program?**

- 1. Increase the square footage allowed. 2. Increase # of people allowed - in total my house has 7 bedrooms. I am unmarried and have 1 child at home but can only rent to 2 unrelated people.
- ADU's are terrific! These are in-fill development with no increase in impact. Allows families to stay together in a sustainable fashion (sharing an entrance and kitchen is not sustainable!)
- I recommend making it easier. In particular, the requirement for an interior connection between units is very problematic from an architectural and construction standpoint. This is very difficult and unnecessary; the goals of the program can be accomplished w/o it.
- The regs on who can live there are extremely limiting - they should be the same as for any other dwelling."
- Allow a higher density in certain neighborhoods.
- Allow more of them to help offset our high price point homes.
- Applicant assigned to one planner? Is current codes. Planner seems to discourage ADU's.
- Better training for city inspectors/agents
- Change off street parking requirement. Allow none ADU's.
- Consider increasing the 10% of properties in a neighborhood limit somewhat - by 5 or 10%
- Definitely eliminate parking requirement. Bus system and biking is excellent in Boulder & many people do not have a car.
- Eliminate rental license if there is no intent to rent it. This one is currently used for a caretaker for the house and elderly owner. Occupants of the ADU are considered household members i.e.; separate the ADU & rental license process.
- Eliminate s.f limitations & parking requirement as well as occupancy limits. ADU's should be easier to construct in any house without so many limiting code requirements.
- Exemption from utility upgrades. Treat as 2 family home for water budget purposes. Allow more ADU's -- it lets lower income people live in nice neighborhoods & provides needed income to homeowners facing rising taxes & utility bills. Eliminate off street parking requirement.
- I feel if I have an ADU and use it only for an exchange help in lieu of rent I shouldn't be subject to all the rules/hurdles required of renters.
- I think eliminating the parking clause would make it easier for people to obtain an ADU license. Boulder is an urban community & on street parking is easy to find. Parking should not be a barrier for potential landlords.
- I think that the licensing renewal should be relaxed or extended by a few years. It becomes expensive to hire "your contractors". I think any professional in their field should be able to do the inspections."
- I think the program was generally very well thought out when I applied in 2000. I am not aware of current procedures, so I am unable to comment on what might have already changed.
- I think the required separation between ADU's should be relaxed (however, keeping the neighborhood density requirement).
- It appears to be ok as it is right now.

- It would be nice to have an option to keep the ADU in a frozen state where I wouldn't have to keep renewing the rental license (haven't rented it out for about 8 years), but wouldn't have to tear the kitchen out. Maybe there could be a minimal frozen state fee or something. I'd like to be able to sell the house to someone w/ the ADU intact, years in the future, but my husband and I will never rent it out ourselves.
- Make it easier to get one.
- Make the application process less complicated.
- Many. The gov't shouldn't limit or prescribe property usage that doesn't conflict with area regs. I live alone so there's no add'l burden on city infrastructure/density for me to have an ADU. It's not as if me and 2 tenants puts more strain on city svcs than a family of 5. 10% rule should therefore also be struck. That's like saying if my neighbor does x with their property I can't. Also 35% rule should be flexible according to the layout of the house, up to 50% (ie, no limit if no major mod).
- More of 'em - owner occupied property req'd.
- More permissiveness regarding rental of the main house while maintaining the ADU designation. It would be nice to be able to rent out my house for a year or two without concern of no longer having an ADU.
- More widely publicized and encouraged as housing alternative. Expansion of density/neighborhood restrictions.
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None. Don't know current details.
- Not sure why I have to have a fire supression system (independent water tank) in the garage. My house doesn't have this and if a sprinkler system is required, why not just hook it up to the city plumbing. The tank takes up room in the garage where I'd like to use this space.
- Permit ADU in new construction; we had to wait 5 years and could not prewire for 220v. That was very inconvenient.
- Recommend that I may legally rent out a room outside the ADU.
- Seems to be pretty good to me.
- Seems to be working well. Maybe carefully increase occupants to allow for children.
- Separate address and mailbox.
- The off street parking requirements, which are rigid, and fail to take into account how the neighborhood functions.
- There are lots of rental units that are not legal ADUs. Need to get these units into compliance
- Up the percentages allowed to 15-20%
- We think it is working. Bigger size.
- Wish we could have created a one bedroom instead of a studio w/required 5 ft deck. Sprinkler requirement tank was hard to design around when placed in garage, but we understand the importance of having the system.

**Question #22. What, if any, changes would you suggest to improve the process of acquiring an ADU?**

- 1. No neighbor notice as it's not their business what someone does with private property. 2. Fee is way too high. City cost is likely < \$100 so its a bit of usury. 3. Separate entrance can be prohibitive. Rule should only require a lockable door between two spaces. 4. The City should be clear about what properties can have are. I hesitated to buy my house until I could get a clear answer as I couldn't afford to make a mistake and buy the wrong place.
- Be more flexible in size of ADU compared to main house.
- Eliminate duplications of inspections & fees.
- Fees to initiate should be lower. Many people rent parts of their homes & don't have licenses.
- I had to be extremely persistent and push thru a lot of barriers to do something that everyone at the City thought was great. The process is very difficult.
- Note that almost all ADU's require a building permit - these two processes need to be much more integrated and cooperative. I had a conditional ADU permit, but the Building Inspector said my second kitchen was in violation because I didn't have my permit yet - but I couldn't get the final permit until construction was approved ... Catch-22.
- I recall the process being very difficult to figure out, w/ several meetings at the licensing office.
- It would have been nice to have a "ADU FAQ" or common things to know about the ADU certification process.
- Also, it would be nice if a garage and driveway could count as 2 parking spots. I only had 2-3 cars belonging to this household when it was rented out, which is nothing compared to the other rentals on our street where it's common to see 4-6 cars out front of those houses.
- Increase the likeliness of ADU transferring with the property.
- Increased city density is a plus. It reduces travel/commute. It improves social environment. Make ADU acquisition easier.
- Just easier to obtain
- Make it easier.
- Make it less onerous and expensive and more expeditious for property owner.
- Make it simpler. There are so many people renting illegally. Why not make it an easier process with more relaxed inspection process. Then residents might be more likely to rent legally. People do not like dealing with the City because the oversight is uncomfortable. I know people who have not wanted to bother because of the renewal process... too many contractors who make money for nothing. As I said, a person should be able to hire his own chosen contractor where they can pay far less money and do this LESS OFTEN.
- N/a
- N/a
- N/a
- None
- None
- None
- None. Keep tenants safe. Please continue to require inspections, etc.
- Promote the availability of acquiring ADU to decrease illegal rentals and increase safety of renters.

- Providing good access/documentation on the requirements of an ADU on the Boulder web site.
- Publicize more
- See above
- Since it is ok right now, I don't know of anything.
- The process has probably changed since we acquired of ADU in 1998.
- They ought to inspect the main house as well. My ADU was plumbed to a 2' sanitary drain. (I fixed it running 3' to my main stack).
- Took me 4 months plus \$25,000 to comply with all the regulations eg; electrical upgrade, new furnace, cut in big windows. Maybe warn people what they're in for.
- Transfer process should be simpler, without need to re-inspect unit, if ADU license is current.
- We have only done renewal process, so can't speak to initial acquiring process.

**Question #23. What, if any, are the disadvantages of maintaining an ADU?**

- Bad renters. I've been very lucky only one bad set in 3 years.
- Bad tenants
- Bad tenants
- Can't think of any - maybe maintaining paperwork; keeping property well-maintained and up to code.
- City license fees
- Cost
- Currently none, but I'm concerned about what the costs will be to meet the new energy smart requirements.
- Finding renters to share our home. Extra maintenance/upkeep.
- Have to deal with the City.
- Have to decide whether to renew the rental license or pay to tear out the ADU when you haven't rented it for 8 years and don't plan to before you sell the house.
- I have not found any disadvantages. No more the other rentals. Cost per square foot is high.
- Inability to rent main house
- Inspections while I support them are a bit expensive.
- It really depends on having the right person. My tenant has been here for 7 yrs. It has worked out beautifully.
- Loss of some degree of family privacy due to the presence of a tenant.
- My ADU is in the basement. I make sacrifices when I have a tenant by reducing volume of TV or stereo, not doing the laundry too early or too late. The rental income is not worth it. I stopped renting it.
- N/a
- New city green rules are for rentals but this is also my home so unless it's a separately deeded duplex the ADU shouldn't be subject to these rules. Compromise is to give the owner incentive to make the whole house compliant.
- No disadvantages except extra utilities which we don't really notice anyway.
- No separate head control for ADU.

- Noisy tenants
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None for us as it was for elderly mother
- None I can determine.
- None really
- None that I can think of. Except one year I had a student with a small child. I didn't renew. I have quiet, responsible grown-up woman now.
- None. It's a great program and should be allowed in every home.
- Of course, like any rental, maintenance and having people in your property
- Rental license fees when we do not rent it. Being told we would have to remove the oven and basement door if we no longer want ADU status makes no sense eco-nor safety wise. Besides what if we needed kosher kitchen?
- Rental license renewal.
- Ruthless rental license City bureaucracy.
- Some extra costs - need to maintain an entire separate infrastructure.
- Some loss of privacy since ADU is part of a house & not constructed as a separate unit originally.
- Supplemental income & one day we will need healthcare. We are in our 60's.
- Time consuming to screen potential tenants. Additional property maintenance and repair responsibility. Integrating new renters into neighborhood norms.
- Turnover can be hard on a family when renting to a stranger.
- We are more heavily regulated than a landlord who chooses to rent out a whole house.
- We haven't had any issues maintaining it since we live on the property.
- When your tenant turns out to be impaired like ours did (practicing alcoholic) it becomes uncomfortable and undesirable.
- You are forced to meet a standard that neither you or your neighbors have to meet until you add your apartment.

**Question #24. What, if any, are the benefits of having an ADU?**

- \$ - Space - flexibility
- 1. Supplemental income. 2. Boost in property value - proven income.
- A great way to allow others to share your space when it works for you to do so.
- Ability to have help at home.
- Additional income
- Additional income to offset mortgage expense
- Additional income, in fill and maximizing limited downtown space by offering a small but efficient living situation to young professionals.
- Allows more control of renters to ensure that City ordinances are followed; noise & trash for example.

- Critical income source to help my family live in center of town
- Extra income, increased home value.
- Fantastic way to facilitate a home remodel. Great investment in property. Tenants have been great. The garage looks great. Was able to add Boulder made Alpen windows and other environmentally conscious construction because we knew that it could produce income to pay for itself.
- Flexible space that can be re-purposed, depending on personal, family and financial needs; diversify neighborhood and City housing options; additional income; increase density (efficiencies in transportation, tax base and other services) w/minimal impact.
- For homeowner; for City - low cost housing and density
- For me, retired, it's my income now - grateful.
- Having the supplemental income allowed us to purchase our house and ensure our children could go to school in a good school district. We would not have been able to afford our current neighborhood without our ADU.
- I live alone (am a senior) and, in an emergency, could call tenant of ADU.
- Income
- Income
- Income from otherwise unused space. Potential to downsize, live there and rent main house. Provide affordable housing in Boulder.
- Income if it's rented, guest space if it's not.
- Income, space for guests.
- Income. I am a widow.
- Income. Presence of another person.
- Income. Security of having tenants on/in property.
- Income/tax benefits/hosting foreign guests (many foreign guests have no car & are comfortable with biking and the bus. Help with car, city etc. W/hosting foreign guests. Our 3 sons are grown & gone, house seemed so empty w/o ADU renters.
- Increased income to pay mortgage.
- Increased income. I am considering renting my ADU my home once I retire in the next year or so.
- It helps pay for property taxes, property usage/damage/upkeep etc. Especially as I age. It is 'company' somewhat.
- It is a way to own a home that you might otherwise be unable to afford, or to have guest quarters that are separate from your home. It is also nice to have the option of having this be a caretaker residence, either for a property or a person (senior/ disabled)
- It is good to have someone on the property when we are out of town. Also, it is helpful to have someone collect mail and newspapers.
- It was great for my first house buying experience and not quite having to have a roommate, just a housemate.
- It's wonderful.
- I like the ability to have a small unit tucked away in a residential neighborhood that can be used for any of the reasons you list, extra income, guests, relative. It provided extra income at first when I needed it, and it will be for a relative, possibly me as I get older.

- I approve of the restrictions in place about neighborhood restriction, proportional size, off street parking, hidden entrance, license if rented."
- Let's me stay in my home, gives renters a good home.
- Low maintenance and good income.
- Makes living in Boulder affordable in high mortgage town.
- Makes our home more affordable - allows us to live in Boulder on one average salary while contributing to retirement & college savings plans. Helps us to pay for our home, hopefully more quickly than we would be able to otherwise.
- Makes this neighborhood affordable for us.
- Money
- Multi-generational families can stay together - cheaper for kids, better for aging adults, better for everyone.
- More people occupy less space - no sprawl, eases housing costs, better for the City.
- Sharing is progressive! Get with it.
- Nice living space for visitors. Supplemental income possibility.
- Nice to have the income. Also nice to know we're providing affordable housing to young people.
- Potential supp. income. Potential to add value to sales price for property in future.
- Provide multiple dwellings instead of a single dwelling within the same square footage. More flexibility for visitors and aging populations.
- Rental income
- Rental income and having someone in the house when we are away.
- Rental income; writing off some improvements; writing off a portion of some exterior improvements; security for those living alone; highest & best use; flexible lifestyle; provides more options in the case of a divorce/death of a spouse/temporary move for work/elderly parents, etc. More favorable financing options depending on how taxes show the rental.
- Sociability. Helps make property maintenance affordable.
- Someone to shovel the walkway in the winter.
- Supplemental income to offset high real estate prices in boulder.
- Supplemental income, garage, storage.
- Supplemental income, new friendships.
- Supplemental income.
- The ADU seems to enhance a 'highest and best use' of a property in a low density residential area.
- This situation is a win-win situation. It provides a unique housing opportunity for tenants and financial benefit to the property owner we well as assistance with maintenance, etc.
- We enjoy having a place that's separate for visitors. Gives us both more leeway and a little extra income when we have tenants.
- We have a too large house for 2 people. It makes good sense environmentally to share the space. It's enjoyable to have 2 good tenants around.
- We were able to construct her own oven and kitchen so she could live to her wishes as long as possible. Otherwise we would have not applied (which was some inconvenience for us and more expensive).

- When it is occupied, which currently it is empty, i use it only as an exchange - free apt in exchange for help with dogs/plants when i am away.
- Xtra income. Separate space for adult children or other relatives/friends.

**Question #25. Do you have any additional comments about ADUs in Boulder?**

- 1. The house across the street, privately owned - is occupied by 4-5 people with 4 cars, some of them parked on the lawn. No problem. 2. The house next door, rented to 5 students has 4 & 5 cars parked every which way. No problem. 3. My house, with me and a single mature renter, and only 2 vehicles. I have to meet a standard my neighbors don't just because its an ADU. I'm the only one with a problem.
- ADU should be an assumed right like any other property modification. The program should be expanded so as to be 'normal' use. This won't hurt the moneyed interests of Boulder landlords as there will still be relatively few who want do to this so it won't greatly increase the number of rental units in the City.
- ADU's are common in Europe & to help household income. Great op to meet people from other places. It will help with Boulder housing needs. There are many homes w/unused space. Families/seniors who'd benefit from additional income and other people on property very flexible use: rental \$/grown children/aging parents/household help - nanny etc/help NCAR-NOAA w/housing temp foreign researchers/etc.
- ADU's are desirable because they increase density in the city, which increases efficiency and reduces sprawl. Car traffic and parking are connected with ADU's could be reduced if, for instance, ADU residences were issued a bus pass.
- ADU's meet the stated goals of the City - they are all good for everyone.
- Should be less restrictive and easier to process.
- And your survey questions should distinguish between the two units - your final answers will be wrong.
- Again, I think people are wary of the City oversight being so strong...the City is losing revenue because the licensing is intimidating and the oversight as it is now done, is expensive
- An ADU , if done properly, will increase the property's value. It will also improve the living conditions of the renters.
- As an aging retiree I appreciate being able to rent my extra space. It allows me to stay in my home and yet maintain my independence.
- As the population ages, there will be more opportunity and more need for ADU's.
- City needs to find out why unlicensed ADUs exist and what prevents them from becoming legal.
- Difficult to find a comp when buying our house due to ADU - made bank loan more complicated.
- Do not allow more than 2 people to reside in an ADU. Overcrowding leads to a litany of issues; including noise violations, extra trash. Property neglect and an overall degradation of the neighborhood.
- Good that they are allowed.
- Great program
- Height restriction is good.
- I am a retired widow on a fixed income and this ADU helps make it possible for me to remain in my home.

- I don't understand why I need a fire suppression tank - can't I just hook the sprinkler system up to the water line? My house doesn't have a sprinkler system but the ADU does.
- I feel like it's not fair that I follow the rules and paid a lot to get my ADU fully certified and continue to renew the license, while I see several houses in my neighborhood that clearly have more than 3 unrelated people living together w/ 4+ cars.
- I had a very difficult time b/c the previous owners had not submitted proper paperwork for the ADU which made it quite hard for me. Simplifying the process would help.
- I think it is a excellent program. I don't know whether many people who want to rent part of their property are aware of the availability of ADU licensing. Perhaps consider some trade offs to the requirements to make a license easier to obtain.
- I was surprised to hear that there were only 200 licensed ADU's in the City. I would have guessed many more.
- If the City wants to have more density this is the best way to get it. In some zones it makes no sense the size of the lot/D.U. it is too much property D.U. it is the only way to get a reasonable average size of D.U./acre 2500 sf.
- I'm not sure why the owner living in one of the units is so important. The distinction between an ADU and a duplex is non-existent and I don't think the City should be determining who can occupy a unit. Two tenants in two units is not inherently worse than one tenant and one owner in two units.
- In our experience ADUs are a valuable, important housing alternative, worthy of serious inclusion in any discussion of affordable, flexible, environmentally responsible housing in Boulder. However, the high cost of securing ADU approval in both time and money is a big deterrent to bringing this housing source out of the shadows...only 200 registered? Not likely this # in line with reality. I would post that many more such arrangements exist in one form or another. Better to be encouraged creatively, then safely/reasonably/affordably regulated and licensed.
- It will help the need for a market single professional. I have a professor renting for 3 years. Happy to be in a single community privacy.
- It's a good program. Higher density is feasible but may have excessive impact.
- Make the transfer process more clear and easy. Continue to limit the # of ADU's on the hill.
- Needs to publicize program, to encourage ADU's
- No
- No
- No
- No
- Note questions 16 & 17 are badly worded.
- Overall rules are a bit strict (size, # people) and seem inconsistent with other 'low income' housing programs. Otherwise, very pleased at this program.
- The City should be more aggressive in pursuing illegal rentals in residential areas. They are rampant in n. Boulder. Consider 'density' impact of ADU. How many people already live in the house? How many more cars will be added as well?
- The SmartRegs requirements may force me to give up the ADU, because the cost of replacing the furnace that supplies the ADU would be prohibitive. Gas for the furnace costs about \$750/year. Suppose it would cost \$10,000 to replace the furnace. If the efficiency of the new furnace were 20% greater, I would save \$150/year. This would result in a payback time of 66 years! So I might

choose to give up the ADU. Thus, the SmartRegs may defeat the public purpose of ADU's, which is to provide inexpensive housing for students, etc.

- They make total sense. Allow more in Boulder. Since it's in my house, we share furnace, hot water heater, etc. So it's good that we are able to pick who we want to rent to.
- This is a great program that could significantly influence the availability of affordable housing if allowed to expand. Thanks!
- We feel that the ADU is very beneficial to our family. We like the fact that they are limited in the neighborhood, (less competition), but that just means that there are many unregulated, unofficial rentals out there.
- We like that there is some control over the density of housing although we know there are more rental units than the City gives license to. Because of the ADU system we believe there is some oversight for the quality/safety of rental units.
- We love our ADU and think it is a great asset to our property. The requirement of licensing and only being allowed to rent if main house is owner occupied is very important to us. We believe the properties as a whole are better maintained if owners are living there. If owners were not required to live on property, it may feel too 'rentally' and potentially too loud/park like etc. I don't think all houses should be allowed but maybe a little more than 10%.
- We love our ADU.

## **Appendix C: Survey Materials**

A copy of the survey materials appear on the following pages.



**CITY OF BOULDER**  
**Community Planning & Sustainability**

1739 Broadway, Third Floor • P.O. Box 791, Boulder, CO 80306-0791  
phone 303-441-3209 • fax 303-441-3241 • web [bouldercolorado.gov](http://bouldercolorado.gov)

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Winter 2012

Dear Boulder Resident,

National Research Center is conducting a survey about accessory units on behalf of the City of Boulder. The purpose of the survey is to help understand how the units contribute housing opportunities within the city and also to determine how the current program might be improved. An accessory unit is a secondary living unit that is located within a residence or in an accessory building on the same property. Most often, accessory units are created through the conversion of basement or attic space, or space above a garage. The Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance makes a distinction between Accessory Dwelling Units, Owner's Accessory Units and Limited Dwelling Units. However, for the purposes of this study, all three will be referred to as accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Your household has been selected to participate in the survey because the city's records show that you maintain an accessory dwelling unit. Since there are fewer than 200 licensed units in the city, your answers are extremely important. Your responses are completely anonymous and the results will be reported only in group form.

Please have the person in your household most familiar with the ADU take a few minutes to fill out this survey. If you prefer to complete the survey online, visit:

[www.n-r-c.com/survey/adu.htm](http://www.n-r-c.com/survey/adu.htm)

If you complete this paper version, please return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to the independent company that is administering the survey at:

National Research Center  
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300  
Boulder, CO 80301

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Erin Caldwell with National Research Center at 303-226-6992.

Thanks for your help and participation in this survey. Your input will help to improve existing regulations.

Sincerely,

David Driskell  
Executive Director of Community Planning & Sustainability

Enclosure: Postage-Paid Envelope to National Research Center, Inc.



# City of Boulder Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please complete the questions inside this booklet as well as those on the back side. You can return the completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

## 1. Did you create the ADU or did it exist when you purchased the property?

- I/we created the ADU
- It existed when I purchased the property
- I/we no longer have an ADU on this property

## 2. When was the ADU created?

- Before 1980
- Between 1980 and 1989
- Between 1990 and 1999
- Between 2000 and 2009
- Between 2010 and 2012
- I don't know

## 3. Where is the ADU located?

- Basement
- First floor
- Second floor
- Separate building
- Over garage
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. About what size is the ADU?

- Less than 500 square feet
- Between 501-800 square feet
- Between 801-1,000 square feet
- Between 1,001 and 1,200 square feet
- Over 1,200 square feet
- I don't know

## 5. What was your primary reason for adding or retaining the ADU?

- Supplemental income
- Housing for relatives
- Housing for visitors
- Housing for caretakers
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. How do you currently use your ADU?

- Rent it out to paying tenants
- Rent it out in return for other services (e.g., childcare, yard work, etc.)
- Housing for relatives
- Housing for visitors
- Extra space
- I live in the ADU and rent out the main house
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. What do you consider to be the primary benefits of maintaining an ADU? (Please check all that apply.)

- Supplemental income
- Space for visitors
- Space for relatives
- Security/companionship of a tenant
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. How many persons in each age category currently occupy the ADU?

- The unit is not currently rented/occupied
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children under 18
- \_\_\_\_\_ Young Adult(s) 18-29
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adult(s) 30-65
- \_\_\_\_\_ Senior(s) 65+

## 9. What is the current monthly rent, or if not occupied, the anticipated rent?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

### 9a. Does this include utilities?

- No
- Yes -> Which one(s)? (Check all that apply.)
  - Electric
  - Gas
  - Water
  - Waste

## 10. Is other compensation provided by the tenant in return for living in the ADU?

- No
- Yes -> What kind? (Check all that apply.)
  - Child care
  - Senior care
  - House care
  - Pet caretaking
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. What is the approximate annual household income of the tenant(s) of the ADU?**

- Less than \$20,000
- About \$20,000 to \$40,000
- About \$40,000 to \$80,000
- About \$80,000 or more
- I don't know
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- The unit is not currently rented/occupied

**13. What is the occupation of the adult resident(s) of the ADU? (Please check all that apply if more than one adult resident.)**

- Student
- Service Worker/Retail/Restaurant
- Professional
- Retired
- Caretaker/Caregiver for household
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- The unit is not currently rented/occupied

**14. Have your neighbors expressed an opinion about your ADU?**

- No, they haven't mentioned anything
- In general, they approve
- Occasional complaints
- They are unaware of the ADU
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Currently, one additional off-street parking space is required for an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose eliminating the off-street parking requirement?**

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- No opinion

**16. Currently, only 2 residents may occupy an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose an increase to the occupancy limit?**

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- No opinion

**17. Currently, only 10% of properties in a neighborhood are allowed to have an ADU. To what extent would you support or oppose eliminating this density restriction?**

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- No opinion

**18. Have you had any interaction with the City of Boulder's Planning & Development Services Center in the last 12 months regarding your ADU?**

- No
- Yes → How would you rate your experience?
  - Excellent
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor
  - No opinion

**19. How would you rate your most recent experience with the rental license renewal process?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Have not had to renew the rental license

**20. If you bought your property with the ADU in place, how would you rate your experience with the ADU transfer process?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Have not transferred the ADU

**21. What, if any, changes would you recommend to the ADU program?**

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**22. What, if any, changes would you suggest to improve the process of acquiring an ADU?**

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**23. What, if any, are the disadvantages of maintaining an ADU?**

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**24. What, if any, are the benefits of having an ADU?**

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**25. Do you have any additional comments about ADUs in Boulder?**

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**Thank you for completing the questionnaire!**

**Please return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:**

**National Research Center  
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300  
Boulder, CO 80301**