

FROM THE DESK OF

DUSTIN W. DURHAM

Knoxville Transportation Authority Commissioner | Renter
New Urbanist | Bike Advocate | Knoxville Since 2008

To: Knoxville-Knox County Planning

Subject: Ordinance Amendment 8-C-23-OA

I am writing this letter in support of proposed Amendment 8-C-23-OA to our City codes. See below for a breakdown of my support by the seven summation points listed by Planning Staff.

1. I support the removal of the ownership requirement for a plot of land in which there is an ADU. This requirement artificially stifles potential development of smaller, affordable housing, especially in our historic walkable neighborhoods where many locals already rent out homes but would like to build an ADU as well. While I understand the desire to have people in our communities that are 'rooted there', I would like to remind everyone that equating home ownership with a concept such as 'rootedness' is dangerous and unfair. Many renters are in the same home for multiple years and owning a house does not guarantee you are in a community for longer, as homes can obviously be sold. Per City Staff's comments, getting rid of the owner occupancy requirement would be nearly impossible to enforce, which begs the question: why even have the requirement to begin with?

2. I support the removal of the lot size minimum for ADUs, as well as a re-evaluation of minimum lot sizes in general. As with most figures when it comes to our zoning codes, 5,000 SF is rather arbitrary and there is nothing special about the number. Removing this requirement for ADUs would begin to allow ADUs in smaller parcels on other types of zoned land. In regards to potential stormwater issues, there are numerous ways to mitigate this in the future and should not preclude us from adding to our housing stock.

3. I support the decrease of minimum setbacks for ADUs, with obvious exceptions given for utility needs. My understanding of the subdivision requirements is that a subdivision is a new development of six or more homes, so allowing a decrease in this setback in our existing, walkable neighborhoods should not be an issue.

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4, 5, & 7: I support the removal of maximum ADU gross floor area requirements, the increase in the ADU-to-primary-dwelling-unit ratio, and the doubling of ADU height limits. While this may require a change in the written definition of what an ADU is, there is no logical reason why an extra dwelling unit must be the size it is currently limited to. Especially in regards to the ratio limits compared to a primary structure, 50% makes much more sense than 40% as an ADU is in essence a 'mini-house'. There is no difference in a large ADU being built and a addition to a home of the same size. The general scale of ADU's should be treated as a natural and physical extension of the primary unit, even if there is no actual physical connection.

6. I support the removal of required off-street parking mandates for ADU. Parking mandates are arbitrary and antiquated and they artificially increase housing costs by requiring more land to be devoted to cars and less to livable spaces. In both our historic, walkable neighborhoods, as well as our newer subdivisions, there are either alleys or streets which can more than hold additional vehicles. As well, when ADUs are in walkable areas near transit, people are free to live - as I have been able to - in a 'car-lite' manner in which they only use a car once a week or so and therefore do not need their personal vehicle to be parked directly near their home.