



# ZONING, LAND USE, AND AFFORDABILITY

# Zoning Reform to Address Housing Affordability

## Five Myths

- 1. The market can solve this**
  - The market probably cannot reach <50 AMI
- 2. We can solve this without the market**
  - All solutions involve significantly increasing housing supply – and the market builds 90% of it
- 3. We can build our way out of this shortage**
  - Housing supply only expands by 4-6% per year
- 4. We can solve this without affecting existing single-family neighborhoods**
  - That is 50% + of housing – too big to ignore
- 5. We can do this with existing subsidy programs**
  - The need under 50% AMI is huge – and growing – and housing for that group will require more subsidy

## Administrative Approvals are Key

# Procedural Simplicity is VERY Important to builders

Builders routinely report that the time, cost, and uncertainty involved in discretionary approvals and public hearings is as important or more important to project viability than substantive zoning rules

1. Denver – Almost no conditional uses and all approvals after zoning are administrative
2. Boise -- Administrative approvals with fixed incentives for small income-restricted multifamily projects
3. Connecticut -- Remove subjective approval criteria like “compatible with community character”

## Optimizing Use of Existing Buildings is Key

- 1. Allow higher occupancy in each unit**
  - Doubling-up and multi-family living are rising, and the “blood or marriage” condition is out of date
- 2. Allow single- to two-family by right**
  - This is the least expensive conversion, since both are often covered by the same fire and building codes
- 3. Remove multi-family lot area per dwelling unit standards**
  - Allows market rate conversion of existing buildings to add more units
- 4. Allow conversion of commercial and office buildings to multi-family housing by right**
  - Many are well-located to avoid impacts on lower-density residential neighborhoods

## Optimizing Use of Existing Serviced Land is Key

### Infill and Subdivision Standards

Undeveloped infill parcels are that way for a reason – there's an unusual barrier to development on that site – so be flexible

- 1. Allow creative “missing middle” or “pocket neighborhood”** forms of housing subject to maximum contiguous area limits
  - Cottage housing, co-housing, courtyard apartments, tiny houses, container housing, manufactured housing, supportive housing
- 2. Adjust or waive parking standards**
  - Small projects have small parking impacts
- 3. Adjust subdivision improvement access standards for small projects**
  - Small projects have small impacts on infrastructure systems