

FAQ

WHAT IS AN ADU?

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) are secondary apartments on a residential lot or within the main home. ADUs are often referred to as ancillary apartments, mother-in-law suites, cottages, granny flats, or guest houses. These residential units are smaller than the main home, and can come in a number of forms.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY ALLOWED?

Accessory Dwelling Units are currently allowed in “two-family” and “multi-family” zone districts. City Planning is proposing to allow ADUs in “single-family” zone districts and to reduce the challenges many homeowners face when trying to build an ADU. See the Existing Regs vs. Proposed Changes board for more information.

WHAT KIND OF ADU CAN I BUILD?

City Planning is proposing two types of ADUs, an “integrated” and “detached” unit. Both types are currently allowed in “two-family” and “multi-family” zone districts. With the code change, “single-family” zone districts would be allowed to also construct both types of ADU with restrictions based on your property’s size and layout and your existing home’s size.

CAN I POST MY ADU ON AIRBNB OR VRBO?

Yes, you can use the house or the ADU for short term rental purposes, however, the property owner must live in either the ADU or primary house full-time if the property is zoned for a single-family residence.

DOES THE NEW ORDINANCE OVERRIDE MY HOA?

The proposed changes to City code do not override Community Covenants. HOAs may still opt to prohibit accessory dwelling units through their covenants. Please check with your HOA for more information.

CAN I USE A TINY HOME, PRE-FABRICATED, OR MANUFACTURED HOME AS AN ADU?

Yes. However, there are differences between these types of construction requiring different types of permit reviews and inspections. Please contact the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department to discuss permitting requirements. Tiny homes must be attached to a foundation and connected to utilities. A tiny home which is on a trailer cannot be used as a dwelling unit, even if the trailer is skirted; tiny homes to remain on a trailer are permitted within designated campgrounds.

WHAT'S THE PROCESS?

2018

MARCH-

- City Council requested City Planning Department Staff update the accessory dwelling unit ordinance by exploring the allowance of ADUs in additional zone districts throughout the City and evaluating current ADU standards.

MARCH-MAY-

- City Planning Staff evaluated current ADU Code language, researched ADU ordinances within other communities, and reviewed best practices with American Planning Association and ADU advocates.

**JUNE-
SEPTEMBER**

- The ADU steering committee was formed; made up of property owners (both that had recently gone through the process of constructing an ADU and those considering constructing an ADU), two (2) City Council members, one (1) City Planning Commissioner and a representative from the Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO).

- The committee was formed to assist staff on re-writing the ADU ordinance, which included the consideration to allow ADUs in single-family zones, recommended design standards (i.e. maximum ADU size, setbacks, etc.) and other considerations.

**AUGUST-
NOVEMBER**

- Staff presented a draft of the ADU ordinance to City Planning Commission, the Commission on Aging, the Civil Rights Commission, and other groups to acquire additional input, insight, and recommendations moving forward with the ordinance.

- There was overwhelming support for the recommended changes to the ADU ordinance. The ordinance was also presented to the Code Scrub Committee, comprised of general citizens and building industry representatives, for review and comment.

**NOVEMBER-
DECEMBER**

- Staff tweaked and fine-tuned the ordinance based on comments received from the ADU steering committee, Code Scrub committee, internal reviews, and others.

DECEMBER-

- Staff presented the general parameters of the revised ADU ordinance to the City Planning Commission at its informal meeting.

2019

FEBRUARY-

- City releases press release regarding the proposed ADU ordinance and provides information and graphics on City website.

- Three (3) public open house meetings scheduled to present the revised ordinance, answer questions, and receive feedback.

MARCH-

- Presentation to City Planning Commission for recommendation to City Council.

APRIL-

- Presentation to City Council for consideration of the proposed ordinance (two readings of the ordinance are necessary).

MAY-

- Likely period when ADU Ordinance would take effect (note that City Council can opt to designate an effective date of the ordinance).

JUNE-

- Continued citizen outreach, creation of ADU handout and information, and creation of permit for single-family homeowners.

FIGURE 4

THE HISTORY OF ADUS IN COS

1926

- The City of Colorado Springs first adopted zoning regulations in 1926 to protect the health and safety of the general public by separating certain land uses from residential areas.
- The 1926 Zoning Code allowed for such uses as “Bungalow Courts” and guest houses to be constructed, below is a paraphrase of the 1926 code.

Bungalow Courts: A group of three or more buildings used or intended for use as dwellings on a lot or parcel of land

No building designed or used as a part of a bungalow court shall be deemed to be a one-family dwelling.

1951

- The City adopted a new Zoning Code in 1951. Many of the “additional or secondary” dwelling units on properties were allowed within certain zone districts. However, the minimum lot size required to a “Bungalow Court” or “Guest House” increased, making additional or secondary dwellings more and more difficult to construct.

1958

- The City Zoning Code continued the allowance of bungalow courts, servants quarters and “living quarters for necessary caretakers and watchmen”. The provision of these types of dwelling units were restricted to larger estate type lots that existed in the North End neighborhood.

1980

- By 1980, like many communities across the county, the City adopted what could be considered “suburban” type zoning standards that necessitated the requirement of larger lots and forced the outward development of the community.
- This included the provision of requiring “attached” housing, or duplexes, in lieu of detached housing units that were previously referred to as guest houses, servants quarters or bungalow courts.

2003

- In 2003 the City adopted an amendment to the City Code that reintroduced the allowance of detached accessory dwelling units (ADU) within certain zone districts within the City; these ADUs were primarily allowed within “multi-family) zone districts.
- The City Planning Department also recognized historic platted lots that may have originally been sized to accommodate more than one residential dwelling and “grandfathered” some of those lots.

2012

- The City refined and loosened the ADU standards in 2012 that were deemed too restrictive or prohibitive for many homeowners. Below are a few of the refinements:
 1. Instead of locating ADUs in the back 50’ of the property, the requirement was changed to allow ADUs in the back of the property with a 20’ setback from the primary house
 2. Allowance of 25’ ADU height vs original 20’ height

FIGURE 4

SUCCESS IN OTHER CITIES

	COLORADO SPRINGS, CO	DURANGO, CO	LAKEWOOD, CO	CASTLE ROCK, CO	GOLDEN, CO	SACRAMENTO, CA	MUKILTEO, WA	SALT LAKE CITY, UT	PORTLAND, OR
NUMBER OF ADUS ALLOWED PER LOT	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES REQUIRED PER ADU	1	1 additional parking space must be provided on-site for the ADU, two parking spaces must be provided if no parking currently exists	1	0	1	0	2 off-street parking spaces	1 space for 1 bedroom 2 spaces for 2 bedrooms	0
MUST PROPERTY OWNER LIVE ON THE SITE?	Currently, no. Proposal will require owner occupancy in single-family zone districts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (6 months each calendar year)	Yes	No
HOW BIG MAY ADUS BE?	Detached: may not exceed 50% of the finished floor area of the principal structure or 1,500 square feet. If principal structure is 1,000 sqft or less, the minimum base size of the ADU may be 500 sqft.	550 Square feet	700 square foot maximum and only one bedroom	An ADU located interior to the main residence shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of it's floor area. The building footprint of a detached ADU shall not exceed 800 square feet.	For a principal dwelling unit of 1,000 square feet or more of living space, the ADU shall be no larger than 50% of the living space, or 800 square feet, whichever is smaller. For a principal dwelling unit of less than 1,000 square feet of living space, the ADU shall be no larger than 500 square feet	For lots 5,200 sf to 20,000 sf max of 600 sf. For lots greater than 20,000 sf max of 800 sf.	The accessory dwelling unit shall have a gross floor area of no more than 700 square feet or 60% of the floor area of the principal structure	No more than 50% if the gross square footage of the principal dwelling unit or 650 square feet	No more than 75% of the living area of the house or 800 square feet
WHERE IN THE CITY ARE ADUS ALLOWED?	Single-family, two-family, and multi-family	Established Neighborhood, Multi-family, Rural-Agricultural, Residential Low, Residential Medium, and mixed use neighborhood	Most residential zone districts	Most residential zone districts	Single-family residential, multi-family residential and Planned Unit Development (PUD)	Agricultural, agricultural-residential, and residential zones	Single-family and multi-family residential	Foothills residential, single-family residential, multi-family residential, special development pattern residential	ADUs are allowed on sites that are zoned Residential, Commercial, and in the Central Employment (EX) zone
MUST ADU MATCH HOUSE IN EXTERIOR DESIGN?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CITY POPULATION (2017)	465,101	18,465	154,393	62,276	20,696	501,901	21,469	200,544	674,805



FIGURE 4

PLANCOS SUPPORT

The following excerpts are from the newly adopted comprehensive plan for the City, PlanCOS supporting the changing of the City Code to be more ADU-friendly.

WE WILL BUILD A GREAT CITY THAT MATCHES OUR SCENERY

In the coming decades, Colorado Springs will become a vibrant community that reflects our engaging outdoor setting as pioneers of health and recreation. Our city will be filled with unique places of culture and creative energy, sustainably designed around our natural environment. We will attract and retain residents of all generations with an innovative, diverse economy, and dynamic, well-connected neighborhoods that provide viable housing opportunities for all.

VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS

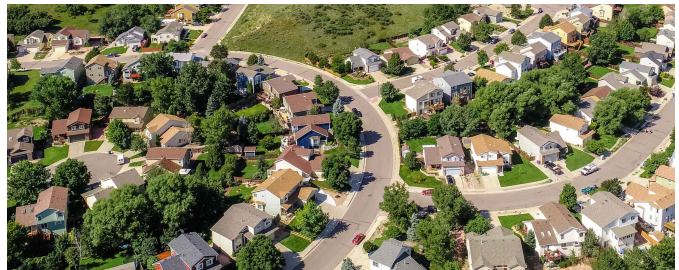
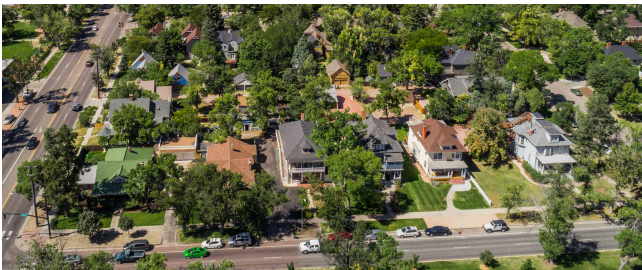
Forms diverse and safe neighborhoods with quality gathering areas, a mix of housing types, transportation choices, and a shared sense of pride.

Housing should reflect our community, not only where people live now, but where they want to live in the next phases of their life. A fundamental expectation is to move our community in the direction of more housing choices.

Goal VN-2: Strive for a diversity of housing types, styles, and price points distributed throughout our city through a combination of supportive development standards, community partnerships, and appropriate zoning and density that is adaptable to market demands and housing needs.

Strategy VN-2.A-3: Support land use decisions and projects that provide a variety of housing types and sizes, serving a range of demographic sectors, and meeting the needs of residents and families through various life stages and income levels.

Strategy VN-2.A-6: Update the City's zoning code, processes, and standards to support the construction of additional accessory dwelling units and micro homes.



MOST IMPORTANT IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

1. Update Zoning and Subdivision Code

Incorporation of options to effectively integrate additional housing design options and choices in additional areas of the city, including smaller and potentially more affordable units such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PLANCOS VISIT:

www.coloradosprings.gov/PlanCOS

FIGURE 4

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

THE CREATION OF PLANCOS

The creation of PlanCOS was “a community based process” in which hundreds of meetings and other outreach efforts were used to gather community input to ensure resident input were heard and included.

- 53 stakeholder interviews
- 90 Co-Creators
- 274 outreach meetings
- 9,000 participants
- 5,146 survey responses
- 24,508 social media posts

Out of this community based process came recommendations and goals. Accessory Dwelling Units are expressly indicated as a strategy to achieve a goal of housing diversity and supporting the needs of residents and families through various life stages.

THE MILL STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The Mill Street Neighborhood Plan indicates Accessory Dwellings Units as a way to “Create a Resilient Future for Mill Street” by providing homeowners a wealth building opportunity. This goal was created based on feedback from 50 visited homes and businesses, 78 surveys responses, 89 public meeting attendees, stakeholder interviews. In the survey, 45% of respondents said that “housing affordability solutions” was one of the most important outcomes for a successful neighborhood plan.

AGE FRIENDLY COLORADO SPRINGS PLAN

“As an Age-Friendly city, Colorado Springs will need to change current housing policies in order to allow for alternative, small housing options, and work to increase the inventory of single and two-bedroom living spaces. The ability to age in place is dependent on the availability of and access to affordable, safe, and diverse housing options for all income levels.”

The Age Friendly Colorado Springs Plan indicates ADUs as a way to support “aging in place.”



FIGURE 4

ADVANTAGES OF ADUS

The need to provide housing to aging parents, dependent or disabled adult children or other family members should not be limited to those within the allowed zone districts.

Expanding the use of ADUs in single-family zoned neighborhoods will give property owners in all residential zone districts the same opportunity to provide accessible, and semi-independent, housing for family members or as an investment in the property. This ordinance will also loosen some of the strict requirements currently applied to ADUs in multi-family zone districts.

1. Add housing stock for families in neighborhoods while maintaining manageable neighborhood density
2. Assist families by helping parents age in place
3. Assist families with dependent and disabled adult children or other family members in need
4. Offer additional housing diversity at a variety of price points
5. Assist families with “boomerang children” who may return home
6. Provide homeowners with a wealth building opportunity



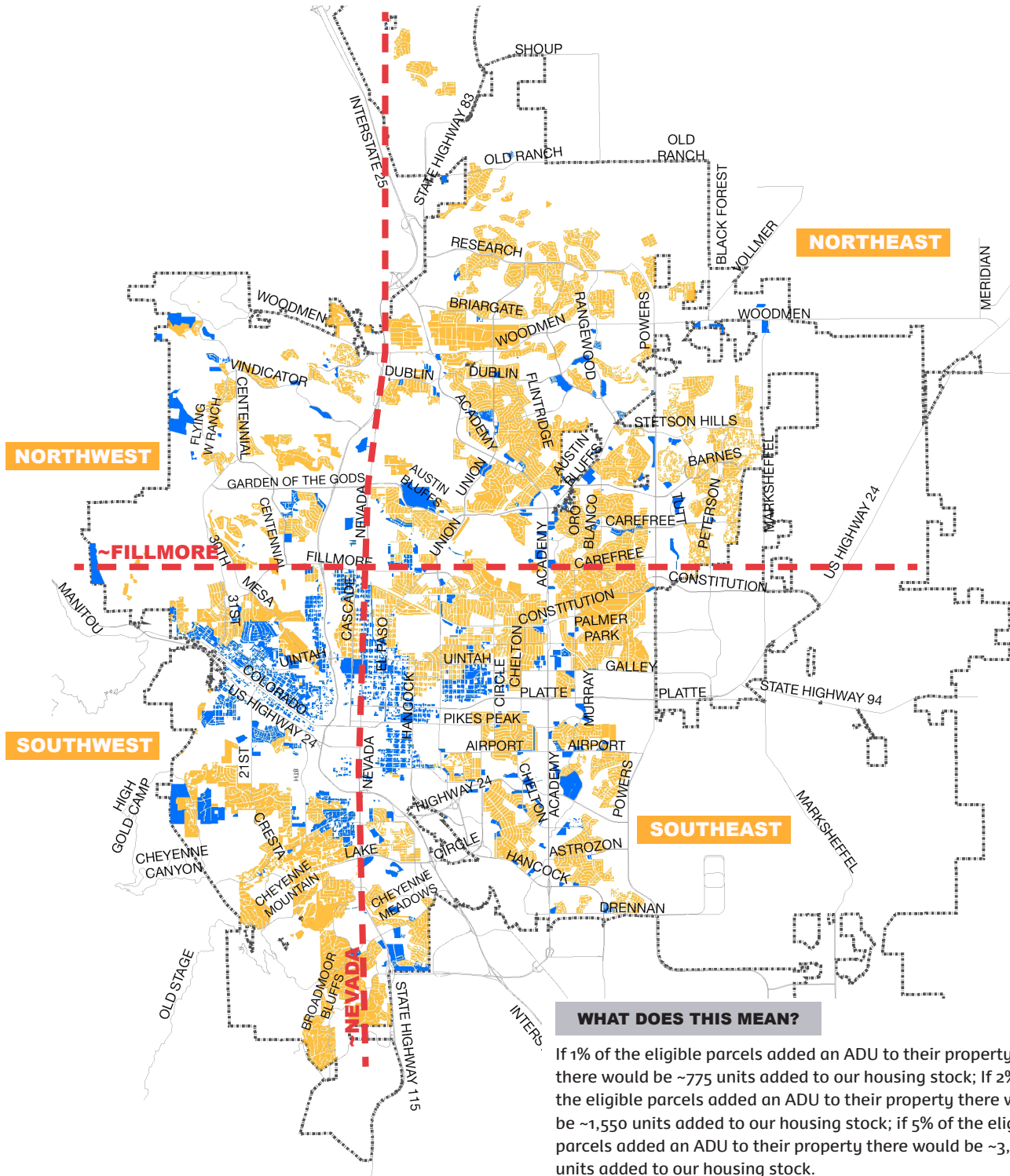
FIGURE 4

EXISTING REGS VS. PROPOSED CHANGES

WHERE ARE THEY ALLOWED?	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	A, R-2, R-4, R-5, SU, TND, C-5	Would include all current zone districts in addition to R, R-1 9000, R-1 6000, OR and OC zone districts
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently prohibited within single-family zone districts. (Note: Traditional duplexes are permitted in R-2 and higher zone districts)	Would be allowed within all residential zone districts including A, R, R-1 6000, R-1 9000 (single-family residential zone districts) and OR, OC and C-5 zone districts
MINIMUM LOT SIZE	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	7,000 s.f. in R-2 6,000 s.f. in R-4, R-5, SU and all commercial districts	Would utilize minimum lot size within each zone district
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	Would utilize minimum lot size within each zone district
MINIMUM ADU SIZE	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	No minimum except as noted in City Code Section 6.12.303	Minimum 200 s.f.
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	Minimum 200 s.f.
MAXIMUM ADU SIZE	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	750 s.f., deck (patio space not included)	No greater than 50% of the finished floor area of the principal home or 1,500 s.f., whichever is less (Note: Maximum lot coverage to also dictate ADU size) If existing finished floor area of principal structure is less than 1,000 sqft the minimum base size of the ADU may be 500 sqft
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	No greater than 40% of finished floor area of home (excluding garage and any uninhabitable space, e.g. attic)
MAXIMUM HEIGHT	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	25-feet	A, R, R-2, R-4, R-5, SU, TND, OR, OC and C-5: 6:12 or greater roof pitch - 28 feet Less than 6:12 (including flat roof): 25 feet R-1 9000 and R-1 6000: Property abuts an alley above standards apply; Property does NOT abut an alley 20 feet maximum height (pitched or flat roof)
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	Integral units would be part of principal home, maximum building height standards of base zone would apply
OFF-STREET PARKING	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	One (1) additional parking stall in addition to one (1) stall for principal home	No Change
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	One (1) additional parking stall in addition to one (1) stall for principal home
SETBACKS	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Required in rear of property, follows accessory structure setbacks	Generally the same; but would now allow an ADU next to the principal home but must still meet front and side setbacks for principal home (plus building code separation)
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	Meet setbacks of zone district required for principal home
SEPARATION	EXISTING REGULATIONS	PROPOSED CHANGES
<u>Detached</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Twenty (20) feet separation between principal home and ADU	Would need to meet Pikes Peak Regional Building Dept code, generally ten (10) feet but could be less if meeting Building Code
<u>Integral</u> Accessory Dwelling Units	Currently Not Permitted	Pikes Peak Regional Building Dept code standards would apply

FIGURE 4

EXISTING REGS VS. PROPOSED CHANGES



EXISTING REGULATIONS

ADU Eligible Parcels

- R2 - Residential permitting two units per property
- R4 and R5 - Multi-Family residential permitting three or more units
- SU - Special Use parcels - often colleges and universities
- TND - Traditional Neighborhood Design - Gold Hill Mesa
- C5- Commercial property allowing residential units permitted
- A - Agriculturally zoned parcels

Number of ADU Eligible Parcels: ~9,400

PROPOSED CHANGES

Additional ADU Eligible Parcels

- R1-6 - Single-family residential with 6,000 sqft lot
- R1-9 - Single-family residential with 9,000 sqft lot
- R - Residential estate with 20,000 sqft lot
- OC and OR - Commercial properties allowing residential units

Proposed Number of ADU Eligible Parcels: ~68,000

FIGURE 4

EXISTING REGS VS. PROPOSED CHANGES

NORTH WEST

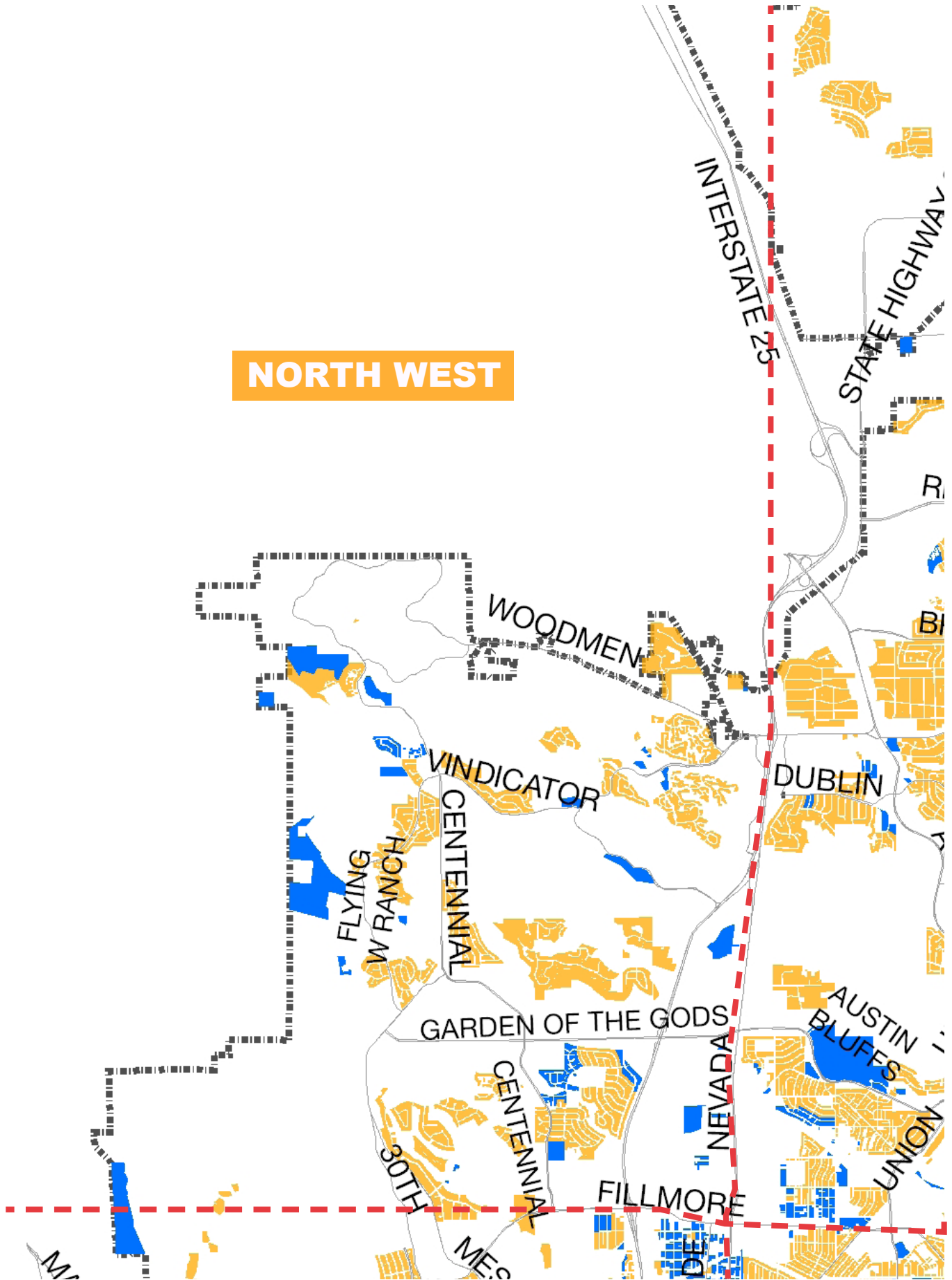


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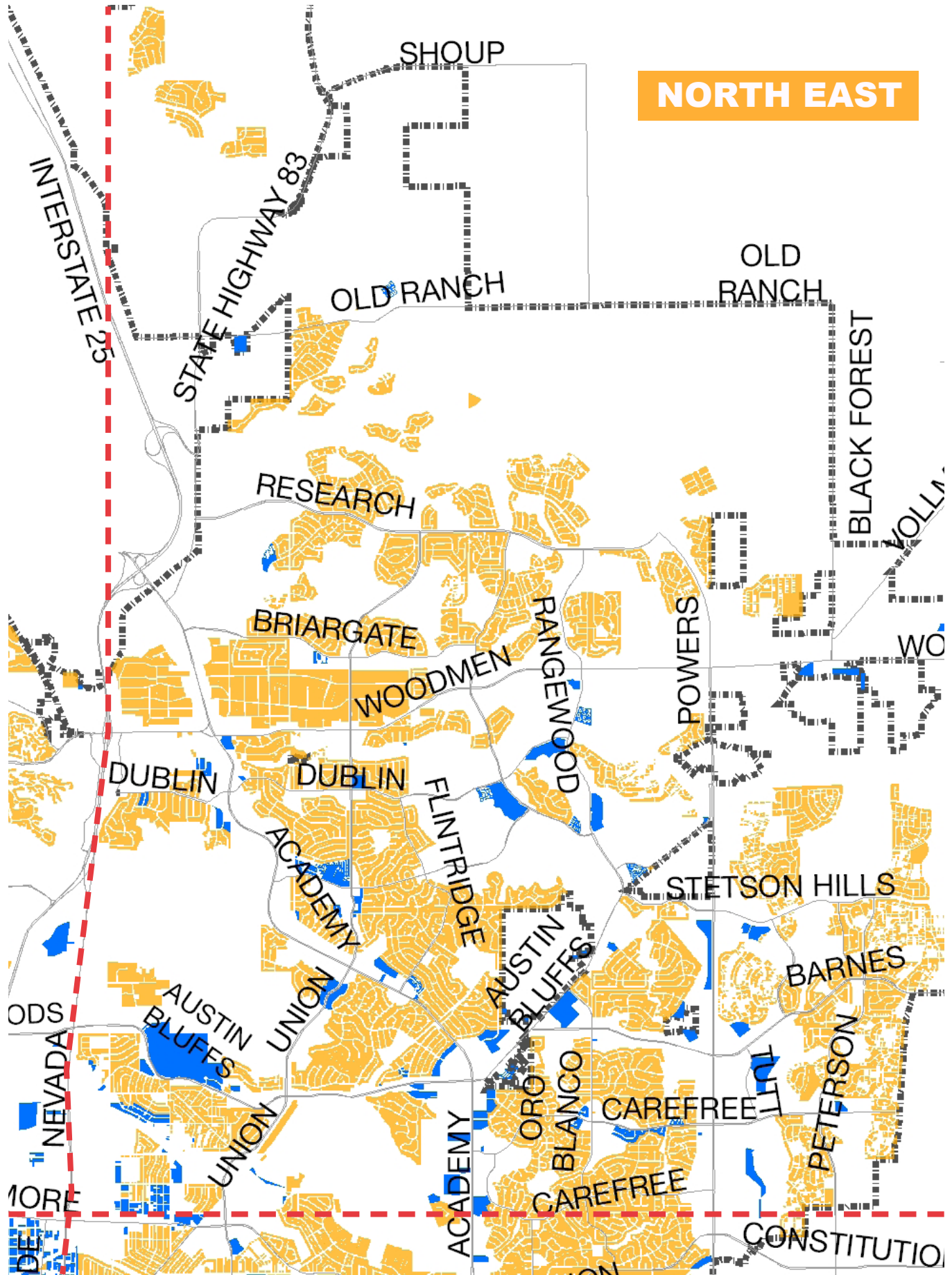


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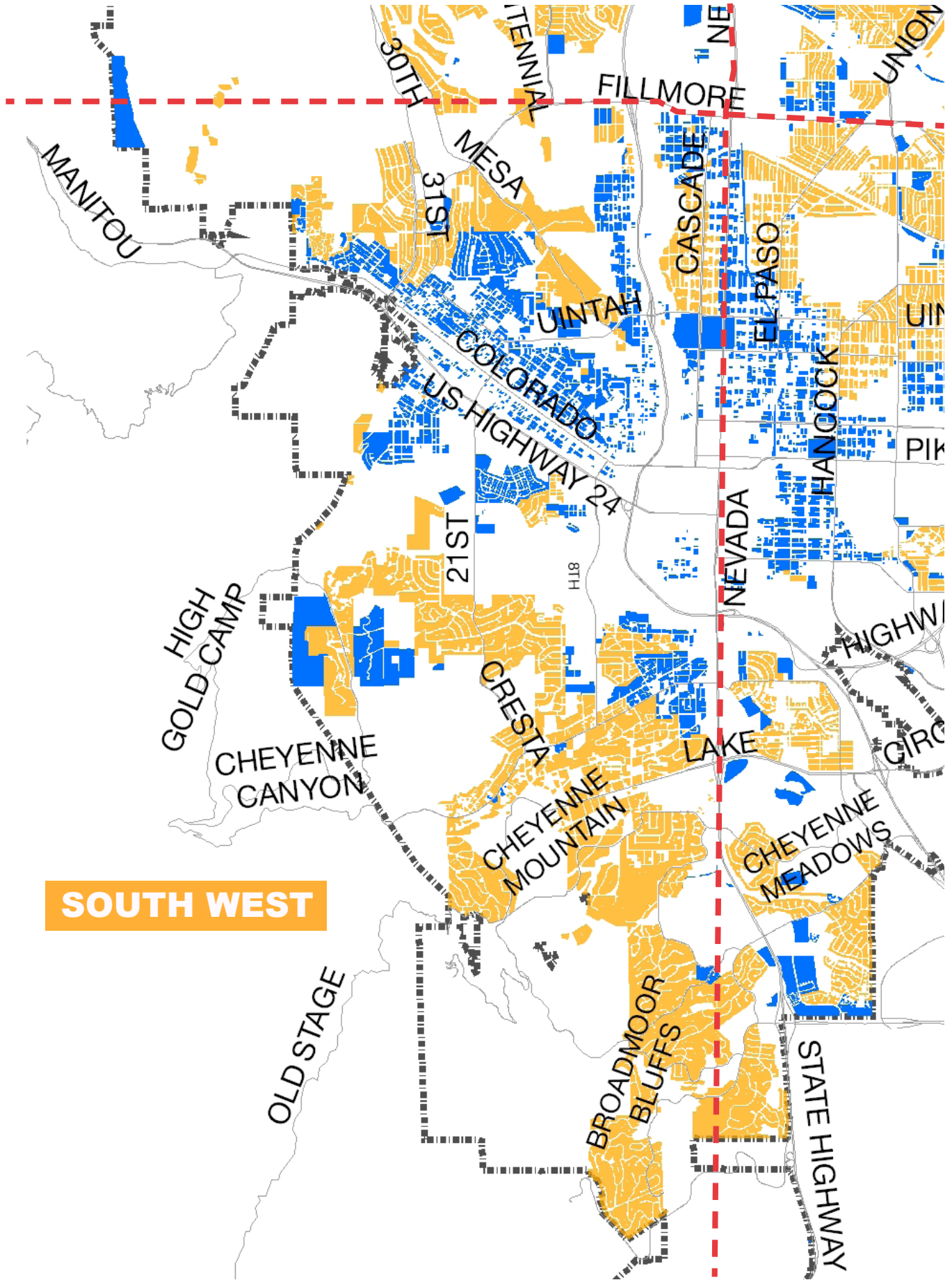


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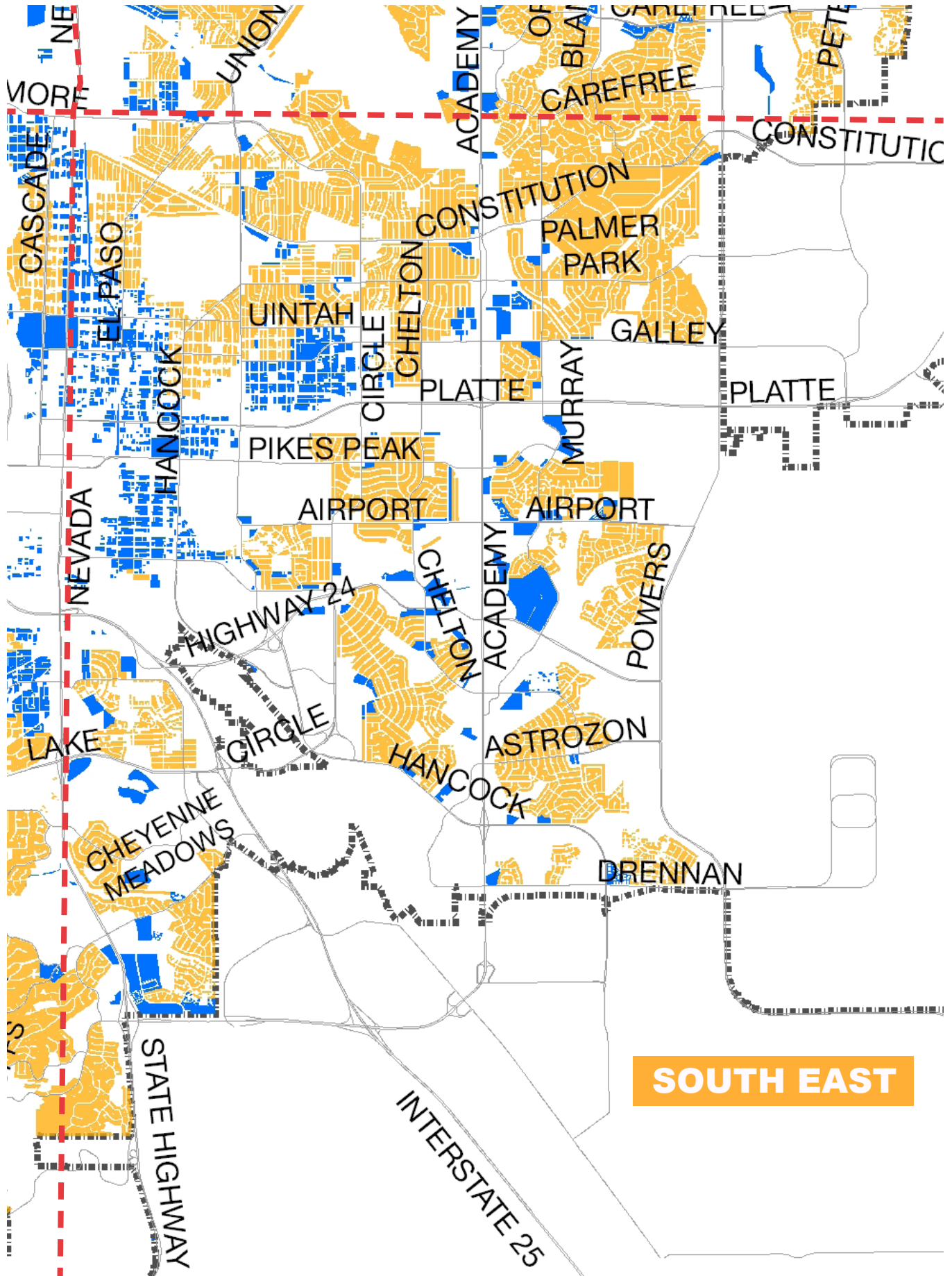
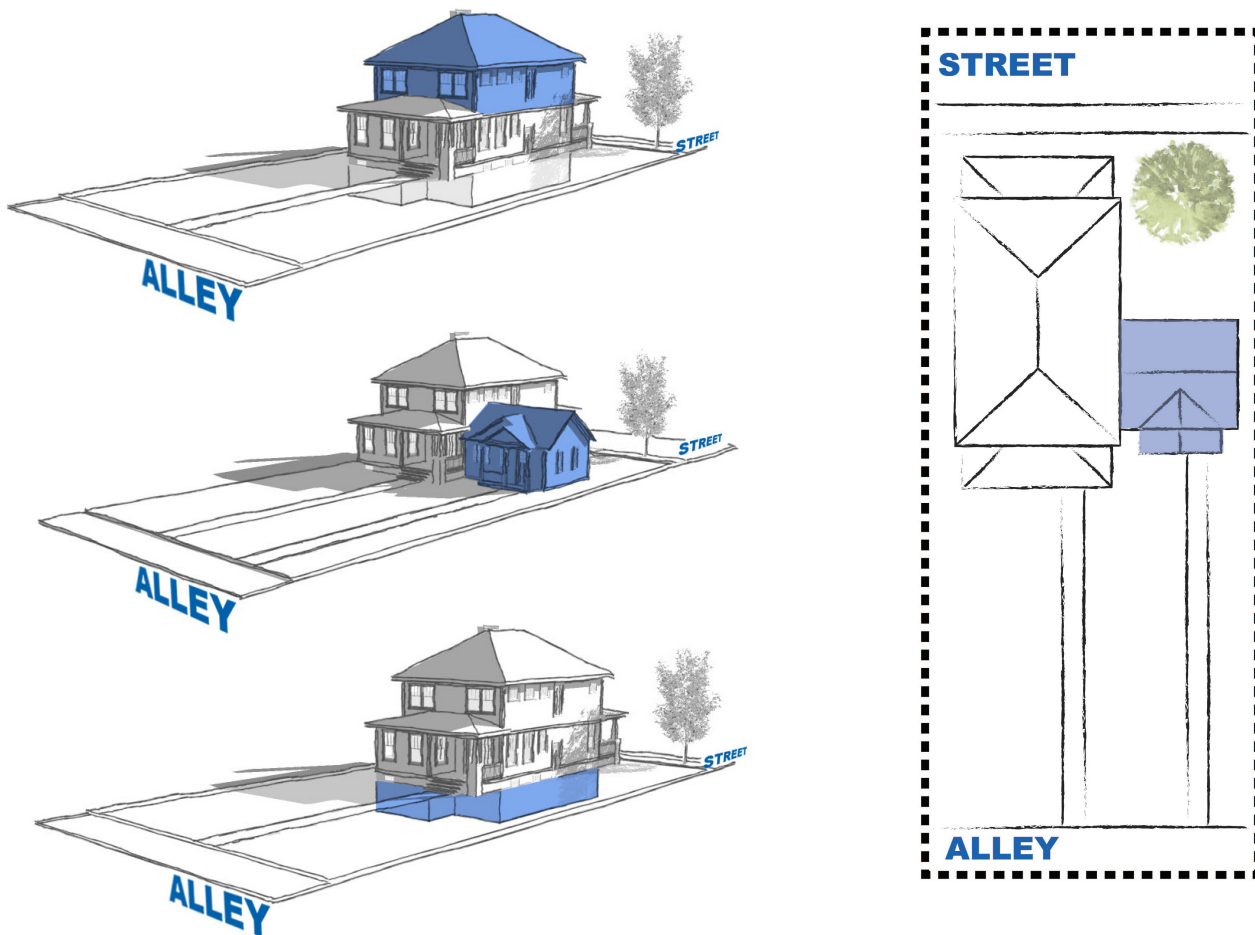


FIGURE 4

INTEGRATED UNIT

WHAT IS AN INTEGRATED UNIT?

A unit that is attached to a single-family home and maintains access between primary home and the unit via a common doorway or stairway.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

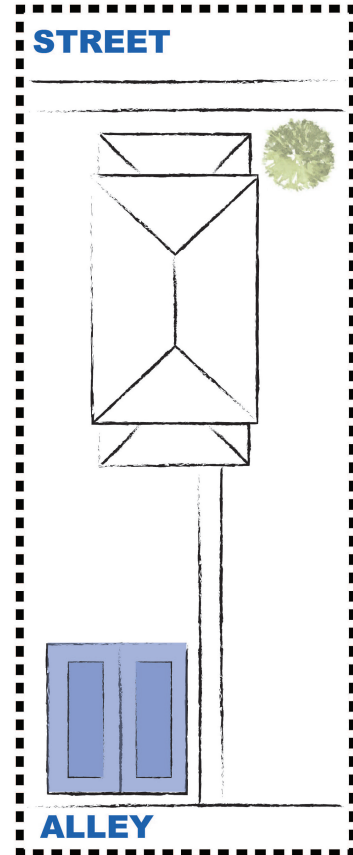
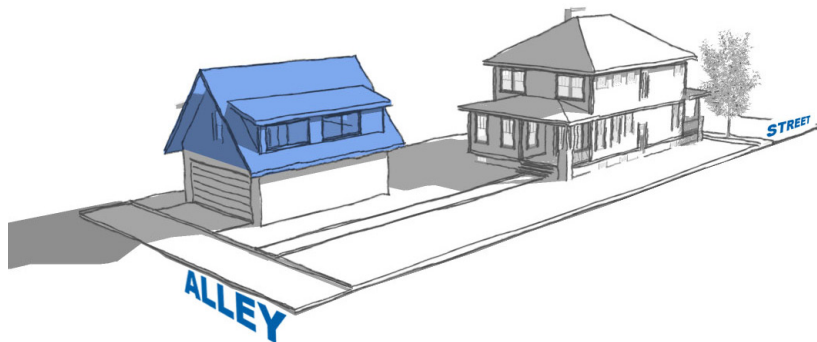
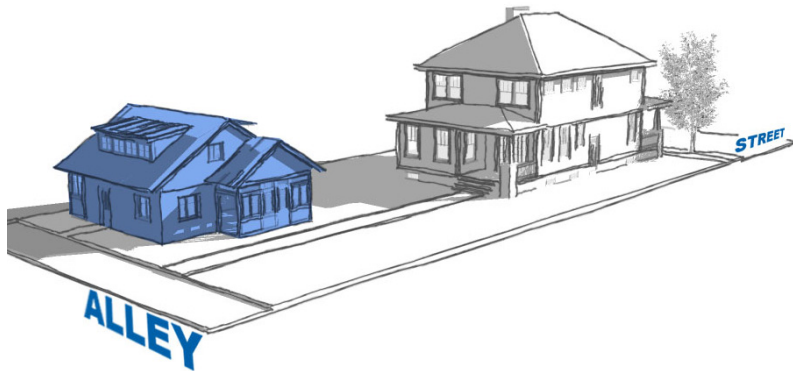
- 1** Property owners must live either in the primary home or the integrated unit if the property is zoned for single family.
- 2** The minimum size of an integrated unit is 200 sqft; maximum size is 40% of the finished floor area of the primary house.
- 3** One additional off-street parking space is required for the integrated unit
- 4** Integrated units have to maintain an interior connection to the primary home. However, they may have separate exterior access; access has to be on the side or rear of the home.
- 5** Integrated units are only within single-family homes and are not allowed within duplexes or multi-family units (triplexes, fourplexes or apartment buildings).

FIGURE 4

DETACHED UNIT

WHAT IS A DETACHED UNIT?

A unit that is detached from the primary home on the property; usually these are stand alone “cottages” or a unit over a garage.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- 1** Property owners must live either in the primary home or the detached unit if the property is zoned for single family.
- 2** The minimum size of a detached unit is 200 sqft, OR if the primary home is less than 1,000 sqft the minimum base size of the accessory dwelling unit may be 500 sqft. The maximum size is 1,500 sqft or 50% of the finished floor area of the primary home, whichever is less.
- 3** One additional off-street parking space is required for the detached unit
- 4** The maximum heights vary from zone to zone, but you can expect detached units to range from a maximum of 20' - 28'.
- 5** Separation distance between the detached unit and the primary house must meet the adopted Building Code of Pikes Peak Regional Building Department, about 10'.

FIGURE 4

DESIGN GUIDELINES

TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS

Consider talking to your adjacent neighbors regarding your proposed plans of adding an ADU to seek input on possible design solutions that would benefit both properties and possibly avoid future conflicts.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

The design and placement of your Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) should follow the general development pattern established within your neighborhood.

- Consider if there are existing ADUs within the neighborhood and where those units have generally been placed on the lot; are the units primarily in the rear of the lot along an alley?
- Are the units free standing or above a detached garage?



ENTRANCE TO UNIT

Consider where the entrance to the unit will be placed, how it will be distinguished as a separate unit and how it may interact with a neighbor's property.

- For detached units consider placing the entrance facing the primary home or at the back alley if the parking space will be located in the same general area.
- Units on the second level of a garage may require an exterior stairway, if possible, consider the placement of the stairwell away from adjacent properties.
- Regarding integrated units, please be sure to familiarize yourself with the Code requirement of maintaining an interior connection between the primary unit and the integrated unit. This requirement allows the home to be transfer back to a single unit if desired by the property owner, as well as maintain an integral appearance of the home.
- If a secondary access is necessary by Building Code or desired by the homeowner (the interior connection must be maintained, but the door may remain locked), placement of the access for the integral unit should be placed on either the side or the rear of the home, this is maintain the outward appearance of the home as a single residence.
- Sidewalks leading to the ADU should be considered if feasible, particularly for units that may not have access onto an alley or are located within a walkable neighborhood. Tenants of the unit should feel they are part of the neighborhood and not relegated to only use of an alley.

FIGURE 4

DESIGN GUIDELINES

PARKING

The addition of an ADU will require one (1) additional parking space be provided on site in addition to the parking required for the primary residence. City code currently restricts the amount of paved surface that can be located within the front yard setback:

- Properties less than 75' wide can have no more than 45% of the front yard paved.
- Properties more than 75' wide can have no more than 40% of the front yard paved.

PRIVACY & OUTDOOR SPACE

Maintaining privacy between the main residence and the ADU is an important consideration; however maintaining privacy between the ADU and adjacent properties may be just as important. Consider the following when designing an ADU:

- For detached ADUs consider the use of fencing or creating enclosed courtyards that provide both the tenant and the neighbor adequate privacy.
- Consider the placement of windows to avoid looking directly onto a neighbor's property or the use of clear story windows (windows that are placed higher up on the wall) that still would allow natural light into the unit but not allow direct view to a neighboring property.
- For integrated units, consider use of fencing, landscaping, blinds/shutters or other elements that would help maintain a level of privacy for all properties involved.
- Consider locations for outdoor decks and patios, placement of these elements provides tenants the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, but consideration to neighboring properties should also be considered.



STORAGE

Having adequate storage is important to the livability of any residence. Thought should be given to the storage needs of the resident of the ADU; if possible, space should be provided for such items as bicycles and seasonal items. Within the unit, an efficient layout and the use of leftover spaces, such as the area under stairs, provide additional storage opportunities and can make a unit feel larger than it is.

BLEND IN WITH PRIMARY RESIDENCE

A new ADU is not required to match the primary home's architecture, however considerations such as matching building color and trim, roof pitch, building materials, scale and overall size of the unit compared to the primary residence should all be considered during the initial design.