

**4/22/24 Input from Coalition on Diversity and Equity  
re: Proposed Regulations for  
Accessory Living Unit and Two-Family Dwellings, and  
Multifamily Dwellings**

We are writing on behalf of Coalition on Diversity and Equity (CoDE). We first want to recognize the Planning and Zoning Regulations Review Subcommittee members for all your hard and thoughtful work, and we thank you again for openly welcoming our participation and input.

The proposed regulations that will be presented tonight will provide a wonderful opportunity to make more housing choices possible in our town, ranging from accessory dwelling units to two-family and multi-family housing. This will help seniors and others who would like to stay in Columbia but need a smaller and/or more affordable place to live, young people who grew up here and can't stay or move back because housing here is just not affordable, and people who work in town or nearby and would like to live here but cannot afford current housing costs. The proposed regulations are easy to understand, respond to Columbia's needs for housing that's more affordable, and will help make our town stronger by supporting more diversity in our community. Overall, we support the proposed changes and hope the Planning and Zoning Commission will also.

We are requesting one change in the proposed regulations for Accessory Living Unit and Two-Family Dwellings. Section 8.3.3 would require the square footage of a detached accessory dwelling unit to not exceed 30% of the floor area of the primary dwelling unit, with the exception that a primary dwelling unit with less than 1650 square feet may have a detached accessory dwelling unit up to 500 square feet.

We've received feedback from some Columbia residents that 500 square feet just cannot accommodate a senior's wheelchair-accessible needs. Someone who wants to build an attached ADU for an older family member would want to insure it will meet long-term needs by making it wheelchair friendly. In addition, a senior couple may require two bedrooms because one is ill or has special needs, or a second bedroom may be needed if a live-in caretaker is required at some point.

The smallest wheelchair-accessible floor plans we've found are 681 square feet for a one-bedroom unit, and 798 for a two-bedroom unit, and they are tight. The two-bedroom unit's 2<sup>nd</sup> bedroom was 7.5 x 9.5 feet, for example. In order to meet the needs of seniors, we believe 900 square feet would be necessary.

We are respectfully asking that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the proposed regulations with this revision.

CoDE Columbia Affordable Housing Committee:  
Rhonda Kincaid  
Pat Shimchick  
Susan Spiggle