

Tarra Jolly

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Major Concerns by the W-S Neighborhood Alliance regarding UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units
Attachments: 11.4.2021 W-S Neighborhood Alliance's Major Concerns about Proposed UDO-CC15-Accessory Dwelling Units.pdf
Importance: High

From: Carolyn A. Highsmith <carolyn_highsmith@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, November 5, 2021 3:44 AM
To: Tarra Jolly <tarraj@cityofws.org>
Cc: Aaron King <aaronk@cityofws.org>; Chris Murphy <chrism@cityofws.org>; Desmond Corley <desmondc@cityofws.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Major Concerns by the W-S Neighborhood Alliance regarding UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units
Importance: High

Dear City/County Planning Board members:

The Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA) has major concerns regarding the newly proposed 2021 UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units. As such, WSNA is submitting a formal Letter addressing these concerns in the attached document. WSNA is especially concerned about the lack of a public dialogue and discussion over such a major zoning change to our City's residential neighborhoods.

As such, as the Letter notes, WSNA is asking for a continuance from the City/County Planning Board for UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units until a more concerted effort is made to conduct a citywide public meeting on UDO-CC15.

Sincerely yours,

Carolyn Highsmith
On behalf of the Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)

Zoning Committee, Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)
President, Konnoak Hills Community Association
Vice President, New South Community Coalition
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Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)

November 4, 2021

**RE: WSNA's Major Concerns about the Proposed UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units.
Please Postpone Decision Making until More Community Dialogue and
Discussion Can Be Held between Planning Staff and the Community-At-Large.**

Dear City/County Planning Board Members:

The Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA) is requesting that you postpone your decision making on UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwellings Units until a citywide public meeting can be held for all interested parties and neighborhoods to discuss the changes and impact that 2021 UDO-CC15 will have on our urban and suburban neighborhoods. Please read our reasons below.

The **Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)** is an alliance of over 16+ residential neighborhoods that have been working together for over 20+ years to ensure the character and integrity of our City's neighborhoods. As such, WSNA was very involved in the community discussions over 4 years ago when the first UDO on Accessory Dwelling Units was passed by the W-S City Council in 2017. This first approved 2017 UDO version on Accessory Dwelling Units was by no means the ideal UDO on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that WSNA had been advocating to achieve.

WSNA does understand the need for increasing both our City's density and affordable housing. However, such housing needs also have to be reconciled with the existing issues currently being faced by our older urban neighborhoods (e.g., old and inadequate water/sewer infrastructure, storm water runoff, parking issues, etc.) as well as by our newer, suburban neighborhoods.

However, this newly proposed 2021 UDO-CC15 is not just an update but a major revision/rewrite of the original 2017 UDO on Accessory Dwellings. Therefore, if the 2021 UDO-CC15 is approved as currently written, all single-family residential zoning areas within the City of Winston-Salem will by default be re-zoned for multi-family usage instead of single family usage without benefit of review by an elected body. **Such a major change in residential zoning must not be rushed through the City/County Planning Board or the City Council without ensuring better safeguards for our neighborhoods and without a major community dialogue and vetting by our City's neighborhoods and residents.**



Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)

WSNA requested that the Planning Department have a citywide virtual meeting on UDO-CC15 so that questions could be submitted and some major concerns addressed **BEFORE** the City/County Planning Board meets on Nov. 10, 2021. This request was declined, and instead, we received a PowerPoint presentation plus a FAQ sheet on UDO-CC15—that just raised more questions and concerns. We also understand that the Planning Staff did meet with the “Affordable Housing Coalition.” However, this Coalition is an official commission appointed by the City’s Mayor and cannot possibly represent the concerns and issues on UDO-CC15 coming directly from our City’s neighborhoods.

Below is a list of the concerns WSNA has regarding the proposed 2021 UDO-CC15 in addition to our major concern over the lack of a public forum before the Nov. 10th Planning Board Meeting.

- **Need for Neighborhood Safeguards** (more rules and regulations in UDO-CC15) – If WSNA decides to support a by-right approval process for Accessory Dwelling Units in residential neighborhoods that would no longer require the approval of an elected body, then more rules and regulations should be included in UDO-CC15 to protect the integrity and character of our City’s neighborhoods.
- **Setbacks** – The proposed 5-foot rear and side setbacks are insufficient for dwellings. Plus, such close proximity to the property line risks creating inappropriate and incompatible situations. WSNA believes that setback rules for ADUs should be more closely aligned with those of Charlotte and Greensboro (i.e., 15 feet or the principal use setback) as opposed to those of Wilmington or Asheville, that have more tourist-based economies.
- **Parking** – The new provision of no parking requirements for ADUs will have a huge, negative impact on neighborhoods dependent on on-street parking. There will be issues with sanitation collections, blocked sidewalks, as well as intersection and side street safety hazards, etc.
- **Lack of Occupancy Limits** – WSNA is concerned about how the City is going to effectively regulate occupancy of an accessory dwelling vs. a boarding house, especially if the primary residence is also rented out? Without an elected body review for ADUs, WSNA is concerned that ADUs could develop into boarding house situations, since two dwellings on a lot could allow up to 8 unrelated occupants. As such, WSNA asserts that this lack of occupancy limits needs to be addressed, such as considering a cap on occupancy for ADUs.
- **Building Size** – WSNA is concerned that the size provisions for detached ADUs may be inappropriate for smaller lots and for situations where the principal residence occupies a larger percentage of the lot. WSNA would like to further discuss what an appropriate size standard



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should be for these situations. WSNA also does not see that the new 2021 proposals are in keeping with the standards of our peer cities, since most of our peer cities allow a maximum size of 800 square feet.

- **Storm Water Impacts** (especially lack of adequate water/sewage infrastructure in old neighborhoods, poor runoff areas, etc.) – Simple paving changes or construction can seriously impact older neighborhoods where there are small lots—leading to flooding in basements and yards along with major erosion. Storm water runoff is already a major city/county issue with climate change and needs to be addressed. For example for UDO-CC15, a more stringent site review plan regarding ADUs could be required, while also giving serious consideration to lowering the limits for triggering a storm water review in older, urban neighborhood situations.
- **ADUs as Short-Term Rentals** – Without some regulation for using ADUs as short-term rentals, the City is opening up for abuse and a scenario where entire blocks of neighborhoods could all be used for short-term rentals—negating home ownership and the integrity and character of our neighborhoods. Therefore, WSNA is proposing that at least a review and/or special permit be required for short-term rentals and for renewals of such. Other regulations should also be considered.

In conclusion, these are WSNA's most pressing concerns regarding UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units. WSNA absolutely believes that there needs to be more public dialogue and discussion on UDO-CC15 **BEFORE** the City/County Planning Board and City Council meet for final consideration of UDO-CC15: Accessory Dwelling Units. WSNA, therefore, urgently requests that the City/County Planning Board continue its review of UDO-CC15 until either December 2021 or January 2022.

Sincerely yours,

Carolyn Highsmith

On behalf of the Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)

Zoning Committee, Winston-Salem Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA)

President, Konnoak Hills Community Association

Vice President, New South Community Coalition

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