



Rachel Vass

Wed, Dec 15,
11:55 AM (2
days ago)

to val, Sheila, Chad, Kenneth, me, andy, tracy, David, Jennifer, Tammy, melissa, egarvin, jkelly, lr, D

Dear Trustees, Commissioners and Staff,

I am Rachel Vass, I own 204 S 5th. Thanks for all the hard work on the draft LUC. There are two specifications that I'd like to comment on, the change to a 3,000 square foot lot minimum, and the 800 square foot minimum home size.

Changing the residential lot minimum from 6000 square feet to 3000 sf per single family dwelling will have more disadvantages than advantages. Average residential lots here are 50' x150', or 7500 sf. There are size and shape variations but 50 x 150 is a fairly standard lot here. I counted more than 200 residential lots in town that could potentially be created if the lot minimum became 3000 sf. That would mean at least 200 more cars, 200 more toilets.

It won't happen overnight, but if you've been to Telluride or Ouray, those towns feel like sardine cans. I grew up in Telluride in the 70's, I watched it happen. They have parking scarcity and a noticeable lack of elbow room. Privacy is diminished and alley ways are used as main roads requiring more maintenance. Assuming this change is to promote more affordable housing, the benefit of dividing lots will be short lived, but will cause a permanent loss of privacy, open area, and landscaping.

Fire risk in Dolores is high, crowding additional dwellings into back yards will increase this danger.

Dolores is a nice place to live because we have a little elbow room, we can walk the side streets without worrying about constant traffic, there's some distance between neighbors. The existing 6000 sf minimum lot size has been successful in protecting our relaxed town vibe. Let's build out the empty residential lots first and then reassess how much more density we want.

A note about affordable housing. Unlike Telluride, Silverton and Ouray, Dolores is not enclosed by Public land. Montezuma County is more than 2,000 square miles, much of it privately owned. Several hundred years ago, the county population was 2 times what it is now. In other words, we have room to grow. Affordable housing in Colorado has long been a challenge. After the 2008 real estate crash, entry level builds are slower than ever. This is a national problem, not just a local one.

In Colorado, affordable housing is supplied by mobile home parks, small entry level houses, government subsidized multi-family and title restricted housing. I'm not in favor of sacrificing my neighborhood feel to make room for additional dwellings wedged into back yards. Cutting lot minimums in half is an invitation to speculators but won't solve affordable housing requirements. Maybe a 4500 sf lot minimum is a good compromise?

Moving on: the 800 sf minimum size for a single family dwelling size is too large. A well designed 750 sf home is a perfectly comfortable and efficient 2 bedroom 1 bath. And 600 sf gets you a terrific 1 bedroom house.

For the purposes of this discussion, let's assume we aren't talking about Tiny Houses, which are smaller than 500 sf.

500-800 square foot homes are environmentally friendly because they are more economical to build, require fewer supplies and consume fewer resources because they are cheaper to heat and cool;

25% of adults in the US live solo. Generally speaking, the smaller the house, the more affordable to rent or buy. So, smaller entry level houses provide affordable housing options for singles & childless couples.

Houses between 500-800 sf help balance density by providing options for 1 or 2 occupants. The 800 sf minimum outlaws efficient entry level homes.

Small houses have smaller foot prints and take less land space. More space between dwellings deliver better fire defense.

500 - 800 sf houses are an appropriate scale for our local 50'x150' and smaller lot sizes.

Why rule out an efficient and sought after housing style (the studio, the one bedroom, or the small 2 bedroom)?

What are the benefits of requiring all new homes to be at least 800 sf?

If someone wants to build a super efficient 520 sf home why stop them?

If a 520 sf home complies with UBC, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, architectural, fire and flood code, why deny that dwelling?

Many of the cutest houses in town are smaller than 800 sf, a historical precedent.

Let's protect our green space, privacy and easy-going, not-overcrowded town by making lot minimums at least 4500 sq and reducing the minimum house size to 500 sf.

Thank you, happy holidays.

Rachel Vass

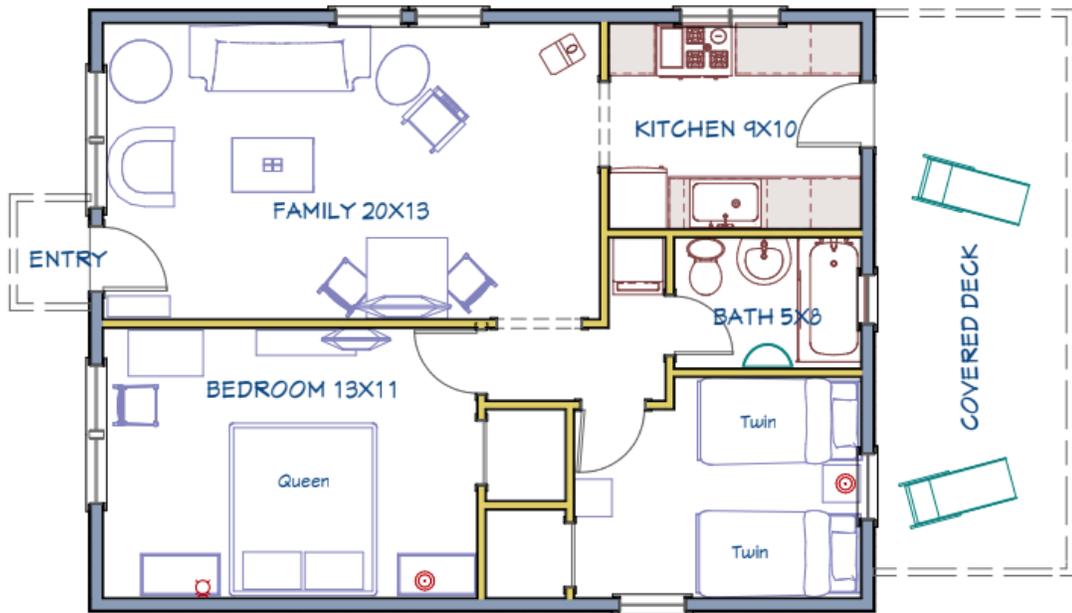
Below is a 750 sf 2 bedroom floor plan including laundry. The foot print is 25'x30' on a 7500 sf lot with 13 fruit trees.

Below is a 500 SF one bedroom house.

examples of under 800 SF homes in town.

5 Attachments





750 SF 2 Bedroom