

City encourages homeowners in west Denver to build carriage homes to curb affordable housing crisis

[Russell Haythorn](#)

DENVER -- The city of Denver is launching a program that could help homeowners pay their mortgage, and also solve the affordable housing crisis.

The initiative makes it easier and cheaper for homeowners in west Denver to build a second, smaller homes right in their backyards.

The idea behind that is to allow families to build an additional home – sometimes called carriage homes or granny flats - and make additional income by renting it out, without changing the character of the neighborhood.

Unlike the current building trend in some Denver neighborhoods of scraping older homes and putting up multi-story duplexes and condos, this initiative encourages homeowners to build small, one to two bedroom carriage homes in their backyards.

The initiative is spearheaded by the [West Denver Renaissance Collaborative](#). The WDRC calls the homes ADU's or accessory dwelling units.

"If we could add on or add something in the yard, that'd be great," said Westwood homeowner James Escalera.

"The American dream isn't just a dream, it's a reality," said Denver Housing Authority director Ismael Guerrero. "But, with rising housing costs, low wages and increased cost of living - it's at risk. And we need to do something to make sure they don't lose the dream they've already achieved."

The program cuts a lot of red tape for homeowners, in terms of design, permitting and construction.

It also cuts costs in half for homeowners by offering subsidies, financing options and waving fees.