

Attachment F – Summary of Outreach Themes

Summary of Public Input

Preparation of the ADU Ordinance Amendment Including Separate Sale of ADUs (Amendment) involved extensive community engagement to ensure that updates to local regulations were both consistent with State law and responsive to local priorities. Between spring and fall 2025, County staff conducted a comprehensive outreach effort that included small group discussions with industry representatives and environmental organizations, presentations at community planning and sponsor group meetings, and a series of public webinars. Each engagement activity was designed to serve a specific purpose—small group meetings focused on technical feasibility and implementation considerations; community group meetings provided a forum to discuss local needs and potential community impacts; and public webinars were structured to inform residents about recent changes to State ADU legislation, outline potential implications for the County’s Zoning Ordinance, and solicit input on local eligibility criteria for the separate sale of ADUs. The objectives of this outreach were to gather input on community priorities, identify challenges and opportunities related to ADU development, clarify where the County has discretion to adjust local standards, and inform the public about State-mandated ADU requirements. Information received during public engagement is summarized below.

ADU Development Requirements and Approval Processes

A primary theme that emerged from building industry stakeholder engagement involved concerns about reduced development requirements and the ministerial permitting process, as it relates to the separate sale of ADUs. Many participants noted that existing ADUs were originally designed and permitted as rental units, without consideration for potential future subdivision or condominium conversion. As a result, these units often lack the physical site features—such as private access driveways, off-street parking, or individual utility connections—needed to function as independent ownership units. Comments also emphasized that creating separate parcels for ADUs can be complex and time-intensive due to requirements of the State Subdivision Map Act. Stakeholders reported that site plans involving multiple detached rental units can take 10 to 12 months to approve, while condominium conversion projects may extend to two or three years. While the County has limited discretion over subdivision mapping requirements, which are governed by State law, this feedback highlights the importance of clear and efficient local review procedures. Staff incorporated this input by ensuring that the Amendment provides clearer guidance on what qualifies for ministerial approval, while continuing to comply with State-mandated subdivision and mapping requirements.

Environmental and Locational Considerations

Community members also provided feedback regarding the location and environmental impacts of ADU development and conversion. Participants expressed concern that allowing separate sales of ADUs could increase development pressures in rural areas, potentially contributing to dispersed growth patterns or added strain on road infrastructure, parking, utilities, fire safety and natural resources. Additional comments noted potential environmental impacts, such as increased

impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff associated with ADU construction and site improvements. Some participants suggested linking eligibility for separate ADU sales to factors such as proximity to transit or access to public services, to better align the policy with sustainable development goals. While the County's ability to impose location-based restrictions on ADUs is limited under State law, these concerns are addressed through continued application of existing environmental review and infrastructure requirements. ADU projects, including condominium conversions, remain subject to applicable local building, environmental, and infrastructure standards to ensure that new development is safe and compatible with its surroundings.

Housing Supply and Affordability

Another central theme of public feedback focused on housing affordability and the potential effects of allowing ADUs to be sold separately. Some community members expressed concern that separate sales could reduce the availability of affordable rental housing. There was also concern that potential increased investor activity in single-family neighborhoods may lead to higher-than-intended residential densities. Others viewed the policy as a positive step toward expanding homeownership opportunities, supporting multigenerational living arrangements, and providing flexibility for homeowners to age in place or access home equity. To better understand the potential impacts, staff partnered with Ascent, through SANDAG's Housing Acceleration Program, to analyze trends in jurisdictions that have already implemented similar policies. Since the separate sale of ADUs is new in California, local examples are not yet available. However, findings from Seattle, Washington, and Austin, Texas show that allowing ADU condominiums has not increased rents relative to traditional housing but has created new pathways to ownership in higher-income neighborhoods where ADUs are most common. In Austin, approximately 40 percent of ADU condominiums continue to operate as rentals, maintaining comparable rent levels to non-condominium ADUs. These findings suggest that permitting separate ADU sales can increase housing options and affordability without substantially diminishing the rental housing supply. The full memorandum prepared by the technical assistance team is provided in Attachment D.

Fire Safety and Infrastructure Considerations

Fire safety and infrastructure requirements were also recurring topics of discussion throughout the engagement process. Participants expressed concern about the feasibility of condominium conversions in areas designated as high or very high fire severity zones. While State law does not prohibit ADUs in these areas, the conversion of an existing ADU and primary dwelling into separate condominium units introduces additional fire access and safety standards. Specifically, condominium conversion projects must comply with local fire authority requirements regarding maximum dead-end road length, secondary access, and minimum setback distances from wildland urban interface (WUI) boundaries. If a property's access road exceeds allowable limits or lacks sufficient secondary access, the local fire district may not approve a condominium map for the site. These requirements apply only when an ADU is proposed for separate sale and do not affect ministerial ADU development or rental use. Stakeholders also raised questions about infrastructure

capacity, including water and sewer service, energy metering, and solar compliance. These elements remain governed by existing County regulations and State codes. While these standards may limit eligibility for condominium conversion in certain locations, they are critical for ensuring public safety and consistency with adopted building and fire codes.

Program Design and Implementation

Input on the design of a local program for the separate sale of ADUs reflected a wide range of perspectives. Many participants expressed opposition to including a Right of First Refusal requirement, noting that it could complicate transactions, reduce marketability, and place additional burdens on property owners. Others supported limiting eligibility to detached ADUs, emphasizing that detached units create clearer physical and ownership distinctions between the main residence and the secondary unit. Detached units were also seen as simpler to regulate, with fewer issues related to shared walls, utilities, or access points. Additional support was expressed for a requirement to limit eligibility to ADUs that have been newly constructed as part of the development of a major subdivision while seeking a tentative map.

The community engagement process provided valuable input that helped shape the Amendment. Stakeholder feedback highlighted both the opportunities and challenges associated with allowing the separate sale of ADUs, particularly in balancing homeownership goals with rental housing preservation and infrastructure capacity. While some concerns—such as subdivision processing, fire safety standards, and environmental review—are governed by State law and outside the County’s discretion, the Amendment incorporates local refinements to improve clarity, predictability, and efficiency. Analysis of other jurisdictions suggests that allowing ADU condominiums can expand affordable ownership options and support reinvestment in existing housing stock without negatively affecting rental availability. The County’s approach reflects a balance between compliance with State housing requirements and responsiveness to community priorities, ensuring that local regulations promote safe, equitable, and sustainable ADU development across unincorporated areas.