



June 24th, 2020

Planning and Housing Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Committee Members,

RE: Toronto Building Requirements for Laneway Suites – Access for Firefighters

BACKGROUND:

The City of Toronto has an interest in providing a full range of housing types across the city and within neighbourhoods. Laneway suites expand housing options and choices for property owners and residents in the City of Toronto. In 2018, City Council adopted a By-law to allow laneway suites in the Toronto and East York areas of the city. This By-law was further expanded to allow laneway suites throughout the city in August 2019.

Property owners have, however, encountered challenges in meeting the fire department access requirements. Late last year, the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, in collaboration with the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services developed options and tools to assist designers and property owners in meeting these requirements. These included permission to property owners to achieve the required width of the access route on their neighbour's property where there was not sufficient space on their own property or provide an access path through the lane under certain conditions. While these options have helped property owners to achieve compliance, there continue to be challenges for smaller and deeper sites where there is limited access between houses.

In order to support the design and construction of laneway suites in the City of Toronto, it would be beneficial for the City to provide clarity on how laneway suites can be designed and constructed to meet the life and safety requirements of the Ontario Building Code. A recent decision by the Province of Ontario's Building Code Commission, related to fire department access for a laneway suite on Manning Avenue, should be used to inform this work.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Planning and Housing Committee:

1. Request that the Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building, in collaboration with the Fire Chief, Toronto Fire Services; and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning explore and develop further opportunities for building designers to achieve compliance with the fire department access requirements for laneway suites and report back, with recommendations, to the September 17th 2020 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Ana Bailão
Deputy Mayor
Councillor – Ward 18, Davenport