



Planning and Housing Committee
Attention: Nancy Martins
By email to: phc@toronto.ca

RE: Garden Suites, Planning & Housing Committee, 25.15, June 28, 2021

June 25, 2021

Dear Deputy Mayor Ana Bailao, Chair and Members, Planning and Housing Committee

The ABC Residents Association is a volunteer organization committed to enhancing the quality of life in our neighbourhood through active participation in municipal issues. Originally established in 1957, we serve the residents, including condo and apartment residents, living in Toronto's Yorkville / North Midtown community between Yonge Street west to Avenue Road and Bloor Street north to the CPR tracks.

We have attended the City's Garden Suite consultations, which we found well run and informative. We have also reviewed the draft proposal for Garden Suites and would like to outline our preliminary comments on the proposal, recognizing that additional details and changes will be forthcoming.

We understand that the City's initiatives to increase density and housing options within Toronto's neighbourhoods is a direction of the Provincial Government; however, municipalities, including Toronto have been given flexibility about what standards are used to implement the Provincial directives. We were therefore surprised that the current Laneway Suites Zoning By-laws that have not been evaluated, are the basis of the preliminary draft Garden Suites proposals and are suggesting additional more relaxed requirements.

Considering the finding of the Garden Suite survey and the fact that Garden Suites have the potential of more impact on adjacent properties than Laneway Suites (laneway suite locations have separation distance from neighbours by the fact that they are located in former garage space) we were expecting reduced not increased footprint regulations. As we have

communicated in other letters, the promised Laneway Suite monitoring is long overdue. We think it is important that the City share the data for the lot studies as well as the consultant's Laneway Suites Monitoring Report in time for the public to review it before being asked to evaluate standards for Garden Suites.

The following is a preliminary list of concerns we would put forward at this time:

1. Height – the draft proposal indicates a maximum height of 6m based on distance to the primary house. Our research for 8 municipalities across Canada shows a height allowance of less than 4.6m. The implications of a 6m height are highly impacting on adjacent properties.
2. Basements – we were surprised that basements would be permitted. We understand Barrie now wants to eliminate basements as they found that they were being made into two units.
3. Soft Landscaping – it is very disappointing that soft-scaping would be reduced for Garden Suites from Laneway Suites. We understood that the City was going to safeguard and, where possible, enhance the natural environment with the emphasis on “GARDEN”. The report suggests that further studies will be undertaken, and we suggest protection regulations consider the impact on the yards of those living in proximity to these new homes.
4. Parking – zero parking is proposed as had already been the case for Laneway suites. Our research shows that most municipalities are requiring a minimum of one space for each property with an additional Suite.

This is an important initiative with a major impact on all Neighbourhoods across the City and thus requires a great deal of consideration for all aspects of the program.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. We understand that consultations will continue to take place over the coming months, and we look forward to open discussions prior to the finalization of the by-laws.

Sincerely,

John Caliendo & Ian Carmichael
ABCRA Co-Chairs

Cc: Mayor and Members of City Council
Councillor Layton
Gregg Lintern
David Driedger
Allison Reid