



Planning and Housing Committee

November 24, 2021

RE: PHC 29.2 Changing Lanes: The City of Toronto's Review of Laneway Suites – Monitoring Program and Zoning By-law Amendments

We can appreciate that preparations must occur to accommodate the large increase in population expected in the City of Toronto over the next several decades. However, we do not believe that the Recommended Zoning By-law changes will be beneficial for those same new residents nor the existing ones.

The report included with this proposal mentions the declaration of a climate emergency being voted in by City Council in Oct 2019. The Zoning By-law changes being proposed for Laneway Suites are going in exactly the opposite direction required to accomplish better climate stewardship in neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto. We urge this Committee to send these Zoning By-law recommendations back for further consideration due to the negative impact they will have on soft landscaping, removing trees and creating an unfavourable environment for planting new trees, wildlife, birds and pollinators and achieving the goals of the Toronto Biodiversity Strategy, 2019 for our city.

"Biodiversity is essential for the health and well-being of all beings. These relationships are interdependent and reciprocal. Let's protect and support the biodiversity of this place by building or by deepening one's own relationship with the land" - quote by Carolynne Crawley, in the Forward, Toronto Biodiversity Strategy, 2019.

According to the 2018 Tree Canopy Study, from 2008 – 2018, Toronto lost permeable surfaces at an astonishing rate – the equivalent of 1,670 football fields - resulting in a decrease of available growing space for future tree canopy expansion. The most area converted to impervious land cover was in the Single-Family Residential land use areas. These propose Zoning By-laws will do nothing to halt that loss of growing space but rather will exponentially accelerate the loss.

In particular, the concerns we have are as follows:

Rear Yard Setbacks - Reducing the rear yard setback to 1.0m from 1.5m

Side Yard Setbacks – Reducing the side yard setbacks from 1.5 to 1.0. We would strongly recommend **increasing the side yard setbacks** to allow space to plant trees in between laneway houses. 2m is severely undersized for this purpose.

Landscaping Requirements – Reduction in the soft landscaping requirements between the home and the Laneway Suite. In addition to the threat to trees mentioned earlier this will further reduce the amount of "green" in the yard. Trees and vegetation are important factors in battling climate change. Do not reduce the 85% soft landscaping in the yard. A sidewalk of no more than 1 metre wide made with permeable materials should be sufficient between the home and Laneway house.

Maximum Height - We have concerns about the recommendation that building height be allowed to increase past 6 metres. And then allow yet additional height for structures on the roof by another 1.5m. The reason given for this increase in height is to allow for better insulation for the building. While

increased insulation is a good idea, certainly this increase in R-Value can be accommodated without increasing the height of the building. As the height increases, the more the negative impacts on neighbouring properties in terms of loss of privacy and light.

Floor area and size of the Laneway house - The Laneway house should be limited in size so that it does not become a “second house” in the backyard. There is nothing in the Zoning by-laws that pertain to a true “suite” size. Rather this allows a house virtually the same size as the main residential building on a lot. And does not count the second house towards the gross floor space.

It was referenced in the report that the criteria for Laneway Suites will influence that of Garden Suites. We would hope that very careful attention be paid to loss of Green Space when building either of these structures. The Garden Suite, being a possible “new build” as a separate building has even greater possibility of threatening trees and resulting in even more loss of plantable space.

Recommendation 4 from City Planning to this Committee lacks any reassurance that action will be taken to protect and enhance the City’s tree canopy and growing space and a deadline of a report to the Planning and Housing Committee in the first quarter of 2023 regarding **potential** strategies is far, far too little too late.

The Tree Canopy report was done in 2018. That these potential strategies would then be coming 5 years later we hope would be unacceptable to this committee.

According to the 2018 Tree Canopy Report, Long Branch is the hardest hit Neighbourhood for Tree Canopy loss in all of Etobicoke York and the 8th hardest hit neighbourhood in all the City. Our tree canopy was at 26.5% when the City set the goal to grow the City’s tree canopy coverage to 40%. Long Branch’s tree canopy, during this period of planned tree canopy growth, has declined to now only 15%.

Stronger tree protection is desperately needed now, before changes are made to building and intensification in areas where trees exist now, such as where Laneway Suites are planned.

- Long Branch has experienced the greatest Tree Canopy loss (-43.4%) in all of Ward 3 and all of Etobicoke according to the 2018 Tree Canopy Study conducted by the City of Toronto

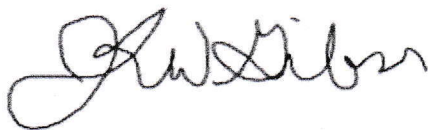
2009 - 2018 Toronto Tree Canopy change by Etobicoke-York Ward*

| Ward | Neighbourhood | Number | 2018 | 2009 | Change | % change |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 3 | Long Branch | 19 | 15.00 | 26.50 | -11.50 | -43.4 |
| 3 | New Toronto | 18 | 15.25 | 8.70 | 6.55 | 75.3 |
| 3 | Mimico | 17 | 16.49 | 13.40 | 3.09 | 23.1 |
| 3 | Alderwood | 20 | 26.83 | 24.70 | 2.13 | 8.6 |
| 3 | Stonegate-Queensway | 16 | 43.40 | 32.20 | 11.20 | 34.8 |
| 3 | Islington-CityCenter West | 14 | 15.73 | 15.40 | 0.33 | 2.1 |
| 3 | Kingsway South | 15 | 42.55 | 46.90 | -4.35 | -9.3 |
| Total Ward 3 | | | 25.04 | 23.97 | 1.06 | 4.4 |

* Source: City of Toronto 2018 Tree Canopy Study ; KBM Resources Group Lallemand inc./BioForest Dillon Consulting Ltd; Duinker, P and Steenberg, J. Dalhousie University Appendix 1: Canopy Change by Neighbourhood 2009-2018: 253

The LBNA recognizes that intensification is necessary for the City of Toronto as the population grows larger. However, we hope that where this additional housing is being planned considers also providing additional infrastructure for neighbourhoods. All these new people will need schools, roads, improved transit, recreation facilities, etc. And also, more green infrastructure and trees.

Sincerely,



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Association
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