

December 8, 2020

TO: City of Toronto Planning and Housing Committee of City Council

FROM: Roncesvalles Macdonell Residents Association

RE: Garden Suites Review

Roncesvalles is a stable Neighbourhood in the city's terms, and the RMRA has been a voice for residents for almost 50 years. In a 2018 survey, the overwhelming majority of Roncesvalles respondents were in favour of Laneway Suites. The few Laneway Suites that have been built since then have been well-received in the Neighbourhood. We strongly encourage the city to continue improving the LWS program and to adopt a Garden Suite program.

The RMRA supports the expansion of this kind of program to other parts of the city as simple fairness and because of the great potential it has for housing and sustainable growth. It is a matter of equity that property owners who do not happen to own a lot on a lane should be allowed to access this kind of development opportunity.

In our Neighborhood, there are property owners turning derelict garages and unused land into two-bedroom and three-bedroom homes on the lanes. Over time, there may well be thousands of such infill "missing-middle" residential spaces developed across the city as people see the potential being realized.

This is gentle densification at its best. These spaces bring new people into an area without major disruption. New population growth in old neighbourhoods otherwise only happens with controversial and lopsided high-density development.

Accessory dwelling units like garden suites also give families a great deal of flexibility in how they live and grow. These can be excellent spaces for seniors, a more economic and healthier alternative to long-term care homes (and we know what Covid-19 has exposed about that housing type). They can also be used to keep families living near each other in stable Neighbourhoods like Roncesvalles, which is otherwise unaffordable for young adults starting to build independent lives.

Thank you to the members of city council who have supported the expansion of accessory dwelling units as Laneway Suites. The next step is to equitably extend this initiative with the regularization of Garden Suites.

Sincerely,

Roncesvalles Macdonell Residents Association

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