

31 January 2022

City Clerk
City Council Item 2022.PH30.2
Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Garden Suites – Final Report
For Agenda on 12 January 2022

SUPPORT FOR GARDEN SUITES

Dear Council Members,

There is only one critical reason why garden suites are important to our city – they will continue to put control of new housing in the hands of everyday homeowners.

For too long, homeowners have been victims of new housing projects, but garden suites, laneway suites, and other EHON (Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods) efforts are a landmark transfer of power that is enabling Toronto's homeowners to be a grass-roots contributor to our housing issues.

There is concern that garden suites will further "commoditize" housing and lead to the commercialization of our neighbourhoods. For the last 2 years, the vast majority of our clients at Lanescape have been individual homeowners. Debt solutions and tax incentives are geared to support individuals in a way that institutions can not take advantage of.

Over the last 2 years, there have been applications for laneway suites on less than half-a-percent of laneway properties in Toronto. We are seeing a piecemeal, scattered approach to laneway suite projects, which is proving that homeowner-led development will exemplify gentle intensification. That is going to continue with garden suites, except it will affect a broader range of properties at an equally gentle pace. And that gentle pace is making a big impact. Laneway suites alone are accommodating about 2% of Toronto's population growth every year. Garden suites will increase that impact and distribute it more evenly across the city.

Our only concern with the new garden suites policy is that it doesn't exist yet. Inaction is the concern Toronto should fear the most. Garden suites are another effort to empower our homeowners to take control of the growth of our city and become its guiding force and leading beneficiary. Every day, our office helps existing and new homeowners; contribute to higher mortgages, accommodate loved ones, and create work-from-home opportunities. They are improving housing flexibility in an increasingly constrained housing landscape. The proposed garden suite policy is a logical next step for Toronto's now proven model of sustainable, secondary housing. Torontonians will benefit from its virtues, and its limitations are adequate to protect the aspects of our neighbourhood we all love.

The attention seen from the Chief Planner and the EHON team ensures that this will be a living policy that continues to address our communities' evolving concerns into the future.

Lanescape strongly recommends immediate support of this policy.

Sincerely,



Craig Race



Alex Sharpe



Andrew Sorbara