

**From:** [jsander@tsa.ca](mailto:jsander@tsa.ca)  
**To:** [councilmeeting](#)  
**Cc:** [Councillor Jaye Robinson](#)  
**Subject:** Our comments for 2022.PH30.2 on February 2, 2022 City Council  
**Date:** January 31, 2022 11:26:23 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Dear Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of Save Our Bennington Residents' Group, which represents nearly 200 homeowners in the long-established Bennington Heights community.

We have reviewed the proposal for a new city-wide “garden suites” policy for Toronto. We have consulted with other residents' groups and recently heard about the City of Barrie’s experience with garden suites from residents’ groups in that city.

We support efforts to increase the stock of affordable housing in Toronto. However, we are now convinced that the proposal coming before City Council on February 2 is seriously misguided and requires significant further study and consultation. We have conducted an informal study in our own community and, prior to our circulation of information, NOT ONE individual was aware of the proposal and its implications.

We are further extremely worried by the experiences described by Barrie residents’ groups. They related how the gardens suites program in that City resulted in developers driving up house prices to the detriment of families seeking homes and the stock of affordable rental housing actually declined instead of increased.

Barrie is now re-drafting its policy – making very significant changes to it. If just half of the Barrie experience is visited on Toronto communities, the result will be destructive to community character and cohesion.

To highlight just a few of these major concerns in Toronto, we note the following:

- No tree protection policies put in place
- Allowance of garden suites closer to lot lines than main house by-laws ... resulting in lack of backyard privacy for neighbours
- Basements were allowed which resulted in greater tree destruction
- 2 storey garden suites were allowed which were much more intrusive to neighbours
- Toronto proposes that garden suites can be nearly 2,000 square feet ... often as big as or even larger than the main house ... hardly affordable housing
- Policy included a minimum size which meant garden suites were built larger for greater profit again resulting in non-affordable housing
- Larger lot sizes scooped up by developers knowing there was greater financial gain resulting in inflated housing prices for families
- No requirement to maintain minimum greenspace, particularly softscaping, which is needed to protect against flooding

We respectfully request that City Council defer consideration of this garden suites policy until such time as the implications of the policy are clearly known and communicated to residents; that the experience of other communities with a garden suites policy is fully factored into policy-making and communications; and that public communication of any new policy is enhanced city-wide.

We are sure Councillors agree that we should get this right – because getting it wrong (like Barrie) will be highly negative and impossible to reverse for everyone except developers and professional investors. *In conclusion, we urge Council to stop the fast-tracking of this proposal and pull it back for review, proper communication and, quite simply, getting it right.*

Ian Anderson



Director and Chair  
Save Our Bennington

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**Ian Anderson**, Chair

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Pronouns: he, him



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