

north shore news

Micro home showcase gets green light

Shipyards project to highlight smallest living space options

Chris Slater / North Shore News

June 30, 2015 03:55 PM



An interior view of a sample NOMAD "micro home." Photo supplied

The growing popularity of coach houses on the North Shore could be getting some competition in the future, following a decision by the [City of North Vancouver council to put cash into setting up a public showcase featuring 'micro homes.'](#)

Council approved a motion June 22 to grant \$35,000 from the city's affordable housing reserve fund towards the 'Innovations in Small Housing' showcase, which will be set up on a vacant lot in the city's Shipyards district in Lower Lonsdale.

As housing costs continue to spike on both the North Shore and in much of Metro Vancouver, municipalities throughout the region have been tasked with creating housing action plans, which aim to explore innovative solutions for those seeking affordable housing. Included among those solutions are ['micro homes' — units under 180 square feet](#) — which could be potentially placed on residential properties in much the same way as coach houses.

To select the specific homes to be showcased, the city will be issuing a request for expressions of interest and will review applications fitting specific criteria.

"While the city has various types of innovative housing and a successful coach house program, a small housing showcase would provide an opportunity to stimulate discussion and improvements to existing coach house designs and raise possibilities for new forms of housing . . ." stated a report prepared by city staff.

While only going on display at this point, the topic earned some enthusiastic response from those on council who spoke on the motion.

"I'm very interested in this being used here," said Coun. Craig Keating. "So many people I talk to are taking a look at

various websites for new small kinds of housing.”

Keating said that many view small housing options as accommodations for loved ones or for potential ways to help with their own housing costs. He said he would look forward to the future possibility of staff preparing a proposal for a couple of these homes to be set up on residential properties on an experimental basis.

“I would certainly look forward to staff coming back in the near future with a proposal to have the opportunity for a couple of property owners in the city who . . . would be able to have one of these installed on a test basis.”

Coun. Linda Buchanan, also supportive of the showcase, said the location is well situated to showcase the micro homes to a broader public.

“Given the fact that we have thousands of people that come down on any given Friday night to participate in the Friday Night Market, it’s a great opportunity to showcase the small homes,” she said.

“I think this is a means to show people what’s possible and I think there is a lot of talk out there around housing affordability and what exactly are small homes . . . this will give it much exposure and can certainly help to facilitate the dialogue.”

Although Mayor Darrell Mussatto looked at the showcase with enthusiasm, he also pointed out that the city is only exploring the option of such homes at this point.

“I think it will be exciting to have this at the Friday Night Market. People can go down and see what micro homes are about. It doesn’t mean we’re approving them, it means we’re looking at them,” said Mussatto.

Mussatto said he is hoping the city can find a way to receive feedback from the public on the homes going on display.

The exhibit, which will allow for up to three housing showcases and feature inside tours during the Friday Night Markets, is expected to be set up later this summer although an official date has yet to be determined.