

Vancouver looks to expand laneway housing program

Proposal is to allow program in all single-family zones

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The City of Vancouver is looking to expand its laneway housing program to all single-family housing zones in order to include the roughly six per cent that is now excluded and to meet targets set last year for creating more affordable housing options in Canada's most pricey real-estate market.

Photograph by: Smallworks Studios/Laneway Housing Inc, Vancouver Heritage Foundation

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Jane Pickering, the city's deputy director of planning, said the remaining six per cent consists of small parcels of land next to single-family neighbourhoods that already allow laneway homes. "It will make it all consistent," she said.

The city has scheduled an information session about the proposed changes for March 6 at the Polish Community Hall at 4015 Fraser St.

Laneway houses are between 500 and 750 square feet and are typically located just off the laneway where a garage would usually be located. They can be rented or used by family.

Since the introduction of laneway houses in 2009, the city has issued over 800 permits for this type of housing.

As part of its housing and homelessness strategy developed in 2012, the city set a target of 1,800 new rental suites and laneway houses to be built over a three-year period ending in 2014.

Recently released numbers from the city show that there were 350 permits issued for laneway houses in Vancouver last year.

Pickering said a report will be presented to city council on the proposed expansion later in the spring. If council agrees, it will be sent to public hearings for possible incorporation in the zoning bylaw later this year.

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