

# WV seeks coach house input

## Public panel discussion will look at feasibility of alternate housing

BY SAM SMITH, NORTH SHORE NEWS MAY 3, 2013

THE District of West Vancouver is considering coach houses as a way to create more diverse and affordable home options.

A panel will discuss the feasibility of these coach houses at an open forum to be held at the Kay Meek Centre on Wednesday, May 8 from 7 to 9 p.m.

Coach houses, sometimes called laneway housing, are smaller detached secondary homes on a common lot. Many municipalities, such as the City of North Vancouver, already allow coach houses.

If residents show enough interest, the district will draft policy and regulations for coach houses to be further reviewed.

Next week's panel will focus on four topics: the right type and size of housing to meet West Vancouver's future needs; the trend toward "downsized" living and the introduction of coach houses in Metro Vancouver; the evolution of the City of North Vancouver's coach house program; as well as the personal story behind a recently completed coach house in North Vancouver.

Coach houses are identified in West Vancouver's Housing Action Plan as one of five key actions to address the limited housing choices and affordability problems in the city.

Many homeowners view coach houses as an opportunity to create a space to put an elderly parent, adult child, on-site caregiver, or design a custom area for a family member with special needs who might, for example, have limited mobility. Others simply aim to downsize into a smaller housing unit on their property, and create a detached secondary suite "to maintain the privacy of the principal dwelling."

For years West Vancouver residents and council have looked for ways to create more diverse and affordable housing, being mentioned as far back as the 2004 Official Community Plan, and the 2007-2008 Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing.

A 24-page discussion paper entitled The Potential for 'Coach Houses' in West Vancouver was completed in Dec., 2012.

The document outlines possible short and long-term directions the district can take to implement coach houses.

The document identifies several "housing gaps" in West Vancouver, including older residents wishing to downsize; younger families and young adults wishing to establish themselves in the community; lower income residents looking for more affordable housing options; people requiring accessible or adaptable housing; and people in need of assisted living.

The panel is to be moderated by journalist Frances Bula, with panelists Andy Krawczyk, Jake Fry, Melina Scholefield, Gary Bridger and Bob Sokol.

For more information visit [westvancouver.ca](http://westvancouver.ca), email [housing@westvancouver.ca](mailto:housing@westvancouver.ca) or call 604-925-7055.

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