CITY OF **VANCOUVER**

POLICY REPORT
URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date:	October 15, 2008
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Meeting Date:	October 30, 2008

TO:	Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
FROM:	Director of Planning in consultation with General Manager of Engineering Services, General Manager of Social Development, Director of Development Services, Chief Building Official, and Director of Real Estate Services
SUBJECT:	Laneway Housing (LWH) in Single Family Areas - Issues and Options

RECOMMENDATION

A. THAT Council approve the recommendations from the issues and options paper, as listed in Appendix A, as directions to staff in the development of regulations and policies to implement Laneway Housing; and instruct staff to prepare and report back with amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law, the Parking By-law, the Vancouver Building By-law, and related by-laws and policies.

B. THAT based on Council directions given, staff report back to Council by memo with an estimated time line for the development of regulations.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the recommendations.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the recommendations.

COUNCIL POLICY

The EcoDensity Charter: On June 10, 2008, City Council unanimously approved the Charter which includes a commitment to making environmental sustainability a primary goal in all city-building decisions – in ways that also foster and support affordability and livability.

EcoDensity Initial Actions: On June 10 2008, Council also supported a series of Actions to begin to carry out the commitments of the Charter. Two of these Actions were approved as immediate policy (both require greener performance from rezonings). Most of the remaining Actions were instructions to staff for further analysis and consultation, for report back to City Council. A report on Laneway Housing issues and options was one of the priority actions for further work unanimously supported by Council.

SUMMARY

Laneway housing is generally a smaller house or cottage at the rear of a lot near the lane. However, this concept can take many different forms. The options explored in this work took as their starting point ideas initially brought forward by people during the 2007-08 EcoDensity consultations, and then discussed further and in more detail with the public and stakeholders in September of this year. The recommendations in this report would create a model of laneway housing different from anything existing or previously considered in Vancouver.

Most of the recommendations have been taken directly from the options put forward in the recent public process and for which there was a high level of support. There are also four recommendations where the original options have been added to or altered, to reflect and respond to what was heard from the public and stakeholders. These are recommendations related to retaining existing houses; developing specific height limits for 1 ½ storey LWH; determining final parking configurations and regulations; and where in the city to permit laneway housing.

What started as a concept, has now moved through a Council-directed exploration of a comprehensive set of issues and options to a point where the recommendations in this report would provide much more defined parameters of what LWH would be in the context of Vancouver single family areas.

If Council approves the recommendations, there would still be considerable and complex work to develop regulatory changes potentially related to five different RS zoning schedules, as well as changes to the Parking and Building By-laws and related policies. This work would cover close to 70,000 lots of varying sizes and shapes with a variety of existing houses and garage types.

Key next steps would include three main phases for zoning regulations: develop more detailed illustrative models, draft regulations based on these models, and test regulations for unintended results. Further public consultation is also intended related to the finalizing of the height and parking regulations. In the last step before LWH could be allowed, draft regulations must be reported to Council and zoning amendments referred by Council to a Public Hearing for final consideration.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to convey to Council the laneway issues and options paper, and to seek Council approval of its recommendations as a guide for next steps in laneway housing implementation. (Appendix A is a summary list of the recommendations from the laneway housing issues and options paper; Appendix B is the full paper.)

BACKGROUND

Laneway housing was mentioned frequently by the public during the EcoDensity public engagement in 2007-08. On June 10, 2008, Council unanimously approved EcoDensity Initial Action C-5, related to laneway housing, identifying it as a priority action, and instructing staff to report back with an issues and options paper after further analysis and public consultation.

Issue topics identified in Action C-5 include: tenure; lot sizes that LWH could be built on, including fire and safety requirement impacts; retention of existing houses and relation to heritage tools; design issues such as scale, neighbourliness, and impacts on open space and sunlight; parking requirements and impacts; green building and site requirements; utility and servicing issues; and lanes as potential amenities.

DISCUSSION

The issues and options paper provides technical information, public responses to the options, and recommended options. The following sections of this report provide highlights from the issues and options paper. (See Appendix B for the complete paper.)

What Laneway Housing is… and is not

Laneway housing is generally a smaller house or cottage at the rear of a lot near the lane. However, this concept can take many different forms. The options explored in the issues and options paper respond to ideas brought forward by people during the 2007-08 consultations and tested with the public in September of this year. During these consultations, people described a type of laneway housing that would:

- Help with affordability by providing more rental housing and/or housing for family members or caregivers
- Give homeowners the opportunity to add a laneway house onto their own lots while retaining existing houses -- instead of providing new units only through redevelopment
- Maintain the backyard open space/gardening space of single family areas
- Be small scale
- Address fire access issues so that LWH could be built on smaller lots as opposed to only lots that are 50 feet and wider.
- Provide some parking on the site along with the laneway house.

This concept for laneway housing is different from anything previously considered in Vancouver and different from Vancouver's current form of 'infill' housing. Infill housing is permitted in some areas with older larger houses that are generally zoned for duplexes and multiple dwellings in addition to infill. (These are 'RT' zones as opposed to single family 'RS' zones.)

Infill developments are different from LWH in that infill zoning permits smaller backyard space than in single family areas, higher heights than those being considered for LWH, and larger units. In addition, infill is generally part of strata title redevelopments. These characteristics fit well in these older, already-higher density areas, but are different from characteristics that would fit the model people talked about during the past consultations for single family areas.

Why LWH?

During the EcoDensity public engagement, people spoke of the reasons why they wanted laneway housing: to provide a home for aging family members, adult children, multi-generation families, or caregivers, or for the homeowners themselves as they down-size from the main house; to provide more choice of places to live in their neighbourhoods; to help with affordability (i.e., rental; mortgage-helper); and for sustainability by providing more opportunities for people to live in the city where there are jobs, services, and good transit.

Laneway housing has environmental, economic, and social sustainability components. It would support many of the City's commitments in the EcoDensity Charter. These include a greener denser city pattern which promotes gentle, hidden or invisible forms of density across the city; more housing affordability, types, and choices; and green sites and buildings.

Public and stakeholder consultation

The earlier EcoDensity consultations provided the organizing framework for the issues and options. Using this framework, initial analysis and draft options were prepared over the summer and then shared with the public and stakeholder groups this fall, seeking their comments and preferences. The following events and meetings took place:

- A workshop with Vision Implementation committee members from across the City was the first event (approximately 80 attendees).
- Two public open houses; advertised in local and ethnic media; located at the Polish Hall on Fraser at King Edward and the Hellenic Centre on Arbutus at 30th (approximately 115 and 160 attendees respectively)
- Meetings with Council committees and other groups who had expressed a strong interest in LWH in the previous consultations – i.e., Vancouver City Planning Commission, Food Policy Council, Greater Vancouver Homebuilders Association, and the Heritage Commission sub-committee on EcoDensity. Information was also provided at UDI (Urban Development Institute) Liaison meetings.

At the workshop and the open houses, attendees were encouraged to complete a Feedback Form, which asked open-ended questions regarding the key topic areas. Of the 355 attendees, approximately 275 completed a Feedback Form, spending considerable time at the events to write their comments. Feedback Form comments, as well as letters received, are in a binder on file in the City Clerk's office and posted on the EcoDensity website: http://www.vancouver-ecodensity.ca/

The EcoDensity web site was also used to advertise the open houses; and after the open houses, the display boards were made available on the web site. The EcoDensity e-mail list was used to let people (2,000+) know about the open houses and about the availability of the display boards for downloading.

Comments from the process are incorporated into the issues and options paper, and highlighted in the next sections of this report. The comments supported many of the options presented. In some cases, staff have since amended options to respond to the public input.

Another valuable source of information was a questionnaire sent to the EcoDensity e-mail list to ask for information specifically from homeowners interested in adding LWH to their

property and from those interested in living in LWH (approximately 180 questionnaires were returned). This was a way of comparing the options being developed with housing needs and expectations.

During the consultation, an issue raised by some was why the consultation did not directly ask if people like LWH or not. The answer given by staff was that having LWH arose from the public through the EcoDensity consultations, and in June 2008 Council asked staff to consult on specific issues and options, rather than on whether people like LWH or not. At this point, providing concrete options has been a way of moving forward and provides something specific for people to respond to, rather than asking a general question that is not defined. At the public events, everyone was encouraged to fill out Feedback Forms, which most people did. People were encouraged to use their forms to provide any comments. Some did use their forms to say they did not like any of the options.

Recommendations to move forward on LWH

What began first as a concept, has now moved through an exploration of a comprehensive set of issues and options, to a point where the recommendations in this report would provide much more defined parameters of what LWH would be. This means that the next step of developing regulations and related work can proceed within specific Council directions.

Recommendation A is the recommendation that would set these directions. The more detailed individual recommendations it refers to are listed in Appendix A. These are excerpts from the full issues and options paper (Appendix B). The paper includes both technical analysis and public responses to the options.

Most of the individual recommendations are those taken directly from the options put forward in the public process and for which there was a high level of support.

However, there are four recommendations where the original options have been added to or altered, to reflect and respond to concerns and suggestions raised in the public process. These are the recommendations discussed in more detail below: retention of existing houses; number of storeys and height of LWH, parking, and where in the city LWH would be allowed.

Retention (#2 through #6 in Appendix A): Staff have added two new recommendations (#5 and #6 in Appendix A) to limit the size of LWH and to monitor new LWH development and assess the rate of retention versus demolition of existing houses. This is in response to a concern from some that there is not a strong enough guarantee that existing houses will be retained.

The original options were developed with the strong intent of retaining existing housing. This would be primarily accomplished through an approach that would allow LWH as only small scale, non-strata units.

Some suggested going farther – for example, allowing LWH to be built only with existing houses, not with new houses. While it may be legally possible to allow LWH only with existing houses, there are also issues that could be difficult to resolve, such as: how long would the main house have to be retained? how is 'retention' defined? and, what would be the disincentive for the homeowner if they did not wish to continue to retain the main house after a LWH has been built? For instance, a disincentive could be that a newly-built main house would not be permitted to have the same floor space if the retention rule were broken.

However, creating additional rules to try to guarantee retention could discourage homeowners who are contemplating adding LWH. In addition, if LWH is a desirable form of housing, as many have said, it would be preferable if those who do choose to build new houses could build a LWH at the same time if they wanted to.

The maximum unit size recommendation will assist with maintaining land values and the monitoring recommendation would provide the opportunity to confirm that the retention intent is being met, before stricter, more difficult measures are considered.

Number of storeys and height (#8 in Appendix A): The recommendation would mean that the next step to develop regulations would be to permit a maximum of 1 ½ storeys, but the recommendation does not yet define the specific height. Instead it leaves room for exploration, while allowing for regulations that would accommodate both 1 storey and 1 ½ storey options.

In the public consultation, people reviewed both 1 and 1 ½ storey options. Many people favoured the 1 ½ storey option for its flexibility in providing livable space for a variety of users and accommodating some parking on site. However, there were also concerns about possible impacts of the 1 ½ storey option on shadowing, privacy, and scale.

If Council approves the recommendations, the next steps would involve developing illustrative models for how high the additional ½ storey would be and to assess its impacts, before regulations are drafted.

To provide a context for LWH height options -- in single family areas, current height limits for the main house range from 30 to 35 feet (some existing bungalows are lower than 25 feet in height). Garages in single family areas are allowed a maximum height of 15 feet. The 1 ½ storey option was defined in the public process as having a height in the range of 18 to 22 feet, leaving undefined the exact height and scale of the extra ½ storey.

Parking (#9 in Appendix A): The recommendation does not yet set a specific minimum parking requirement, but it does rule out 0 spaces. It also rules out a 3-space requirement for 33-foot wide lots which would have made LWH difficult if not impossible to achieve on these lots (the most prevalent lot size in single family areas). The recommendation also rules out the tandem parking option.

The recommendation narrows future work to 1 and 2 spaces options for 33-foot lots and 1 to 3 spaces options for wider lots. Current Parking By-law requirements for a house and secondary suite in RS zoning are a minimum of 1 space if the house was built before 2004, and for newer houses, 1 space per unit. If this approach were applied to LWH, it would mean 2 spaces including suite and LWH for older houses, and 3 spaces for newer houses regardless of lot width.

Public response on the parking issue was the most mixed of any of the topics. This is reflective of the differences in existing on-street parking conditions in neighbourhoods throughout the city, as well as different values people place on parking. Most people wanted at least some parking on site as it is a common concern of residents that new development provides enough on-site parking. There were also some concerns about tandem parking because it would encroach into backyard open space. (In current regulations, tandem parking is not permitted as a way of achieving minimum parking requirements.)

On-street parking is getting increasingly more congested near high density residential areas or in areas close to commercial, recreational, or transit destinations. The impact of additional density created through laneway housing, on on-street residential parking demand has the potential to be one of the most directly felt impacts for neighbours of the laneway units. Less on-site parking means more difficulty for people to find on-street parking particularly in those residential neighbourhoods that already have significant on-street parking shortages and could become a problem in those neighbourhoods that currently operate without any concerns. Any additional parking demand that is not met on-site, or any on-site parking that is displaced by laneway units, will compete with existing neighbours for on-street space. Given the high level of on-street demand in many neighbourhoods, this is likely to be a concern for existing residents and an issue that City staff would have to manage through programs funded from the Operating Budget.

At the same time, the less parking required, the easier it would be for LWH to provide diversity in unit size, especially on the smaller lots. And as people find it less affordable or less necessary to use cars, car ownership per household could decrease in future.

For all the reasons discussed above, the recommendation calls for including more than one option in the next step of the work.

Where in the city (#19, #20, and #21 in Appendix A): The recommendation is a hybrid of the two options presented to the public – of either permitting LWH city-wide in all single family areas, or permitting LWH only on selected sites or in pilot areas. The recommendation creates, in effect, a 'city-wide pilot' by developing regulations that would apply to all single family areas, but with testing and monitoring.

For the most part, homeowners who want to build a laneway house on their property live in various parts of the city and thus favoured the city-wide option for equity reasons, and due to their concern that they might be left out otherwise. Others favoured the pilot option, to be based on some form of neighbourhood approval or other criteria.

Concerns about "where" were, in many ways, concerns about the pace of change and the City's ability to monitor and act to correct unforeseen consequences. With regard to the pace of change, analysis and other experience suggest the LWH development would be gradual. However, the recommendation has been rewritten to provide both testing and monitoring phases to address concerns about unintended consequences.

The question of "where" affects the timing of LWH implementation more than any other factor being considered. If instead of being city-wide, LWH were to be implemented in a pilot area or on selected sites or selected types of areas, this would require very significant technical and process work. The various criteria would result in potentially very different answers, and so a process to select or weigh the criteria might be required, as well as a significant public process, especially if some type of neighbourhood surveys were to be used. (In the Community Visions program, surveys were preceded by significant community involvement.) Only once all of this is completed could the work begin to develop regulations.

The specific single family areas are RS-1, RS-3, RS-3A, RS-5, and RS-6. These comprise 96% of the almost 70,000 lots in 'RS' zones, and are the 'RS' zones that do not already permit additional units in the form of 'infill' or duplex. (All other zones in the city (e.g., 'RT,' 'RM,') already permit some forms of higher density development.)

Lanes

Lanes are addressed in #22, #23, and #24 in Appendix A. Lanes play an important role as service corridors for large garbage, recycling, and yard waste trucks; utility poles and transformers; and parking access and manoeuvring.

In the initial EcoDensity public discussion in 2007-08, the concept of lanes as 'micro-amenities' was raised. During the issues and options consultation process this September, people had many ideas about "lanes as amenities": place to bike and stroll; hard surface area for playing basketball, hockey and other games; site for habitat and management of storm water; safe place to be; visually pleasant place to be.

The recommendations in this report respond to this range of needs in two basic ways. First, regulations for LWH private property can have a significant impact on lanes as safe and visually pleasant and green places through aspects such as lighting and setbacks for planting. Second, the treatment of the lane surfaces themselves impacts their usability for servicing and for hard-surface games and bicycling, as well as their visual appearance and their management of storm water. Engineering Services is providing a report, under separate cover, regarding lane treatment.

One idea raised during the public process was whether lanes that reach a threshold of a specified number of laneway houses could be candidates for special lane treatment by the City. Staff investigated this and found that most lanes are already paved, so there would be limited opportunity for pavement change for many years. In addition, the pace of LWH development is expected to be gradual, so it could be a long time before any particular lane reaches a specified threshold. This indicates the importance of working on lane improvement options separate from LWH development, so that lane improvements anticipate rather than respond to their variety of future uses.

Next steps

Recommendation A provides a framework for the next steps involved in drafting regulations and related policies. Recommendation B instructs staff to report back with a timeline for this work.

If Council approves the recommendations, there is still considerable and complex work to develop regulatory changes to five different RS zoning schedules covering close to 70,000 lots of varying sizes and shapes with a variety of existing houses and garage types, as well as changes to the Parking and Building by-laws and related policies. Regulations would include not only topics such as height, setbacks, floor space, and parking, but also green building and site and universal access. This further work is described in more detail in the attached issues and options paper.

Key next steps would include three main phases for zoning regulations: developing illustrative models, drafting regulations, and testing regulations for unintended results. Consultants would be used for at least the first and last phases.

Further public consultation is also intended in the next steps -- not to seek input on topics that Council would have already determined, such as rental versus strata, but rather input on

the remaining less definitive recommendations related to determining maximum height and minimum parking regulations.

In the last step before LWH could be allowed, draft regulations must be reported to Council and zoning amendments referred by Council to a Public Hearing for final consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications. Funding for consultants is already in existing budgets.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Laneway housing follows the intent of the EcoDensity Charter.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The EcoDensity Charter also includes social sustainability, and in particular affordability.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The next steps are discussed above.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The description of next steps includes public consultation.

CONCLUSION

This report, and the attached paper on issues and options for laneway housing in single family areas, provides technical analysis of a wide range of issues that would need to be addressed before a new concept of laneway housing -- that responds to what people have talked about in public consultations -- can become a permitted housing type in the City's zoning and other by-laws. Combining technical analysis and the public feedback has resulted in a series of recommendations that would move toward implementation of this new type of housing.

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Appendix A: Laneway Housing Recommendations

Recommendation A in the covering Council report refers to the specific list of recommendations below. (These are from the issues and options paper, which is contained in full in Appendix B.)

Affordability

1) Require laneway housing to be family or rental, using the same mechanisms as for secondary suites in single family areas**.** Do not allow strata titling of the property when LWH is built.

Retention of Existing Houses with Opportunity for Homeowners to Add LWH

2) Require LWH to be family or rental – do not allow strata titling of the property when a LWH is added (as in Recommendation 1 above) - this means upgrades would not be required to the main house when a LWH is added.
3) Prepare amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law regarding fire access and safety requirements, as described in the issues and options paper in Appendix B.
4) Develop a homeowner manual.
5) Set a maximum unit size for LWH to balance achieving livable and diverse housing, while minimizing any land value and redevelopment impacts.
6) Monitor the pace of retention and redevelopment related to LWH, to see if there is any increase in the rate of demolition beyond the normal single family rate, and if so, report to Council (See also Recommendation 21 below).

Livable and Neighbourly Units

7) Backyard open space: Develop regulations for LWH within the garage area, thereby retaining currently required backyard open space.
8) Height and Unit Type: Develop regulations for 1 and 1 ½ storey LWH to allow for a variety of unit sizes and types (including exploring maximum height for 1 ½ storey, roof design, orientation, upper storey windows, etc.).
9) Parking: Develop regulations that would work with 1 and 2 parking space configurations on 33 foot wide lots and 1, 2 and 3 parking space configurations on wider lots. Do not explore further the following: 0 spaces; 3 spaces on 33 foot lots; or tandem configuration, as parking space would encroach into backyard space.
10) Universal Design: Develop regulations for universal design where possible (Vancouver Building By-law), e.g., height of electrical outlets, etc.
11) Process: Develop approval process with a view to balancing flexibility, quality of design, and a user-friendly permit process for the homeowner.

Green Building and Site

The yard (site)

12) Retain permeable backyard open space, as per existing single family regulations (as above in Recommendation 7).
13) Require permeable surface treatment where surface parking and driveway is permitted (as opposed to a garage or carport).
14) Investigate ways to deal with roof runoff other than piping into stormwater/sewer system, e.g., rock infiltration pits; collection in rain barrels.
15) Encourage use of waterwise landscaping guidelines.

The building

16) Require laneway housing to meet the high standards for all single family homes set by the City's new Green Homes Program, with some adaptations where appropriate in relation to the size of building, as described in the issues and options paper.
17) Require separated storm and sanitary sewage connections for the laneway house, as would be required for any new housing.
18) Develop zoning regulations that would not preclude the future addition of other green features, such as solar panels, and encourage passive design where possible.

Where Should LWH Be Allowed

19) Permit LWH in all single family areas (i.e., RS-1- RS-3, RS-3A, RS-5, and RS-6).
20) Test regulations with design professionals and builders for possible unintended consequences before finalizing regulations.
21) Require tracking and monitoring - with a report back to Council after 3 years or 100 projects, whichever is first.

Lanes

Private property

22) Require and/or enable the LWH structure to contribute to the lane – e.g. exterior motion sensor lane lighting for safety; doorways onto lane, etc.
23) Require and/or enable planting between lane and LWH – e.g., an unpaved setback between lane and LWH (see Recommendation 13 for permeable driveway surfacing).

City lane right-of-way

24) Improve green performance and maintain usability of lane ROW -- see Engineering Services Report on 'Enhanced Centre Strip'. In addition, explore in further work the possibility of other features such as alternative paving materials (more permeable and that also meet Engineering standards) for the connection between the 'centre strip' lane paving and private parking areas.

Laneway Housing (LWH) in Single Family Areas Issues and Options

Table of Contents

I. Introduction and Background

Purpose of this paper
The purpose of this paper is to investigate issues and options, and to identify recommended options to pursue, related to allowing laneway housing (LWH) in some or all areas that are currently zoned for single family houses ('RS' zones).

LWH was mentioned many times by the public during the EcoDensity public engagement in 2007-08. On June 10, 2008, Council unanimously approved EcoDensity Initial Action C-5, relating to laneway housing, identifying it as a priority action, and instructing staff to report back with an issues and options paper after further analysis and public consultation.

Issue topics identified in Action C-5 include: tenure; lot sizes that LWH could be built on, including fire and safety requirement impacts; retention of existing houses and relation to heritage tools; design issues such as scale, neighbourliness, and impacts on open space and sunlight; parking requirements and impacts; and lanes as potential amenities. (A detailed list is included in Section II of this report.)

Why LWH?
During the EcoDensity public engagement, people spoke of the reasons why they wanted laneway housing: to provide a home for aging family members, adult children, multi-generation families, or caregivers, or for the homeowners themselves as they down-size from the main house; to provide more choice of places to live in their neighbourhoods; as help with affordability (rental; mortgage-helpers); and for sustainability -- by providing more opportunities for people to live in the city where there are jobs, services, and good transit.

Laneway housing has environmental, economic, and social sustainability components. It can support many of the City's commitments in the EcoDensity Charter. These include a greener denser city pattern which promotes gentle, hidden or invisible forms of density across the city; more housing affordability, types, and choices; and green sites and buildings.

What LWH is… and what it isn't
Laneway housing is generally a smaller house or cottage at the rear of a lot near the lane. However, this concept can take many different forms. The options explored in this paper respond to ideas brought forward by people during the 2007-08 consultations. During these consultations, people described a type of lane housing that would:

- Help with affordability by providing more rental housing and/or housing for family members or caregivers
- Facilitate retention of existing houses by giving homeowners the opportunity to add a lane house onto their own lots; instead of providing new units only through redevelopment
- Maintain the backyard open space/gardening space of single family areas
- Be small scale
- Address fire access issues so that LWH could be built on smaller lots as opposed to only 50-foot and over lot widths

This concept for laneway housing is different from anything previously considered in Vancouver and different from Vancouver's current form of 'infill' housing in 'RT' zones. Infill housing is permitted in some areas with older larger houses that are generally zoned for duplexes and multiple dwellings in addition to infill.

Infill developments are different from LWH in that infill zoning permits smaller backyard space than in single family areas and higher heights than those being considered for LWH. Thus larger scale units are built where infill in allowed. In addition, infill is generally part of strata title redevelopments. These characteristics fit well in these older, already-higher density areas, but are different from characteristics that would fit the model people talked about during the past consultations for single family areas.

LWH and secondary suites
Currently single family zoning permits one rental secondary suite per house. The options in this report assume that a LWH would be an additional permitted unit, in addition to a secondary suite. A homeowner could choose to do one or the other, both, or none.

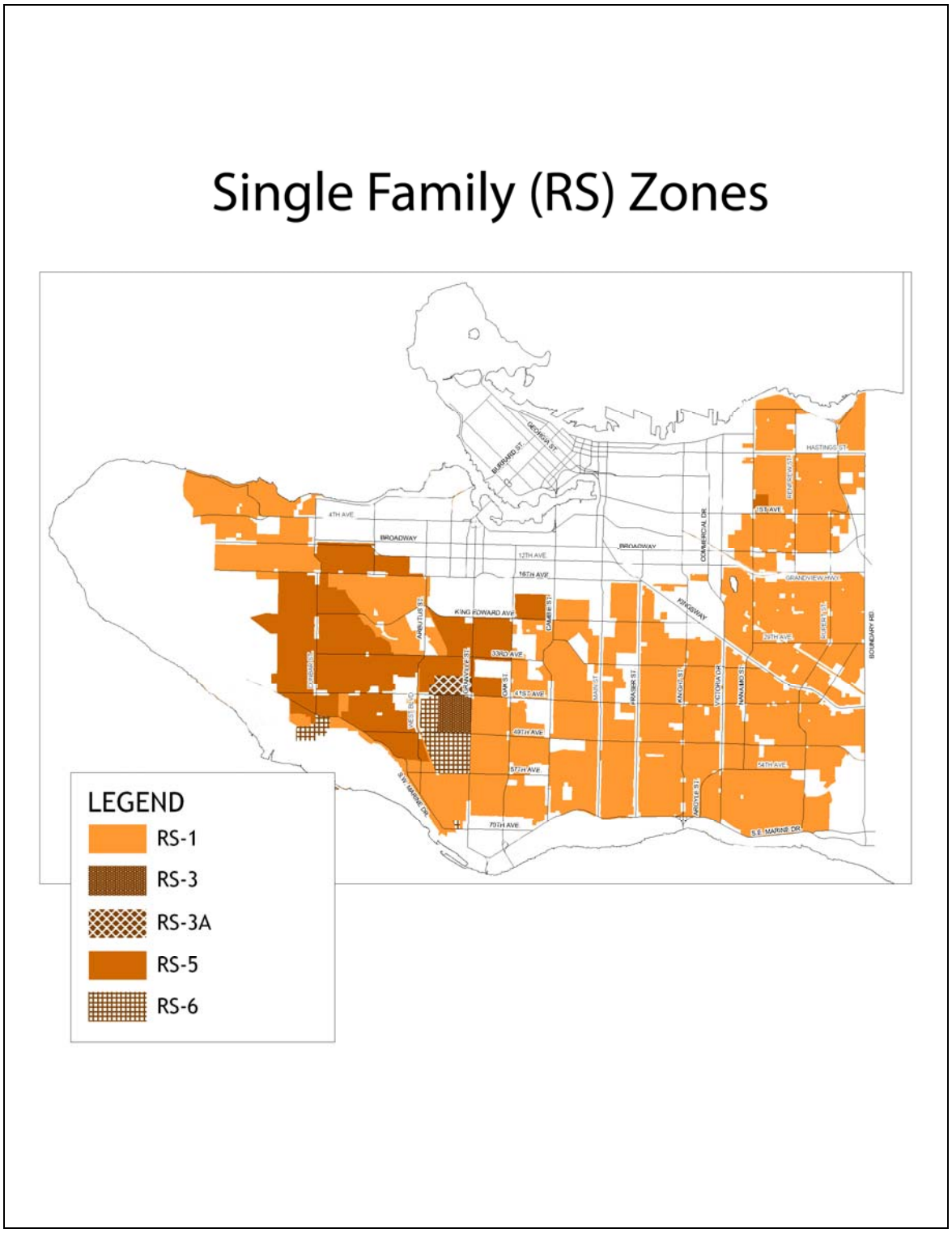
Geographic scope of this paper
This paper focuses on an exploration of options for LWH in single family areas (RS zones) that currently permit one-family dwellings and secondary suites. There are five of these zones explored in this paper: RS-1, RS-3, RS-3A, RS-5, and RS-6. The largest zone, covering most of the geographical area of the City is RS-1, followed by RS-5. (See map on following page.)

The reason for focussing on these RS zones is that they comprise a large number of properties in the city (over 66,000 lots) and are the only zones which do not already permit some forms of higher density development. (The question of whether LWH should be permitted in all of these RS zones, or some, is one of the issue topics explored in this paper.)

Public and stakeholder consultation
City Council approval of Action C-5 included the instruction to do further analysis and further consultation about the issues and options. The key themes heard through this consultation are included in the issues and options discussion in the next sections of this paper.

Further work
This report explores the issues and options identified in Action C-5 at a broad level. The recommended options, if approved by City Council, will narrow the scope of what is and isn't still 'on the table.' A next phase would require more detailed and complex technical work to refine and develop amendments for the Zoning and Development By-law, the Vancouver Building By-law, Parking By-law, and other related City by-laws and policies. The following sections of this paper include more detailed information on what would have to be addressed in the next step.

Single Family Zones In This Study



II. Issues and Options

This section addresses the issues identified in the June 2008 Council Report under Action C-5. To provide an organizing framework for these issues, the key messages people talked about in the earlier EcoDensity consultations are used as the sub-sections:

A. Affordability
"We want laneway housing to help with affordability."

B. Retention of Existing House with Opportunity for Homeowners To Add LWH
"We want existing homes retained and homeowners to be able to add a laneway house on their own lot. We don't want laneway housing to be all about developers." "Don't let lane housing cancel out special incentives for heritage preservation."

C. Livable and Neighbourly Units
"Will laneway housing change the way our neighbourhood looks from the street?" "We'd like laneway housing to meet our housing needs. Will a laneway house affect my back garden? What about parking?"

D. Green Building and Site
"Laneway housing should be 'green' housing. We need to save energy. Permeability and opportunity for gardening and 'urban agriculture' are important."

E. Where LWH Should Be Allowed
"How soon can I build my laneway house?" // Laneway housing should be tried out in a few areas only."

F. Lanes
"Lanes could be made more green, usable, and pleasant. Lanes could be 'amenities'."

Each of these six sub-sections restates the issues and options as they were included in the public consultation in September; provides information on what the public responses were; and identifies recommended options. These recommended options were primarily taken from options shown to the public, and several were newly created or altered in response to public input. Each section also contains background information, followed by a list of some of the further work that would need to be done if the recommended options are to be incorporated into City by-laws and policies.

The following table shows how the topics above incorporate the specific issues identified in the Council-approved Action C-5.

Sub-sections of this report	Issues to be addressed, as per Action C-5
A. Affordability	• Tenure options
B. Retention of Existing House and Opportunity for Homeowners to Add LWH	• Tenure options • Requirements & feasibility relative to retention of existing houses • Relation to, and impacts on, existing heritage tools • Building By-law requirements which address fire and life safety, and their impact on what lot sizes such housing could be built on • Utility and servicing issues
C. Livable and Neighbourly Units	• Opportunities and issues for different lot sizes • Design issues, including form/scale, neighbourliness and character; impacts on open space and sunlight for urban agriculture opportunities, both on-site and neighbouring sites • Parking requirements options and impacts
D. Green Building and Site	• On-site natural functions (e.g., water infiltration) and the reasonable level of green design for this building type • Utility and servicing issues
E. Where LWH Should Be Allowed	• Locations options – based on considerations such as lot size (see also C above), Community Visions, volunteer pilot areas, and relation to Action C-1 (An "Eco" CityPlan) for long-term planning
F. Lanes	• Opportunities for amenity provision and nature and design of potential "green" lanes
G. Other	• Additional information

A. Affordability

What people said during EcoDensity consultation

"We want laneway housing to help with affordability."

Options put forward in LWH consultation

- Require laneway housing to be family or rental, using the same mechanisms as for secondary suites in single family areas**.** Do not allow strata titling of the property when LWH is built.

Public responses

There was widespread support for family or rental use as opposed to strata titling.

Recommendation

As above Option:

1) Require laneway housing to be family or rental, using the same mechanisms as for secondary suites in single family areas**.** Do not allow strata titling of the property when LWH is built.

Discussion

(Note: Strata titling applies to a whole property, not just one building on a property.)

Why family or rental instead of strata?

LWH would add to the rental housing mix and housing choice by providing small ground-oriented units in established neighbourhoods. Similar to secondary suites in single family areas, a rental laneway house would provide the opportunity for family members, young or old, to be housed, as well as renters. Once laneway houses have been built, they could also provide assistance as "mortgage helpers."

- The city's greatest pressures relate to the lack of new purpose built rental accommodation
- Vacancy rates throughout the city are less than 1%
- There is a diminishing supply of rental because of demolitions and conversion in other areas of the city
- Statistically, renters earn half the income of owners
- Renters are far more often forced to spend more than a third of their income on housing than owners
- Renters have fewer housing choices
- For non-rental development (i.e., ownership), there are already many opportunities permitted in all the other areas of the city outside of single family areas -- in the thousands of condominiums that are being built in the central core of the city, in "infill" areas around the core, and along arterials where housing is built above shops

- Secondary suites in single family zones, an important component of the city's affordable rental stock, have been governed by a policy of non-stratification for many years to maintain both rental status and affordability
- Rental is consistent with single family areas – it is how secondary suites are treated.

Rental also assists retention of existing houses, homeowner opportunity, heritage preservation, and land value stabilization – as described in the next sections of this report.

How to ensure rental
The City requires secondary suites in single family areas to be non-strata, as per Council policy adopted January 27, 2004:

- For a new one-family dwelling, if it is providing a secondary suite, the owner must register a section 219 covenant, prohibiting strata titling without consent. The City will release the covenant, on the owner's request, not less than 12 months after issuance of the occupancy permit because the building will then be existing rather than new. (Existing are treated as described in the next bullet.)
- An existing one-family dwelling that adds a secondary suite (a conditional approval use) will be subject to the condition that the owner must not strata title without consent. (For an existing one-family dwelling, registration of a covenant is not necessary because the Registrar of Land Titles will not accept a strata plan without municipal approval.)

The secondary suite approach can apply to LWH as well.

Further work

LWH would be a conditional use in the Zoning and Development By-law like secondary suites, in order to implement this approach. This would be finalized through further work with the Legal Services Department and Development Services Department.

B. Retention of Existing Houses with Opportunity for Homeowners To Add LWH

What people said during EcoDensity consultation

"We want existing homes retained and homeowners to be able to add a laneway house on their own lot. We don't want laneway housing to be all about developers."
"Don't let lane housing cancel out special incentives for heritage preservation."

Options put forward in LWH consultation

- Require LWH to be family or rental – do not allow strata titling of the property when a LWH is added - this means upgrades would not be required to the main house.
- Prepare amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law regarding fire access and safety requirements, as described below.
- Develop a homeowner manual.

Public responses

There was widespread support for retention, for the homeowner-driven approach, and for the options described above. Heritage advocates were particularly interested in how the options relate to heritage incentives, and they had concerns about whether the options go far enough to support retention of existing houses.

Recommendation

As above Options:

2) Require LWH to be family or rental – do not allow strata titling of the property when a LWH is added - this means upgrades would not be required to the main house.
3) Prepare amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law regarding fire access and safety requirements, as described below.
4) Develop a homeowner manual.

And:

5) Set a maximum unit size for LWH to balance achieving livable and diverse housing, while minimizing any land value and redevelopment impacts.
6) Monitor the pace of retention and redevelopment related to LWH, to see if there is any increase in the rate of demolition beyond the normal single family rate, and if so, report to Council (See also Recommendation 21).

Discussion

The recommendations in this paper would still allow a LWH to be built when a new single family house is built, but the initial options (Recommendations 1 through 3) were designed to make it feasible for homeowners to add a LWH onto their lot while retaining the existing house and with the intention of not providing incentives to demolish existing houses. Some people noted, however, that there are also no guarantees that existing houses will be retained; this led to the addition of two new recommendations -- discussed below under Recommendations 5 and 6.

Retention of existing housing is important to people for a number of reasons. From an environmental perspective, it helps achieve the goals of retaining embodied energy and minimizing pressures on the landfill. In addition, retention of existing homes retains existing neighbourhood character, which is important to many people.

Recommendation 2 – Family or rental; not strata titling
Not allowing strata titling assists in two ways. First, if LWHs were strata titled, regulations require upgrading of the main house so that it would be more in line with current building codes. If it is not strata titled, the main house itself would not be required to be upgraded. This is a significant help for retention of existing houses by making it much easier for a homeowner to contemplate adding a laneway house. The second way that the non-strata approach assists with retention is that a strata opportunity would confer greater land value, which could lead to more redevelopment pressure instead of a 'homeowner-driven' process.

Recommendation 3 - Fire access requirements
The Vancouver Building By-law contains requirements to ensure adequate access to buildings for Fire Department vehicles and fire fighters. Due to Fire Department concerns related to fighting fires from lanes, the By-law mandates that Fire Department access be provided from the street rather than the lane. The Fire Department has indicated that it is difficult to locate properties from the lane and often lanes are not wide enough to accommodate fire fighting vehicles.

Currently the Vancouver Building By-law mandates that a continuous path of travel be provided for firefighters from the street to the principle entrance of each unit (principle house, secondary suite, and laneway house). Depending on the number of dwelling units this path of travel serves, this path must have a clear width of 1.2 m to 2.0 m (3.9 feet to 6.5 feet). Considering that many typical single family lots are only 33 feet in width, it is difficult for designers to meet this requirement, and only more so when accommodating an existing house.

An alternative solution to this prescriptive Vancouver Building By-law requirement has been developed for laneway houses by the Chief Building Official in consultation with the Fire Department. This alternative solution permits a narrower path of travel with mitigating features that meet the objectives of the fire access requirements while at the same time maintain an acceptable level of safety. The alternative solution is summarized as follows:

- A continuous unobstructed path of travel must be provided from the street to the principle entrance serving the laneway house and to the rear lane. This path of travel must have a minimum width of at least 900 mm (36 inches) and vertical headroom clearance of at least 2.1 m (6'-10"). In addition, the surface of the path of travel must be concrete, asphalt or similar material and the path must be provided with exterior lighting.
- The continuous unobstructed path of travel (noted above) measured from the street to the principle entrance must not be more than 45 m (150 ft.) in length. For the vast majority of single family lots in the city, this is not a problem. In the case of deeper lots where it is not possible to meet this requirement, the designer

may propose an alternative solution with additional mitigating features to the Chief Building Official for acceptance.

- The laneway house must be sprinklered in accordance with the requirements of NFPA 13D (Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One and Two Family Dwellings and manufactured Homes). In addition to meeting the requirements of NFPA 13D, automatic sprinkler protection must be provided in concealed spaces, bathrooms and closets (clothes, linen and pantries). (Note: all new homes must be sprinklered in accordance with NFPA 13D, however the additional sprinkler protection is a requirement above and beyond what is required by the NFPA 13D standard.) cost
- An exterior strobe light must be provided above the principle entrance of the laneway house. This strobe must be designed such that it will activate at the same time as a smoke alarm is activated within the house.
- The address for each unit located on the property must be visible from the street. This requirement is necessary to assist emergency services (fire and ambulance) in locating each residence. Where it is not possible to make the address visible from the street, the address may be provided on a post near the street and adjacent to the path of travel leading to the dwelling unit.

Other Considerations:

- It should be noted that designers always have the option of developing other alternative solutions where they can not meet the above noted requirements. These alternative solutions do require acceptance by the Chief Building Official.
- Water Service: Since laneway houses require an automatic sprinkler system, a new water service may need to be provided for the laneway house. Often the existing water service for unsprinklered single family homes is not sufficient to accommodate the additional water demand required by the new automatic sprinkler system. Since the Engineering Department only permits one water connection for each lot, the water service line would have to be split such that it can serve both the principle house and the laneway house. Pipes would reach the LWH via a side yard. (Existing pipes entering into the main house would remain.) *(Note: for information on water meters, see Section D on Green Requirements under Further Work.)*

Recommendation 4 - Homeowner manual

A manual could provide information to assist homeowners. This could include the steps and requirements in the permit processes, what laneway houses might look like, sample floor plans, costs, do-able options to provide greener building and landscaping ("easy green add-ons"); referrals to related information; etc. The idea of a manual was very popular in the public comments.

Recommendations 5 and 6 – Maximum unit size and monitoring

Because retention is important to many people, there were some suggestions during the public process to try to seek a greater guarantee of retention: i.e., to permit LWH only where there is an existing house (of a certain age or character) -- not when there is a new house.

The initial options were carefully developed with the intent of not providing incentives to demolish existing housing. However, two new recommendations have been added to

further address this concern. Taken together the recommendations would be retention-oriented by:

- Keeping land values down, by: not allowing strata titling (Recommendation 1) and limiting the size of LWH, especially on larger lots (Recommendation 5). The small-scale, non-strata approach is particularly important.
- Making it easier for homeowners to add a laneway house, by: not requiring that the main house be upgraded (Recommendation 1), simplifying fire access requirements (Recommendation 3), and providing a homeowner manual (Recommendation 4).

To go further than this, it may be possible, as some have suggested, to allow LWH only with existing houses. There are issues that could be difficult to resolve, such as: how long would the main house have to be retained?; and what is the definition of 'retention'?; and what would be the disincentive for the homeowner if they did not wish to continue to retain the main house after a LWH has been built? For instance, a disincentive could be that a newly-built main house would not be permitted to have the same floor space if the retention rule were broken.

However, creating additional rules to try to guarantee retention could discourage homeowners who are contemplating adding LWH. In addition, if LWH is a desirable form of housing, as many have said, it would be preferable if those who do choose to build new houses (about 1% per year) could build a LWH if they wanted to at the same time.

Relation of LWH to heritage preservation

A related issue raised during the EcoDensity public consultations, and noted under the "what people said" above, was whether LWH would compete with the density used to compensate for heritage designation. In another words, would there still be an incentive for a homeowner to agree to heritage designation of their house, if additional density could be gained through laneway housing without having to agree to designation?

Buildings on the City's Heritage Register have access to special City incentives and relaxations in order to encourage their retention and heritage designation. In exchange for heritage designation, one of the incentives available is density. Importantly, this can include density beyond the small scale of the options in this paper for a laneway house.

In addition, by keeping laneway housing as family or rental, the heritage program retains the additional incentives of being able to permitting strata titling or subdivision to compensate for heritage designation.

Further work

- Finalize details of approach and wording for Vancouver Building By-law regarding fire safety, through review with stakeholders.
- Finalize LWH addressing requirements in the Vancouver Building By-law. Currently, addresses for the LWH could be either a new address, or the existing address with a unit number. When a new permit system is designed (underway), a system could be developed for all LWH to have in common the letter "L" after the main address.

- Develop an outline and contents for a homeowners' manual, as per examples above, likely through a consultant, and including input from builders and homeowners.
- Determine an appropriate maximum unit size.

C. LIVABLE AND NEIGHBOURLY UNITS

What people said during EcoDensity consultation

"Will laneway housing change the way our neighbourhood looks from the street?"
"We'd like laneway housing to meet our housing needs. Will a laneway house affect my back garden? What about parking?"

Options put forward in LWH consultation

(See image pages at the end of this section)

- **Backyard open space:** Maintain currently required backyard open space for all laneway housing options, by allowing LWH structure only in the area that existing regulations define for a garage; and
- **Height:** 1 storey at 15' height – same as maximum existing garage and 1 ½ storey with a range of 18-22' in height – maximum to be determined (two storey options were not shown)
- **Parking:** 0-2 parking spaces, including double car garage, one car carport, open surface parking, parking parallel to the lane and tandem parking
- **Unit type:** studio, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom

Public responses

- **Backyard open space:** People were very supportive of retaining backyard open space by allowing LWH only in the garage area.
- **Height:** Many people favoured the 1 ½ storey option for its flexibility in providing livable space for a variety of users and accommodating some parking on site. There was some concern voiced about the impacts of the 1 ½ storey option on shadowing, privacy and scale.
- **Parking:** There was strong support for the provision of *some* parking on site (there was some concern regarding the intrusion of cars into backyard open space as would occur with the tandem parking option).
- **Unit Type:** People felt that LWH design should allow for a variety of unit types and sizes, from studio to 2 bedroom and that units should include accessibility features.
- There were a range of comments about flexibility for different styles of LWH, from traditional to modern and questions about ensuring quality of design.

Recommendations

As above Options:

7) Backyard open space: Develop regulations for LWH within garage area, thereby retaining currently required backyard open space.
8) Height and Unit Type: Develop regulations for 1 and 1 ½ storey LWH to allow for a variety of unit sizes and types (including exploring maximum height for 1 ½ storey, roof design, orientation, upper storey windows etc.).

Amended from above Option:

9) Parking: Develop regulations that would work with 1 and 2 parking space configurations on 33 foot wide lots and 1,2 and 3 parking space configurations on wider lots. Do not explore further the following: 0 spaces; 3 spaces on 33 foot lots; or tandem configuration, as parking space would encroach into backyard space.

And:

10) Universal Design: Develop regulations for universal design where possible (Vancouver Building By-law) e.g. height of electrical outlets etc..
11) Process: Develop approval process with a view to balancing flexibility, quality of design and a user-friendly permit process for the homeowner.

Discussion

Below is background information for the recommendations. Illustrative photos, massing diagrams and plan views are provided on the following image pages. The diagrammatic options shown to the public were based on 33 and 50 foot wide lots, as these are the most prevalent lots sizes. Most single-family lots in the city are 33 feet wide. The second most prevalent lot size is 50 feet wide. Staff recognize that there is a wide variety of lot sizes and configurations and these would be addressed in further work.

Preparing concept options

Work to date has focused on distilling what people said during EcoDensity consultations into conceptual options to take out to the public, carrying out public open houses and other consultations, and using feedback from these consultations to inform the recommendations in this report. The goal of this process has been to determine general perspectives and preferences surrounding backyards and possible LWH height, parking configurations and unit sizes. More detailed exploration of architectural and parking configuration issues would be made as part of regulation development in the proposed next steps (see Further Work section below).

Recommendation 7: Develop regulations for LWH within garage area, thereby retaining currently required backyard open space

Current regulations for single family areas require a certain percentage of the lot be 'backyard area'. Within this area there is designated garage/parking area, which runs 7.9 m (or 26 feet) from rear property line into the backyard. The remaining space between the garage/parking area and the main house is the backyard open space. Many people talked about retaining backyard open space for outdoor living, gardening, permeable area and biodiversity. LWH has therefore been shown as limited to the space required to be garage/parking area, thereby retaining existing backyard open space. It is recommended that any further work done respect the retention of backyard open space. (See image pages at the end of this section)

Recommendation 8: Develop regulations for 1 and 1 ½ storey LWH to allow for a variety of unit sizes and types (including exploring maximum height for 1 ½ storey, roof design, orientation, upper storey windows etc.)

In single family areas height limits for the main house range from 30 to 35 feet, (some bungalows can be as low as 25 feet in height). Garages in single family areas are allowed a maximum height of 15 feet. In the exploration of LWH height, people

suggested that shadowing, accessibility, privacy and scale be considered. Options were therefore explored showing a '1 storey' option as 15 feet high, (the same as maximum garage height) and a '1 ½ storey' option with a range of 18-22 feet in height. The square footage of a 1 ½ storey structure would depend on roof design. As there was much enthusiasm for a 1 ½ storey option, the exploration of both 1 and 1 ½ storey LWH is recommended. A maximum 1 ½ storey height would still need to be established, to provide livable floor plans while addressing shadowing etc. (see Further Work). Full 2 storey height structures would not be explored further. (See image pages at the end of this section)

Recommendation 9: Develop regulations that would work with 1 and 2 parking space configurations on 33 foot wide lots and 1,2 and 3 parking space configurations on wider lots. Do not explore further the following: 0 spaces; 3 spaces on 33 foot lots; or tandem configuration, as parking space would encroach into backyard space.

The current parking requirement for most existing houses (with or without a secondary suite) is a minimum of 1 on-site space. For newly built houses (built after 2004), the requirement is one space per unit (a total of 2 spaces if there is a secondary suite). Under this 1 space per unit scenario, a house after 2004 with a suite and a LWH would require a total of 3 parking spaces on the lot.

As most of the lots in the city are 33 feet wide, this requirement would prove very difficult to satisfy. Accordingly, a maximum of two parking spaces were shown, including double car garage, one car carport, open surface parking, parking parallel to the lane and tandem parking.

Public consultation yielded strong support for the provision of *some* parking on site. Accordingly, it is recommended that 1 and 2 parking space configurations be explored for 33 foot lots, and 1, 2, and 3 on wider lots, as part of regulation development (see Further Work). It should be noted that a decrease from current regulations down to 2 or 1 spaces, could result in people having more difficulty finding on-street parking near their homes. At the same time, as people find it less affordable or less necessary to use cars, car ownership per household might decrease.

Due to a concern regarding the intrusion of cars into backyard open space as would occur with the tandem parking option, it is not recommended that the tandem option be considered. (See image pages at the end of this section)

Recommendation 11: Develop approval process with a view to balancing flexibility, quality of design and a user-friendly permit process for the homeowner.

Within zoning regulations there are specified requirements, and within these requirements there can be flexibility. Currently, most RS-zoned areas (RS-1) do not have design control for the main house or for the garage. Adding design control for LWHs would mean that the homeowner adding a LWH would have to go through a much longer, more costly permit approval process for the LWH than for a main house or garage in the same area. Some RS areas do have design controls (RS-3/RS-3A ,RS-5, RS-6). The decision to have these controls came as a result of a resident voting process, and the design controls in these zones may include minimal design control for garages.

An additional aspect of discretion in the zoning concerns the ability to make relaxations. There may need to be some discretion to relax regulations in order to address anomalies which could arise due to unusual size or shapes of lots, or due to applications to convert an existing garage into a LWH.

Further Work

In order to implement the recommendations, amendments would need to be made to the Zoning and Development By-law and other related By-laws, e.g. Parking By-law. Regulations would need to fit each of the 5 RS zones, all of which have somewhat different regulations. To enable writing of regulations, a series of illustrative models would be developed based on recommended parameters (retain backyard space, explore 1 and 1 ½ storeys, specified number of parking spaces). After these models are developed, further public consultation would take place.

These models would be used to explore, write regulations for, and test regulations on a variety of detailed issues such as:

- **Maximum height:** During the public process the 1 ½ storey was explained as ranging in height from 18 to 22 feet. A maximum height would need to be established, balancing the provision of livable floorplans with a desire to see LWH remain as close to garage height as possible, both for shadowing of neighbouring lots and for the overall scale of single family neighbourhoods.
- **Parking configuration:** Investigate constraints of different parking configurations on LWH options and impacts on neighbourhood
- **Maximum unit size:** Determine the maximum unit size (see Recommendation 5). **Regulation of square footage:** The conceptual design options shown in the LWH consultation process were based on 540 sq. ft. and 700 sq. ft. maximum garage sizes (for 33 foot wide and 50 foot wide lots respectively). However, staff need to investigate how LWH square footage would be regulated (houses are currently regulated through floor space ratio, permeability and site coverage).
- **Roof design:** In addition to overall roof design and orientation, the actual design of a 1 ½ storey would be explored to determine if there should be regulations for dormers, the viability of roof decks, overlook issues, upper storey windows, green roofs etc.
- **Building Elevation:** Currently, there are guides for establishing building elevations for garages. However, as LWH will be a dwelling unit, it might be necessary to examine a more rigorous process to ensure that the building elevation of a LWH is correctly determined in relation to the lane to mitigate possible flooding.
- **Varying lot sizes:** Special lot sizes will be considered. Conceptual options to date have explored the 33 ft. x 122 ft. and 50 ft. x 122 ft. lot sizes, which are the most prevalent in the city. The options have also assumed typical RS setbacks from the property lines. However, many variations exist in city in terms of lot sizes and existing house placements on lots.
- **Vancouver Specials:** Investigate the viability of LWH with Vancouver specials (houses built in the late 1970's to mid-1980's which occupy much of the lot).
- **Garage conversions:** Investigate the possibility of garage conversion in relation to the Vancouver Building By-law, Zoning and Development By-law and Parking By-laws.

- **Basements:** Investigate whether basements are feasible with LWH.
- **Entrance orientation:** Front doors of lane houses normally face into the yard. People have asked if additional entrances might be allowed facing the lane. There exists a need to investigate whether there are any implications or regulatory barriers, noting that for fire access, there must be a door facing into the yard.
- **DCL's:** Amend the Development Cost Levy (DCL) by-laws if FSR is not used to regulate LWH. Current DCL by-law wording links the payment of the levies to what is counted as Floor Space Ratio (FSR).

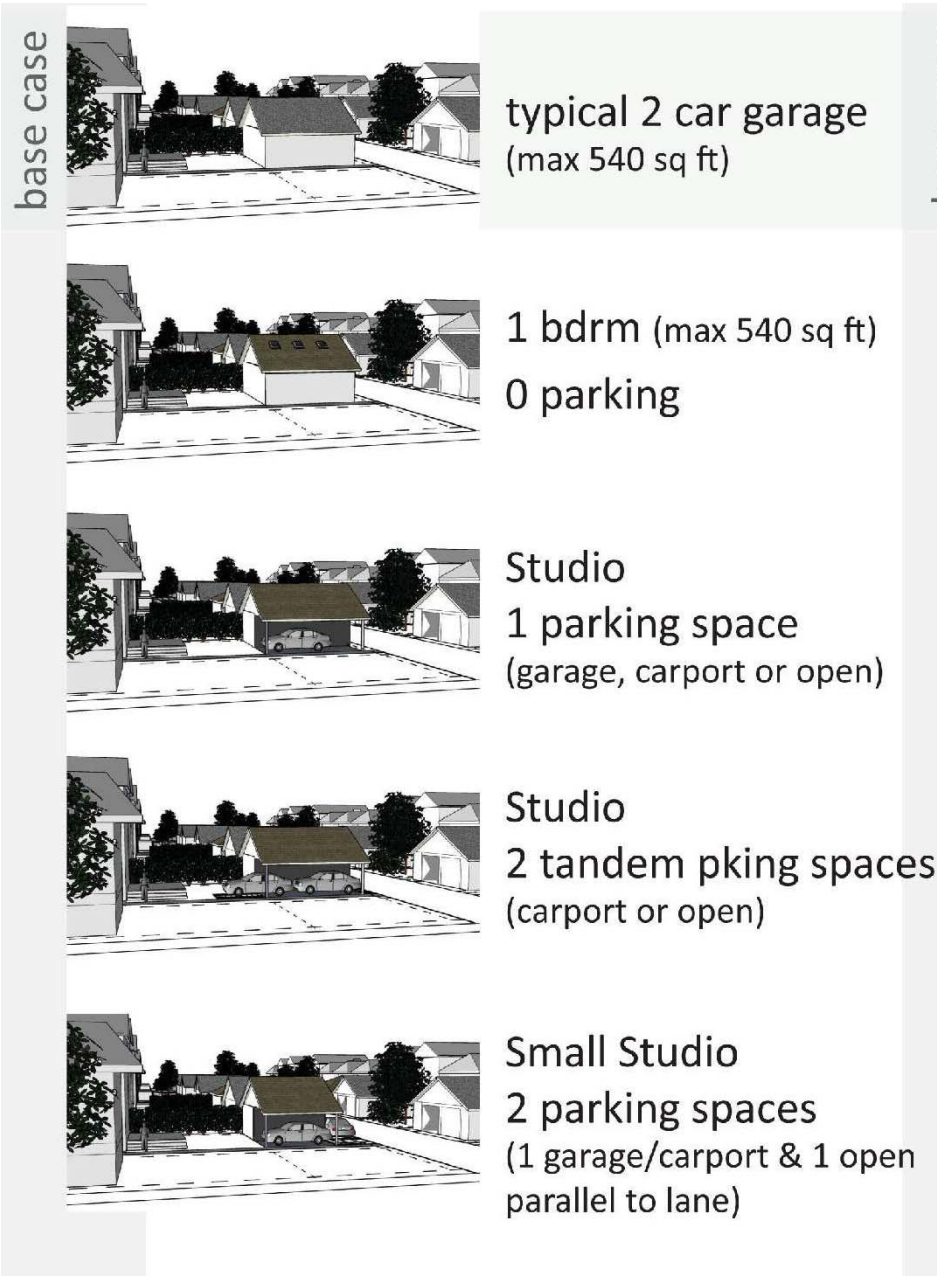
garage/parking area

backyard open space

Top image: Area currently zoned as garage/parking area, in which it is recommended that LWH be allowed. In single family neighbourhoods, this area runs 7.9m (26 feet) from the rear property line into the backyard.
Bottom image: The remaining area between the garage/parking area and the main house is the backyard open space. As it is recommended that LWH be restricted to garage/parking area, backyard open space would be retained.

1 Storey: (15 feet - same as current max garage)

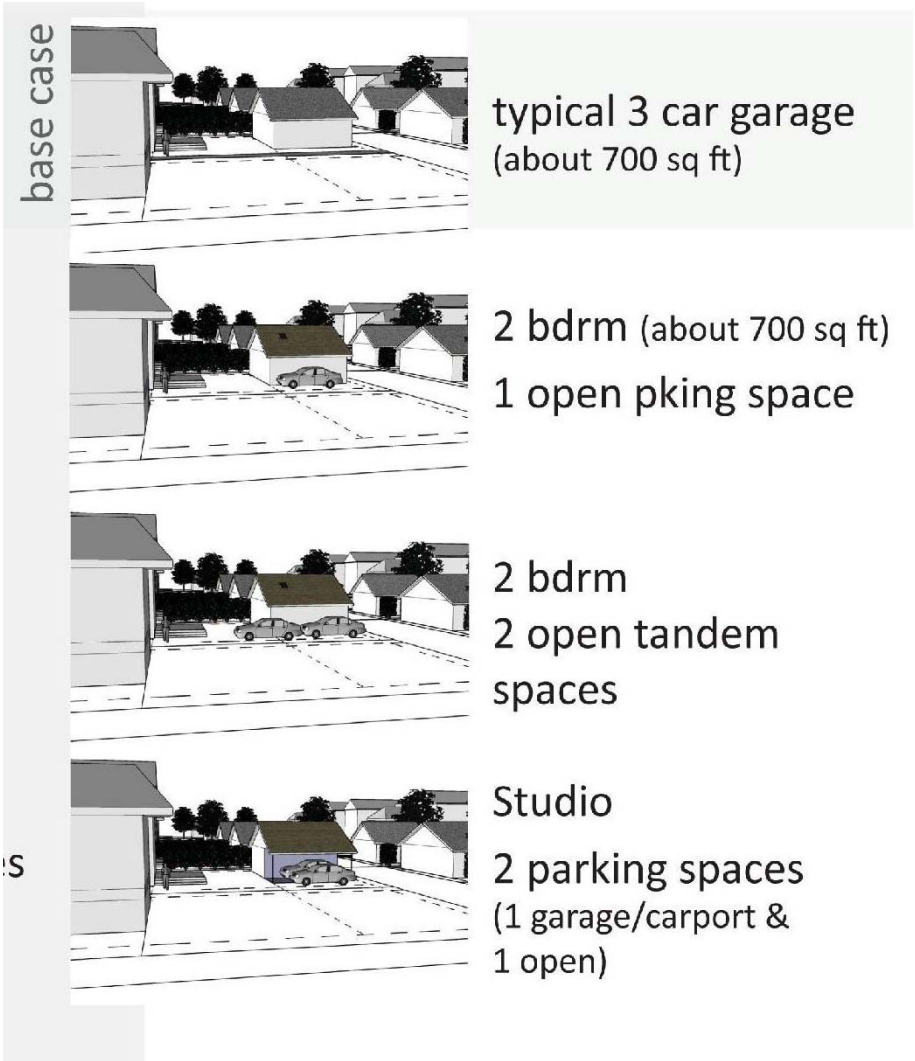
33 Foot Wide Lots



The above variations were shown during public consultation with the intent of determining people's general perspectives and preferences surrounding height, parking configurations and unit sizes. 33 foot wide and 50 foot wide lots were explored as they are the most prevalent lot widths in single family areas (staff would include other lot sizes as part of further work).

1 Storey: (15 feet - same as current max garage)

50 Foot Wide Lots



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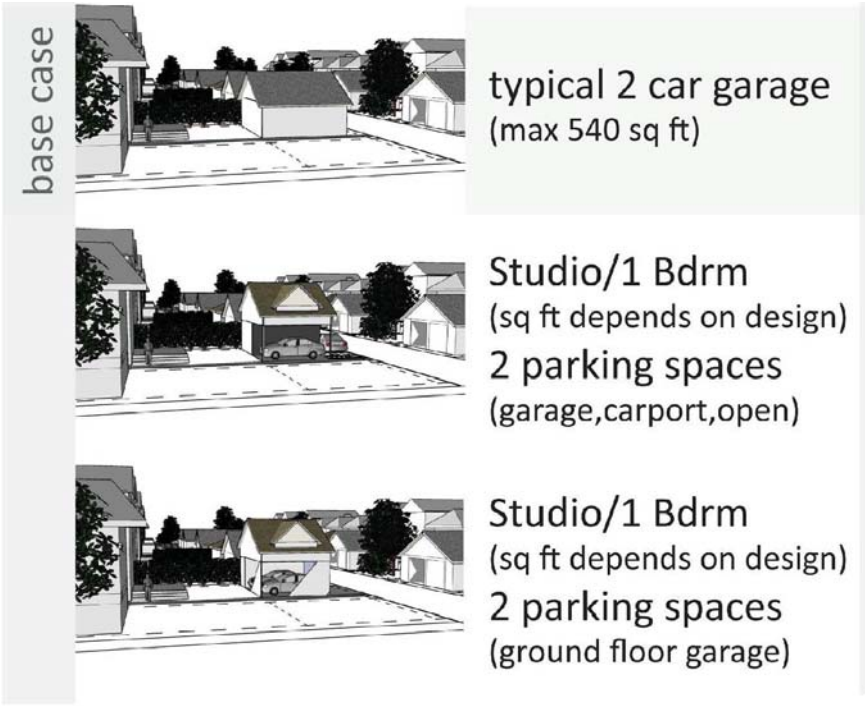
1 ½ Storey: (18-22 feet)

33 Foot Wide Lots



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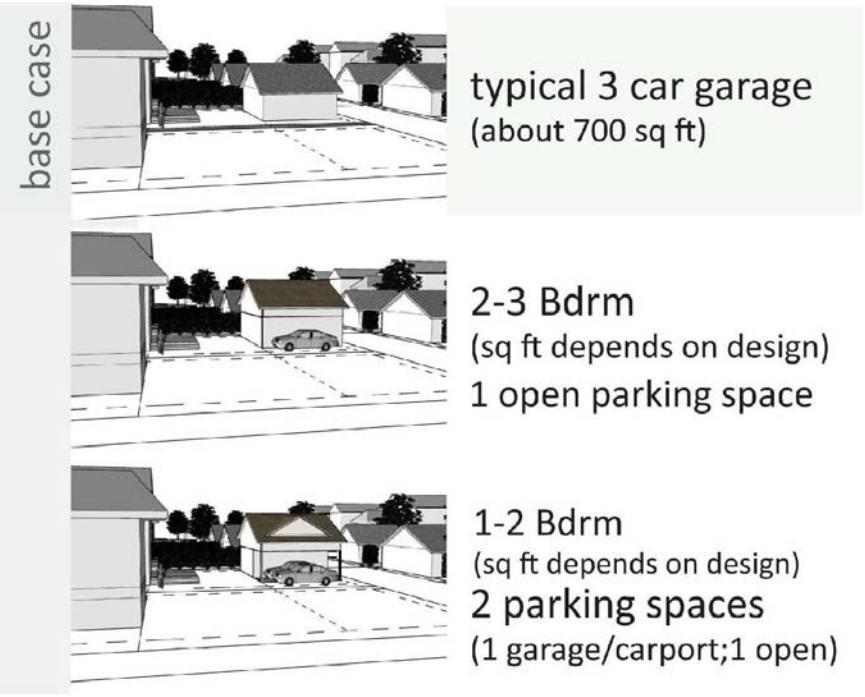
1 ½ Storey: (18-22 feet)

50 Foot Wide Lots



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Above images: Although LWH as described in this paper does not yet exist, the above photos (mostly of people's garages, garage workshops and other small buildings) show some idea of what LWH might look like. There could be many possibilities for form and character.

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D. Green Site and Building

What people said during EcoDensity consultation

"Laneway housing should be 'green' housing. We need to save energy. Permeability and opportunity for gardening and 'urban agriculture' are important."

Options put forward in LWH consultation

The yard (site)

- Retain permeable backyard open space, as per existing single family regulations (as in Recommendation 7).
- Require permeable surface treatment where surface parking and driveway is permitted (as opposed to a garage or carport).
- Investigate ways to deal with roof runoff other than piping into stormwater/sewer system e.g., rock infiltration pits; collection in rain barrels.

The building

- Require laneway housing to meet the high standards for all single family homes set by the City's new Green Homes Program, with some adaptations where appropriate in relation to the size of building, as described in this report.
- Require separated storm and sanitary sewage connections for the laneway house, as would be required for any new housing.
- Develop zoning regulations that would not preclude the future addition of other green features such as solar panels and encourage passive design where possible.

Public responses

There was widespread support for green site and green building features. Permeable parking spaces was a popular idea. With respect to green building performance, people felt that green design features were important, yet had to be balanced with both affordability and keeping LWH do-able by a homeowner.

Recommendation

The yard (site)

As above Options:

12) Retain permeable backyard open space, as per existing single family regulations (as in Recommendation 7).
13) Require permeable surface treatment where surface parking and driveway is permitted (as opposed to a garage or carport).
14) Investigate ways to deal with roof runoff other than piping into stormwater/sewer system e.g., rock infiltration pits; collection in rain barrels.

And:

15) Encourage use of waterwise landscaping guidelines.

The building

As above Options:

16) Require laneway housing to meet the high standards for all single family homes set by the City's new Green Homes Program, with some adaptations where appropriate in relation to the size of building, as described in this report.
17) Require separated storm and sanitary sewage connections for the laneway house, as would be required for any new housing.
18) Develop zoning regulations that would not preclude the future addition of other green features such as solar panels and encourage passive design where possible.

Discussion

Recommendations 12 and 13: The importance of permeability and infiltration

When rainwater falls onto built surfaces it is often drained into storm/sewer systems. This method of dealing with stormwater can be taxing on storm/sewer systems and also allows stormwater, which often travels over polluted surfaces, to carry its pollutants directly into water bodies. The options above therefore propose to incorporate permeable surfaces and allow rainwater to infiltrate directly into the soil, allowing pollutants to be filtered by the soil, and also lightening the load on the storm/sewer system.

Recommendation 14: Roof run-off

Roof water could be moved into a rock infiltration pit located in the yard or a rain collection barrel. The infiltration pit would allow rainwater to infiltrate slowly into the soil and could be covered by planting. It might not be possible to require a rock infiltration pit, as soil conditions in some parts of the city are not amenable to on-site infiltration.

Recommendation 16: How the Green Homes Program would apply to LWH

The Green Homes Program (which became mandatory for all new building permit applications submitted to the city on and after September 5, 2008, requires all one and two family homes to meet high green standards, including:

- Increased insulation for exterior walls, concrete floor slabs, windows, water heaters, and hot water pipes
- A percent of permanent light fixtures hard wired not to accept incandescent or halogen bulbs
- In-home display unit for electricity consumption
- Electronic ignition and direct venting if there are gas fireplaces
- Dual flush toilets
- Heat recovery ventilator (HRV) which ensures better air quality in the house

For LWH, staff assumed these as the requirements, but reviewed them for the applicability to LWH, and would recommend the following variations:

- Replace the HRV requirement with an EnergyStar bathroom fan. The HRV (heat recovery ventilator) is necessary in homes with higher insulation, to provide ventilation. At the same time, it heats incoming colder air with outgoing warmer air. However, for a LWH, it is an expensive and large unit, and for a small unit like a LWH, adequate ventilation could be provided through an EnergyStar bathroom fan. These fans run all the time at low velocity which is energy efficient; they are

quiet and supply consistent fresh air to occupants. They remove moisture. Cost is about $400 installed which is about a $2000 savings versus a HRV.
- Waive the pre-piping for renewable (e.g., solar) energy as a LWH would have easier access to the roof than a typical one or two family house.

Recommendation 17: Separated sewer system
Currently, most sewer systems are combined sanitary sewage and stormwater, which can be very taxing on the system. Gradually the City is separating the two systems. Completion of this system will take many years. In the meantime, any new housing is required to be prepared for the separated system, by providing the separated system on private property.

Sewer service coming into a property would then be split in the front yard, with the existing pipes continuing into the existing house, and the new separated system extended around a side yard to serve the LWH. (Note: for information on water meters, see below under further work.)

Recommendation 18: How green?
We heard suggestions that the LWH should be even 'greener', requiring things like solar panels. However what we have proposed will already be just as green as new single family homes and possibly more green than existing single family homes. Adding more requirements could create a disincentive to homeowners who want to undertake this small scale development.

Further work

- Investigate with the Chief Building Official and Engineering Services amendments to the Building By-law regarding rock pits and other green features.
- Determine how to treat City policy for water metering. Currently, 3-units on one lot would initiate the requirement for a water meter. This would be beneficial from an environmental perspective, but would increase costs for a homeowner adding a LWH.
- Ensure regulations do not make it difficult for homeowners to add green features.

E. Where LWH Should Be Allowed

What people said during EcoDensity consultation

"How soon can I build my laneway house?" / Laneway housing should be tried out in a few areas only."

Options put forward in LWH consultation

- Permit laneway housing in single family areas city-wide

OR

- Permit laneway housing only on selected sites or in pilot areas

Public responses

There was support from many people for a city-wide approach for reasons of equity, recognized housing need, economic feasibility, and reduced property tax implications.

People supporting a pilot project approach instead had many suggestions, for example, using a neighbourhood as a pilot area, or corner lots, or demonstration projects, or a limited number (100, or 245) of laneway houses. Some preferred that neighbourhoods vote on LWH. People involved with Community Visions suggested using Visions to guide location. In general, concerns were usually about assessment, monitoring, and resolution of issues with a new housing type prior to allowing it city-wide.

Recommendation

As above Option:
19) Permit LWH in single family areas.
And:
20) Test regulations with design professionals and builders for possible unintended consequences before finalizing regulations.
21) Require tracking and monitoring - with a report back to Council after 3 years or 100 projects, whichever is first.

Discussion

See map of single family areas in the Introduction section of this report.

Option – All single family areas

During the public consultations, the following pros and cons were listed for this option:
Pros:

- Provides equity across neighbourhoods, and maximizes opportunity to meet diverse housing needs across the city
- Is supported by good transit service (Over 99% of all people in single family areas live within a 10-minute walk of transit service.)
- Minimizes property tax impacts if any

Cons/Questions
- People might think not all sites or areas are suitable
- Will change be too fast?
- Can it be monitored and adjusted?

Option – Selected sites or pilot areas
During the public consultations, the following pros and cons were listed for this option:

Pros:
- Provides more control over location of change
- Allows for monitoring and adjusting
- Focuses on sites or areas deemed acceptable

Cons:
- Likely would not provide equity across neighbourhoods, not meet diverse housing needs across the city
- Could cause property tax impacts
- Selection process would use many resources and much time – without much housing result. (How would sites or areas be selected? Who would decide what criteria and how to apply?)

Recommendation 19: Permit LWH in single family areas with testing and monitoring
The recommendation is for all single family areas, plus testing and monitoring because:

- Best meets housing needs
- Able to deliver LWH much sooner
- Pace of development and population growth are anticipated to be limited
- Property tax impacts, if any, minimized
- Testing and monitoring allow adjustments to be made, as would occur with a pilot

Each of these is discussed below.

Meets housing needs
People who have been asking to add a LWH on their property for an aging parent, an adult child, a caregiver, or themselves as they downsize, live in communities across the city. The city-wide option provides the opportunity to meet these needs in all neighbourhoods.

Able to deliver LWH much sooner
Permit LWH in all single family areas can result in LWH implementation a great deal sooner than permitting it in only some areas. Even though the city-wide approach still would require considerable work to develop and test detailed regulations, the more limited area approach requires an extensive process before regulation work can even begin – i.e., determining criteria and a process for selecting sites or pilot areas.

Many possible criteria have been suggested, including: communities that demonstrate 'support' for LWH; communities with the most parks and community facilities;

communities with more young adults or more older people; locations where the economics of LWH are most feasible; communities where population is declining; etc.

This would require very significant technical and process work. The various criteria would result in potentially different answers, and so a process to select or weigh the criteria might be required. Only once all of this is completed would the process of developing regulations begin.

If it were decided that a system of neighbourhood voting should be used instead of other criteria, there would be questions about which exact boundaries would govern the results and what degree of further consultation would be needed before an informed vote could occur. (In the Community Visions program, surveys were preceded by significant community involvement.)

The net result of any of these approaches would be a great deal of time for not much delivery of LWH since, as described below, the pace of development of LWH is anticipated to be very gradual in any case.

Pace of development and population growth are anticipated to be limited
The discussion about "where" is, in many ways, a discussion about the pace of change and the City's ability to monitor and act to correct unforeseen consequences. With regard to the first -- the pace of change -- analysis suggests it would be gradual, based on the following information:

- Experience with actual pace of change for related types of development: The two measures that seem closest are the following. (a) Single family house replacement – the pace is about 1% of lots per year (on average, 1% per year is about 1 house per block every 3 ½ years); and (b) New row house and small house/duplex zoning around Knight and Kingsway -- the pace of development applications has been about 1.5% of land area per year, or closer to 1% if actual development permits issued is measured.

- Real estate impact: The small-scale, non-strata nature of LWH will mean a much smaller land value impact than large units on strata titled properties.

With regard to concerns about growth impacts, analysis has identified the following information:

- LWH would pay Development Cost Levies just like all other development in the city. This is a per square foot charge. The revenue is used to help pay for growth related capital costs of parks, park improvements, daycare, social housing, and transportation projects including greenways and bikeways.

- The actual population increase from LWH would likely be small. This is because the city and region have seen a decrease in persons per household. This is due to people having fewer children and because an aging population means more 'empty nesters.' (See graph at end of this section.)

Testing and monitoring allow adjustments to be made, as would occur with a pilot
A concern for many people, especially those interested in the selected sites or pilot areas option, was the concern that unforeseen and unintended consequences could occur and thus LWH should be implemented with care.

The recommendation for all areas can address this as well, in two ways: first, by having architects and builders test the regulations before they are finalized; and second, by monitoring and reporting back to Council with adjustments to the zoning if needed. In effect, this would represent a 'city-wide pilot'. Because the pace of LWH development is expected to be gradual, a smaller pilot area would be unlikely to yield much to evaluate for a long time.

The monitoring would not provide a 'cap' or 'moratorium' but would ensure that City Council is informed of any LWH observations and issues and provide the opportunity to adjust regulations if needed.

Property tax impacts, if any, minimized
Adding a LWH to a property would likely increase the assessed value in the same way as any other significant home improvement. This higher assessment would be reflected in property taxes for that particular property.

However, if a new zoning increases land values generally, people worry that even if they do not add a LWH themselves, their property value will increase and they will have a higher property tax bill.

Property value increases that are similar throughout the city have little impact on relative property tax bills because the City sets its revenue needs by its budget needs, not by the land values. It is when land values increase in some areas more than others that 'hot spots' can be created which mean some properties see a higher property tax increase than the norm.

This means that even if there were some land value impacts from LWH, property tax impacts would tend to be 'neutralized' if LWH were permitted on a city-wide basis. However, if LWH is implemented only within a small area or areas, these areas may see an increase in land values, and thus in their particular property taxes, due to perception of an added benefit for a specific area.

Other location considerations: Community Visions or future density options
Council-approved Action C-5 which directed the work for this Issues and Options paper included some further issues to explore about location in selected sites or pilot areas option. These are discussed here:

- Community Visions: One of the first tasks in the LWH work was to review Community Visions. In all cases, the housing types contemplated and surveyed in Community Visions did not include LWH. Laneway Housing is a new model in Vancouver, developed for this work on Issues and Options. The closest in the Visions process was 'infill' housing. However, 'infill' is very different from LWH because 'infill' as described in words and drawings in the Visions, is larger scale, does not maintain single family back yard regulations, and is part of a strata title, full-property redevelopment. ('Infill' had considerable support as a housing type in all

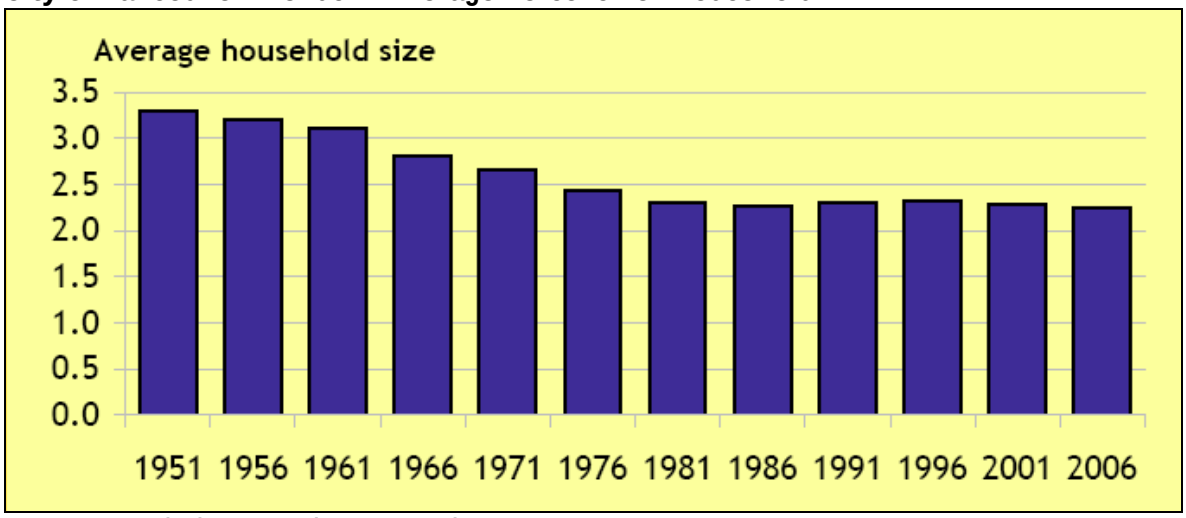
Visions – for locations ranging from large lots for character retention, to scattered throughout single family areas, to specific locations such as around parks or schools.)

- Future density options: The question raised is whether permitting LWH in all single family areas would make eventual higher density development around transit stations or neighbourhood centres more difficult. However, new single family homes have been and are being built across the city. As an influencing factor in future redevelopment, this is much more significant than small rental LWH. In addition, the fact that LWH is recommended as rental means that there would be less property ownership fragmentation than if strata titling were allowed. Also, if LWH were only permitted outside of these potential higher density areas, there would be significant delay due in implementing LWH in order to allow for the planning analysis and consultation necessary to determine just what are the exact boundaries of the potential higher density areas.

Further work

- Development of regulations to apply to all the specified RS zones

City of Vancouver Trends in Average Persons Per Household



Source: Statistics Canada Census data
http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/census/2006/avehousesize.pdf

F. Lanes

What people said during EcoDensity consultation

"Lanes could be made more green, usable, and pleasant. Lanes could be 'amenities'."

Options put forward in LWH consultation

- Explore ways that LWH can contribute to the lane
- Encourage planting between lane and LWH
- Explore lanes as places for green performance and neighbourhood amenity

Public responses

People suggested LWH could help revitalize lanes as neighbourhood spaces and there was support for 'greener' and more pleasant lanes. People also suggested there be opportunity for activities like walking, basketball and street hockey and for lanes to be safe places.

Recommendations

As above Options:

Private property

1) Require and/or enable the LWH structure to contribute to the lane – e.g. exterior motion sensor lane lighting for safety; doorways onto lane etc..
2) Require and/or enable planting between lane and LWH – e.g. an unpaved setback between lane and LWH (see Recommendation 13 for permeable driveway surfacing).

City lane right-of-way

3) Improve green performance and maintain usability of lane ROW -- see Engineering Services Report on 'Enhanced Centre Strip'. In addition, explore in further work the possibility of other features such as alternative paving materials (more permeable and that also meet Engineering standards) for the connection between the 'centre strip' lane paving and people's parking areas.

Discussion

Throughout the EcoDensity process the idea of lanes as 'micro-amenities' was raised. What might a lane as 'micro-amenity' look like? It was initially assumed that this might be something like the 'Country Lane' Local Improvement option. However during our LWH consultation process people told us that lane as 'amenity' meant several things (see image pages at the end of this section):

- places to bike and stroll
- hard surface area for playing basketball, hockey and other games
- site for habitat and management of stormwater
- safe place to be
- visually pleasant place

Options were therefore explored to address these ideas, in addition to keeping in mind that lanes are important service corridors for large garbage, recycling, and yard waste

trucks; utility poles and transformers; and parking access and manoeuvring (see image pages at the end of this section).

Recommendations 22 and 23: Private property
People's suggestions that lanes to be safe and visually pleasant places can be addressed though regulations on LWH private property. The buildings, plantings, and pavement on the private property along the lane have a significant impact on the appearance and feeling of the lane. Along many lanes, there is a mix of new and old, small and large garages and carports, interspersed with trees, vines, and plants (see image pages at the end of this section).

Gradually, lanes are becoming increasingly lined with garages and driveways, as new houses are generally built with the maximum permitted garage space. LWH provides an opportunity, through setback requirements, planting, lighting and architectural design to improve a sense of livability, safety and greenspace along the lanes. In part this will be affected by how much parking is provided along with LWH (see Section C).

Recommendation 24: City lane right-of-way
One idea raised during the public process was whether lanes that reach a threshold of a specified number of laneway houses could be candidates for special lane treatment by the City.

Staff investigated this and found that most lanes are already paved, so there would be limited opportunity for pavement change for many years. In addition, the pace of LWH development is expected to be gradual, so it could be a long time before any particular lane reaches a specified threshold. This indicates the importance of providing lane improvement options separate from LWH development.

Lane Improvement background: Lanes are paved or upgraded through the Local Improvement Process and over time, a majority of the lanes in the city have been improved (the Local Improvement Process shares the cost between the property owners and the City).

In 2004 Council adopted the 'Centre Strip' lane paving option, a more sustainable standard for lane improvements in residential areas. A 'Centre Strip' lane has a 10-14' strip of asphalt pavement down the centre of the lane, with permeable planting space on either side. The City also piloted 'Country Lane' options at three locations. 'Country Lanes' proved much more expensive and have not been requested by property owners since the pilot projects.

'Enhanced Centre Strip' Option: The Engineering Services Report to Council submitted on the same date under a separate cover proposes to develop a new Local Improvement option for lane paving. The proposed 'Enhanced Centre Strip' option would be more economical than the previous 'Country Lane' designs and would improve on the 'Centre Strip' standard by providing enhancements to the centre strip, such as concrete banding, and would incorporate additional infiltration elements that may include infiltrating catch basins, permeable surfaces, and swales where feasible.

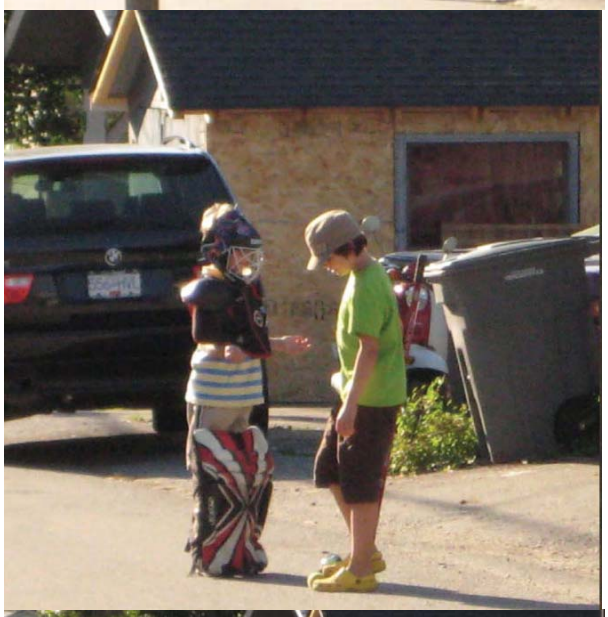
Permeability is an important issue for lanes because rainwater run-off or stormwater is taxing on the storm/sewer system. Allowing rainwater to be detained and infiltrated

into suitable soils also prevents stormwater, which often travels over polluted surfaces, from carrying its pollutants directly into water bodies.

Alternative Materials: Also included in this report is a recommendation that more attractive and permeable paving materials be explored for connections between centre strip paving and parking areas on people's lots.

Further work

Include Recommendations 1 and 2 in developing regulations for LWH and explore issues discussed in Recommendation 3.



Above images: Examples of current lane uses that people requested be maintained

Top image: Lane as service corridor
Bottom image: Positive impact of planting & permeable surfaces along lane

G. Frequently Asked Questions

Below are a number of questions asked frequently during the consultations. The public open houses included display boards on these questions. Some of these questions are addressed in more detail in the previous sections of this paper, but information is repeated here for easy reference.

Would the existing infrastructure be adequate to support LWH?
Yes, existing sewer and water systems, which the City provides, are adequate. (Having LWH that maintains permeability helps with storm sewer capacity – see section D of this report.) In addition gas, electrical, and telecommunications are expected to be adequate.

Would LWH pay Development Cost Levies*?*
Yes, like all new development, LWH would pay Development Cost Levies. These are per-square-foot charges, and the revenue helps to pay for capital costs of amenities needed for new population. (More on this in Section E.)

Would people be able to have both a secondary suite and a LWH?
All of the options in this paper would permit both. A single family homeowner could choose to do one or the other, both, or none.

Would people who build a new house also be permitted to build a LWH?
The options in this paper would apply to both existing houses and new houses. However, the small scale rental nature of the options provides no incentive to replace an existing house. The options are designed to work for homeowners who want to build a LWH on their own property while maintaining the existing house.

Would people be able to convert a garage into a LWH?
If Council approves developing regulations to allow LWH, it may be possible to convert garages. It would depend on the garage age and condition, and on, for example, how much upgrading would be needed to meet building and life safety standards specified in the Vancouver Building By-law. Zoning and Development By-law regulations may be able to provide some relaxations to assist with garage conversions where there are issues of setbacks, etc. These issues would need be addressed in the development of regulations for LWH.

Would modular LWH be permitted?
All units must meet the Vancouver Building By-law for safety and related issues. Modular units that do meet this By-law would also need to meet Zoning and Development By-law requirements such as height, setbacks, size, etc.

Would LWH be permitted on lots with unusual sizes or shapes? What about LWH with 'Vancouver Specials'?
The options in this paper were developed for 33x122 foot lots and 50x122 foot lots because these are the most common lot sizes. If Council approves further work, staff will develop regulations that would apply to properties of other sizes. The options were also developed in the context of existing single family zoning whereas

'Vancouver Specials' were built under a previous zoning that permitted more site coverage for the main house. This is likely to pose some challenges in terms of whether there is room for LWH on these properties; this too will have to be worked out when developing regulations.

Would LWH affect property taxes?
There are two components:

- For the person building a LWH: Adding a LWH would likely increase the assessed value in the same way as any other significant home improvement. This higher assessment would be reflected in property taxes for that particular property.
- For all properties: Permitting LWH across all single family areas would 'dilute' any impact on land values and thus on property taxes. However, if permitted in a small sub-area only, this area may see an increase in land values, relative to other areas, and thus tax increases higher than the norm. (See Section E for more information.)

How would permitting LWH be 'green'?
Laneway housing would have both environmental and social sustainability components. It would support many of the City's commitments in the EcoDensity Charter. These include a greener denser city pattern which promotes gentle, hidden or invisible forms of density in suitable locations across the city; more housing affordability, types, and choices. LWH, as described in the options in this paper, would also maintain open space for gardens and permeability, and meet high standards for green building performance.

How would LWH be regulated?
As with single family houses, regulations would be provided in the Zoning, Building, and Parking By-laws. If Council approves LWH, staff would develop detailed regulations to facilitate neighbourly, livable, and green LWH units, while also keeping an eye that regulations are not so onerous as to be a disincentive for people wanting to add LWH.

Why doesn't this paper include LWH for non-single family areas?
The reason for focussing this paper on RS zones is that they comprise the greatest number of properties in the city (over 66,000 lots), and are the only zones which do not already permit some forms of higher density development.

In particular, 'infill' housing (a larger-scale, strata titled version of LWH) is already permitted in many of the non-single family zones, known as 'RT' zones, as well as in some apartment districts. Some smaller lots in these zones do not have the opportunity under current zoning for infill on lots as small as 33-feet wide. This could be explored in a future phase of work. It would involve different zoning by-laws, different densities, and different contexts. Before determining the priority for such work, it would be worth assessing how the scope of work would compare to number of lots that could benefit.

III. Other Cities

More and more municipalities have added or are looking at some form of laneway/backyard housing. There are many variations such as lot size, number of units per lot, size and height of units, number of required parking spaces, rental or strata, etc. One key message is that "no one size fits all." The following section provides a sampling of laneway/backyard housing in other cities. Generally, the lane house is instead of, rather than in addition to, a secondary suite.

Santa Cruz, California: Status - Approved

Over half of the City of Santa Cruz's land is zoned for single family housing. Challenged by growth pressures, the City introduced "infill" opportunities into its single family neighbourhoods as an approach to providing new affordable housing choices. Key features of the program include:

- Affordability – the unit must be rental and the owner must reside on site
- Retention – the main house is encouraged to be retained
- Livable and Neighbourly Units
  - Minimum lot size of 5,000 sq. ft. (note: 33 X 122 lot in Vancouver is 4, 026 sq. ft.)
  - Maximum unit size of 500 sq. ft. for lots up to 7,500 sq. ft. (500 sq. ft can be a 1 bedroom unit)
  - Maximum height of 13 ft. to mid-roof
  - 3 on-site parking spaces
- Green Buildings and Site – unit encouraged to provide green features such as solar panels on the roof and renewable and recycled materials
- Where – permitted in all single family residential neighbourhoods (1,800 eligible lots)
- Maximum of two units on the lot (principal house + 1 additional unit)

Other features:

- A "how to" manual to assist homeowners
- About 40 – 50 permits are issued each year

City of Kelowna: Status – Approved

The City of Kelowna permits secondary suites in the form of carriage houses which can be built as a separate, accessory building at the rear of the lot. Key features of the program include:

- Affordability – the unit must be rental
- Retention – the main house is encouraged to be retained
- Livable and Neighbourly Units
  - Minimum lot size of 3,498 sq. ft.
  - The unit must be the lesser of 14.8 ft. or the height of the existing principal building
  - The unit must be the lesser of 968 sq. ft. or 40% of the total floor area of the principal building
  - One additional parking space
- Where – all single family residential neighbourhoods
- Maximum of two units on the lot (principal house + 1 additional unit)

City of Surrey, East Clayton: Status – Approved

The City of Surrey approved a master plan for the East Clayton area, for compact, walkable neighbourhoods offering a variety of housing types to enable people to stay within the community as their housing needs change. Key features include:

- Affordability – a variety of tenure – rental and strata title
- Livable and Neighbourly Units
  - Lot sizes range from about 2,700 to 3,450 sq. ft.
  - Maximum unit size of 500 sq. ft.
  - Coach houses encouraged especially for corner lots
  - Reduced front yard setbacks and an increase in useable back yard space
- Green Buildings and Site – encouraged to apply sustainable development principles
- Lanes – provision of lanes to accommodate services at the rear of dwellings
- Where – within a mixed-use neighbourhood

The City of Calgary: Status – Approved

The City of Calgary permits secondary suites in the form of garden suites which can be built as a separate, accessory building at the rear of the lot. Key features include:

- Affordability – rental
- Retention – retention of the main house is encouraged
- Livable and Neighbourly Units
  - Minimum lot size of 4,198 sq. ft.
  - Maximum unit size of 753 sq. ft.
  - Maximum height of 16.4 ft.
  - Provide a private amenity space in the form of a balcony, deck or patio
  - One additional parking space
- Where: in certain land use districts and on a lot that contains a single family house
- Maximum of two units on the lot (principal and 1 additional unit)

City of North Vancouver: Status – Under Discussion

The City of North Vancouver has recently concluded public consultation on detached units in the back yard for "coach houses". Following feedback received from the public, the draft guidelines will be refined and may include the following features:

- Affordability – the unit must be rental
- Retention – retention of the main house is encouraged
- Livable and Neighbourly Units
  - Minimum lot size (under review) – 4,455 sq. ft.
  - Coach house subordinate in size to the principal dwelling
  - Must accommodate two parking spaces on the lot
- Green Buildings and Site – green building design, small footprint
- Lanes - eyes on the lane, overlook, screened garbage and recycling
- Where - all single family neighbourhoods
- Maximum of two units on the lot (principal house + 1 additional unit)

District of Maple Ridge: Status – Under Discussion

The District of Maple Ridge is planning to allow garden suites to be built in back yards. Garden suites are intended to assist in responding to changing demographics and help to promote alternative housing choices. They may include the following features:

- Affordability – the unit must be rental and the owner must reside on site
- Retention – the main house is encouraged to be retained
- Livable and Neighbourly Units
  - Minimum lot size for any garden suite is 5,993 sq. ft.
  - Maximum size for a garden suite is 968 sq. ft.
  - Maximum height for smaller lots is one storey, while owners who have lots adjacent to a lane can put a garden suite above their garage
- Where - all single family neighbourhoods
- Maximum of two units on the lot (principal + 1 additional unit)

IV. Summary List of Recommendations

The following list is a compilation of all the recommendations in the Laneway Housing Issues and Options paper. These recommendations would be used to guide next steps in developing regulations and related work, as described in a separate report to City Council.

Affordability

1) Require laneway housing to be family or rental, using the same mechanisms as for secondary suites in single family areas**.** Do not allow strata titling of the property when LWH is built.

Retention of Existing Houses with Opportunity for Homeowners to Add LWH

2) Require LWH to be family or rental – do not allow strata titling of the property when a LWH is added (as in Recommendation 1 above). This means upgrades would not be required to the main house.
3) Prepare amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law regarding fire access and safety requirements, as described in this report.
4) Develop a homeowner manual.
5) Set a maximum unit size for LWH to balance achieving livable and diverse housing, while minimizing any land value and redevelopment impacts.
6) Monitor the pace of retention and redevelopment related to LWH, to see if there is any increase in the rate of demolition beyond the normal single family rate, and if so, report to Council (See also Recommendation 21).

Livable and Neighbourly Units

7) Backyard open space: Develop regulations for LWH within garage area, thereby retaining currently required backyard open space.
8) Height and Unit Type: Develop regulations for 1 and 1 ½ storey LWH to allow for a variety of unit sizes and types (including exploring maximum height for 1 ½ storey, roof design, orientation, upper storey windows etc.).
9) Parking: Develop regulations that would work with 1 and 2 parking space configurations on 33 foot wide lots and 1,2 and 3 parking space configurations on wider lots. Do not explore further the following: 0 spaces; 3 spaces on 33 foot lots; or tandem configuration, as parking space would encroach into backyard space.
10) Universal Design: Develop regulations for universal design where possible (Vancouver Building By-law) e.g. height of electrical outlets etc..
11) Process: Develop approval process with a view to balancing flexibility, quality of design and a user-friendly permit process for the homeowner.

Green Building and Site

The yard (site)

12) Retain permeable backyard open space, as per existing single family regulations (as in Recommendation 7).
13) Require permeable surface treatment where surface parking and driveway is permitted (as opposed to a garage or carport).
14) Investigate ways to deal with roof runoff other than piping into stormwater/sewer system e.g., rock infiltration pits; collection in rain barrels.
15) Encourage use of waterwise landscaping guidelines.

The building

16) Require laneway housing to meet the high standards for all single family homes set by the City's new Green Homes Program, with some adaptations where appropriate in relation to the size of building, as described in this report.
17) Require separated storm and sanitary sewage connections for the laneway house, as would be required for any new housing.
18) Develop zoning regulations that would not preclude the future addition of other green features such as solar panels and encourage passive design where possible.

Where Should LWH Be Allowed

19) Permit LWH in all single family areas (RS-1, RS-3/RS-3A, RS-5 and RS-6).
20) Test regulations with design professionals and builders for possible unintended consequences before finalizing regulations.
21) Require tracking and monitoring - with a report back to Council after 3 years or 100 projects, whichever is first.

Lanes

Private property

22) Require and/or enable the LWH structure to contribute to the lane – e.g. exterior motion sensor lane lighting for safety; doorways onto lane etc..
23) Require and/or enable planting between lane and LWH – e.g. an unpaved setback between lane and LWH (see Recommendation 13 for permeable driveway surfacing).

City lane right-of-way

24) Improve green performance and maintain usability of lane ROW -- see Engineering Services Report on 'Enhanced Centre Strip'. In addition, explore in further work the possibility of other features such as alternative paving materials (more permeable and that also meet Engineering standards) for the connection between the 'centre strip' lane paving and private parking areas.