RR-1(c)

CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT

Report Date: June 5, 2018
Contact: Paula Huber
Contact No.: 604.871.6013
RTS No.: 12530
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: June 19, 2018

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law - Laneway Home Regulations

RECOMMENDATION

A. THAT the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability be instructed to make an application to amend the Zoning and Development By-law to repeal Section 11.24 (Laneway House) in its entirety and substitute the revised regulations, generally in accordance with Appendix A, to make it easier and more cost effective to build laneway houses and to improve livability of laneway houses;

FURTHER THAT the application be referred to a Public Hearing.

B. THAT subject to enactment of the amending by-law, Council repeal the Laneway Housing Guidelines.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report outlines the results of a review of the decade-old Laneway House (LWH) Program and recommends amendments to simplify the LWH regulations, reduce processing timelines and improve livability in LWHs. This initiative aligns with the Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018-2017) target for 4,000 new LWHs to be built over the next ten years. The Laneway Review involved close collaboration between Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS) and Development, Buildings & Licensing (DBL) to integrate the review with an initiative that began in 2016 to improve the process and timing of permits in single and two-family zones.

The proposed amendments were developed following consultation with LWH builders and designers as well as property owners and residents who live in LWHs. The key amendments include:

- Introducing an outright review process for 1.5 storey LWHs (replacing design guidelines with external design regulations in the zoning);
- Increasing the maximum allowable heights for LWHs;
- Changing the method of measuring height to reference the grade immediately around the LWH;
- Allowing for wider dormers and greater design flexibility on the second floor;
- Introducing minimum size requirements for shared living space and bedrooms to address livability concerns; and
- Providing more flexibility for siting 1 storey LWHs.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On July 28, 2009 Council approved amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law to implement LWH in RS-1 and RS-5 single family zones, and directed that staff monitor and report back.

On November 2, 2010 after 100 LWH permits were issued, Council received the *Monitoring of Laneway Housing Implementation Report* and directed continued monitoring of LWH development as well as a review of the current regulations and guidelines. The review was focused on ways to improve the neighbourliness and livability of LWH and streamline the application process.

On July 28, 2011 Council approved *Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2012-2021)* which includes a goal to enable an additional 6,000 secondary market rental units by 2021. To implement this strategy, the *3 Year Action Plan (2012-2014)* calls for expanding zones and housing types for LWH and secondary suites as a way of increasing the supply of these rental housing units.

On October 2, 2012 Council received the final report of the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability: *Bold Ideas Toward an Affordable City*, which calls for expansion of the LWH Program to other single-family zones to increase the housing supply in low density residential areas.

On June 11, 2013 Council approved amendments to the LWH regulations and guidelines to respond to issues of neighbourliness, parking, livability and length of permitting process. Council also approved the expansion of the LWH Program to all RS zones to equalize opportunity for LWH across all single family areas.

On November 29, 2017 Council approved the *Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018-2027)* as the basis for addressing Vancouver's housing affordability crisis. Council further approved the *Housing Vancouver 3 Year Action Plan (2018-2020)* and directed staff to proceed with next steps towards implementation. Included in the Action Plan was direction to launch a Laneway Housing Review and Innovation Challenge to improve efficiency and affordability of LWH options and to improve the permitting process for low-density housing, including converting 1.5 storey LWHs from conditional to outright approval.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing. The amendments outlined in this report will work towards achieving the targets established through the Housing Vancouver Strategy to add housing choice in neighbourhoods across Vancouver. The changes will also provide design flexibility, improve livability and simplify the processing of LWH permits.

REPORT

Background/Context

The City of Vancouver introduced the Laneway House Program in 2009 to provide opportunities for more ground-oriented rental housing options in existing single family neighbourhoods. Initially introduced in the RS-1 and RS-5 single family districts, which made up 94% of the city's single family lots, the Program was expanded in 2013 to be available in all RS districts city-wide. More recently in October 2017, the opportunity for laneway housing has been extended to RT-5 and RT-6 zoned areas in Grandview-Woodland and Mount Pleasant. Since the LWH Program was adopted, over 3,300 permits have been issued. Today laneway homes are widely distributed in neighbourhoods across the city (see map included as Appendix B).

The Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018-2027) references the success of the LWH Program in increasing the supply of secondary rentals city-wide and expanding options for new housing forms in single family neighbourhoods. Expanding the supply of rental housing is a key priority of the Housing Vancouver Strategy, which includes a target of 4,000 new rental laneway homes to be built over the next ten years, 50% of which are expected to be two- and three-bedroom units suitable for families as identified in the table below.

Figure 1: Target table from Housing Vancouver Strategy

Building Type	Renters				Renters & Owners	Owners	Total	% of Total
	<$15k/yr.	<$15-30k/yr.	$30-50k/yr.	$50-80k/yr.	$80-150k/yr.	>$150k/yr.		
Apartment	5,200	1,600	2,000	3,000	200		12,000	17%
			2,500	12,000	5,500		20,000	28%
				6,500	16,500	7,000	30,000	42%
Infill				**2,000**	**2,000**		4,000	5%
					300	700	1,000	1%
Townhouse					1,700	3,300	5,000	7%
Total	5,200	1,600	4,500	23,500	26,200	11,000	72,000	100%
% of Total	7%	2%	6%	33%	37%	15%	100%	

Supportive and Social Housing | Purpose-Built Rental | Condos | Laneways (Rental) | Coach Houses (Strata) | Townhouses

In developing the Housing Vancouver Strategy, residents expressed a desire to see the 'right supply' of housing and a greater diversity in the type of housing choices available to them.

Vancouverites want new housing to be affordable to people who live and work in the city and are open to considering a diverse range of housing options to achieve this, including LWHs. Expanding LWH options is a part of the Housing Vancouver Strategy to advance transformation of low-density neighbourhoods to increase supply, affordability, and variety of housing options.

Strategic Analysis

The Laneway Review has been a 5 month planning process that aligns and overlaps with the Development, Building and Licensing Department Process Improvements to simplify and streamline review processes for single-family and two-family permits. The work also aligns with work underway to review and improve accessibility requirements for different types of housing and the objectives of the recently launched Regulatory Review with the goal of simplifying regulations and improving the development process. The changes strive to balance improved design flexibility and livability while simplifying the process.

Facts and Analysis

- 90% of LWHs are built in conjunction with a new house
- 45% of all new houses are built with a LWH
- Only 10% of LWHs are single storey
- 60% of recent LWHs have 1 parking space for the site; 40% provide more than 1 space
- 500+ permits for LWHs were issued in each of 2016 and 2017

Cost Effectiveness - The construction industry has recognized that the most affordable way to build a LWH is in conjunction with a new house. The efficiencies for construction and service connections mean that LWHs built this way can cost $100k less than a LWH built with an existing house. The fact that 45% of all new houses come with a LWH indicates that there is good financial case to building a laneway home. A 640 sq.ft. LWH built in conjunction with a new house at a cost of $200k can be rented at about $1,700 to $1,800 per month (or more in some neighbourhoods). If the $200k construction cost was borrowed, the entire loan could be repaid in less than 15 years at current mortgage rates. The Laneway House Program provides sufficient incentives to encourage the construction of secondary rental housing on private land.

Height - When the LWH Program was introduced 10 years ago the City took a cautious approach to the size of lane homes, so that they would reflect the scale and height of garages. In response to resident concerns, the LWH Program and permit process was developed to carefully manage implementation and mitigate potential impacts of LWHs on adjacent properties. The design guidelines stipulate that the second storey of laneway homes should have a half storey expression to reduce bulk, which means that second floors are designed to be contained within the roof. This scale minimizing approach was successful in helping to manage the original concerns about the impacts of the LWH Program. This approach has, however, had some livability and cost implications.

Height restrictions are impacting livability and accessibility in LWHs. Rooms on the second floor often have low ceilings and are awkwardly configured. Common work-arounds for the height restrictions include sinking the first level into the ground so that the floor to floor height, especially for the second floor, is not compromised. This often means that the LWH includes a step down to the entry door. In response to the general acceptance of the LWH Program and expanded opportunities for larger character infill housing on RS zoned lots across the city, it is time to loosen the LWH height limitations.

Livability - Many LWHs are also being built with multiple small bedrooms that raise concerns regarding livability and do not reflect the types of unit configurations intended by the Program. Envisioned as way to add “gentle” density and more housing choice in neighbourhoods, smaller LWHs on standard size lots (33 ft. x 122ft.) were intended to provide studios and one-bedroom units. Larger LWHs on bigger lots were intended to provide up to two-bedroom units. The livability guidelines have not been effectively enforced and the quality of livability in some LWHs has declined considerably. Small LWHs that are built with multiple bedrooms and no shared living space have become increasingly common in Vancouver. New regulations are needed to ensure livable design for LWHs.

Laneway Housing Survey

As part of the consultation process, a survey of LWH owners and occupants was conducted to collect information on LWH features, on who is living in them, and what they are like as homes. The survey ran from January 9 to 29, 2018. A total of 612 survey responses were received, with an almost even split of respondents being property owners (308 responses) and LWH occupants (304 responses). For more detailed survey information, see Appendix C.

Key themes and observations from the survey results included:

- LWHs are creating important secondary rental housing stock and most are occupied as full-time homes;
- Residents are choosing to live in LWHs because they are a more affordable detached housing option and they offer housing options in locations that are near their families and friends, jobs, schools, transit and other amenities;
- Most occupants and owners of properties with a LWH are satisfied with their laneways;
- Both owners and occupants expressed a desire to increase the allowable size of LWHs to enable better-configured interior space for livability, with many occupants noting that providing more storage space would improve laneway living; and
- Property owners from the survey reported that most LWHs take less than 1.5 years to develop and cost under $300,000.

Builder and Designer Workshops

Workshops were held on January 30, 2018 and February 1, 2018 to bring together LWH builders, designers and architects to draw on their first-hand experience. A total of 47 participants attended the two sessions. Through facilitated discussions, participants identified specific issues and challenges with the LWH Program and key areas for change. Participants were also encouraged to share innovations they have developed in the construction of laneways which could be considered in the future.

Key themes from the workshops included:

- The initial LWH Program regulations were created when this housing form was still relatively new and there was uncertainty as to how LWHs would fit with the existing neighbourhood and impact adjacent properties. Now that the Program is almost a decade old, LWHs have been integrated into most neighbourhoods and the industry is able to deliver a building type which is familiar and widely accepted by the public;

- There is a general feeling that LWH requirements and regulations have become overly onerous and complex; there is a need for better balance between competing citywide priorities (e.g. energy efficiency, accessibility, parking and tree retention);
- The length of the review process directly impacts the cost to build LWH, so the City should look for ways to move towards an outright approval process;
- The landscape review process was consistently cited as a source of frustration and delay; participants wanted the City to clarify and streamline this process to provide more certainty and avoid delay; and
- Participants felt that additional relaxations and more flexibility in design would help LWH builders adapt to site-specific challenges; in particular allowing for minimal additional height (~2ft) as a change which would reduce the design challenges and simplify construction of LWHs while having minimal impact on adjacent properties.

A follow-up information session was held with builders and designers on May 3, 2018 to review the draft proposed changes. 36 industry participants attended. The proposed changes (described below) were generally well received with most participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the changes would improve design flexibility, streamline the review process and improve livability. About half of the attendees anticipate that the changes would reduce construction costs. For more detailed responses to the proposed changes see Appendix D.

Proposed Changes to the Regulations

1. Simplify Process: Replace the conditional review process and design guidelines for 2 storey laneway homes with external design regulations and an outright review process. This change to approach means that Section 11.24 of the Zoning and Development By-law will be updated to include key prescriptive design requirements (previously contained in guidelines). This means that, subject to compliance with the new regulations, two storey laneway homes can be approved by staff in the Development, Building and Licensing Group (which already reviews for Vancouver Building By-law compliance) and will no longer require an additional "conditional" design review by PDS staff. This approach has been used successfully in other district schedules.

2. Process Time: Processing time is anticipated to be reduced under the new outright approach. Beyond the time savings from the outright process for the LWH Program, the DBL group has launched the Applicant Assisted and Supported (ASAP) Pilot Program to reduce processing time for one and two-family applicants with high quality submissions. This pilot will put the onus on the applicant to be responsive to deficiency letters which flag changes to submissions and required additional information. DBL will commit to issuing a permit in 12 weeks (6 weeks up front for landscape review and 6 weeks from permit intake to issuance) representing a 65% decrease from the current processing times. If it's successful, the process will scale to all outright homes.

3. Increase Height: The field analysis and industry engagement identified that the current maximum heights for LWHs create significant restrictions on LWH design, particularly for 1.5 storey LWHs. To help improve design flexibility and support the livability of LWHs, staff are proposing that the maximum allowable heights for LWHs with pitched roofs be increased by 2ft., which would allow up to 22 ft. for a 1.5 storey LWH and up to 17 ft. for a one storey LWH. This change is anticipated to have the following benefits:

a. eliminate the need to sink the laneway below grade;
b. provide more usable space on upper floor (less under-height space);
c. improve accessibility;
d. reduce retaining walls at the lane and around parking spaces; and
e. reduce use of concrete; reduce construction costs.

4. Measurement of LWH Height: Instead of measuring the height of the laneway from the average grade of the entire lot, LWH height will be measured from a horizontal datum plane created from the intersection of side yard and rear setback lines. In this way the grade for the laneway will be measured relative to the immediate adjacent grade conditions.

5. Relax and Align Dormer Limitations: Currently regulations restrict the width of dormers depending on whether they face the lane, main house or side yard. Changes proposed would eliminate the dormer width restriction and instead require that dormers be inset 0.6m from all first storey exterior walls and would allow a single projection into the setback to accommodate stairs. This change will provide improved livability of the second floor and design flexibility.

6. Livability: In 2013, when the LWH Program was expanded to neighbourhoods across the city, design guidelines were introduced to ensure a high level of livability in the design of laneway homes. Reviewing the internal layout of units for livability was taking time and requiring significant re-design of units to provide adequate bedroom sizes and shared living space. In response to processing time concerns, senior management at the time instructed staff to focus on the external design of LWH and not review for livability. The market response to this relaxed approach has been a significant reduction in livability of laneways homes and a trend towards maximizing the number of bedrooms for individual rental. Many small units include an enclosed parking space and a small kitchen (~80 sq.ft.) at-grade with no adjoining living room or dining area. In order to combat this trend, align with best practices followed by other housing agencies[1] and ensure that LWHs are designed for a single tenancy as intended, staff recommend introducing two new regulations as follows:

    a. Require the provision of one shared living space that is at least 16.7m ^{2} (180 sq.ft.). This room would typically be a combined kitchen/living/dining area (not a bedroom).
    b. Require that units, other than studio units, provide at least one bedroom that is a minimum size of 8.5m^2 (91.5 sq.ft.).

7. Siting of 1 Storey LWHs: The current regulations do not provide sufficient flexibility for siting 1 storey LWHs on standard 33 ft. wide lots, resulting in many LWH not being able to achieve the maximum permitted floor area. To provide more flexibility, staff recommend increasing the permitted setback from the lane from 32 ft. to 35 ft. and increasing the permitted site coverage from 45% to 47%.

8. Tree Review: Concerns around the processing of tree permits were flagged early during the work on the DBL Process Improvements to simplify and streamline review processes for single-family and two-family permits, which began in 2016. Builders were concerned that tree reviews were not happening until late in the permit process and requirements to save trees were resulting in late re-design of LWHs and servicing plans, both adding to

[1] City of Seattle Housing and Building Maintenance Code, Chapter 22.206.020, Ontario Building Code Part 9.5, San Francisco Building Code, Section 1208; London Borough of Lambeth Unitary Development Plan – Guidance and Standards for Housing Development and House Conversions, 2008.

construction costs and delays. During 2017, the Urban Landscape Development team devoted staff and designed an Enquiry Centre process to screen applications and resolve tree retention questions early in the process before the permit is submitted. The Landscape Team has also initiated weekly meetings with Park Board and Engineering to facilitate the resolution of public tree and utility location conflicts prior to intake. Further, the ASAP Pilot Program will test new landscape review processes that will also be evaluated and scaled, where possible. Overall, Landscape Review is adopting a more balanced approach to tree retention in light of other objectives including the provision of new housing options.

Potential Outcomes and Issues

Staff anticipate that the proposed changes will make it easier to build a LWH and will enable some modest reduction to construction costs. The increased height will make it possible to build a LWH using pile foundations (rather than a full concrete slab) and will help support the use of modular construction techniques[2]. These two alternative construction approaches can provide environmental and cost benefits.

If successful, the changes will increase the take-up of the already popular LWH Program. However, more laneway homes will intensify the challenge to balance the goal of providing more housing choice in neighbourhoods with other considerations such as competition for street parking, tree retention, open space, sunlight and privacy. It should also be noted that as LWHs become more common across all neighbourhoods they create an impediment to future land use changes. This challenge is particularly evident where LWHs are being constructed in areas with recently introduced community plans that identify opportunities for significant future change. A LWH is a capital improvement and adds value to a property making land assembly more costly for moderate density forms such as apartments and townhouses.

Consultation Summary

In response to the general acceptance of the LWH Program, combined with the new character homes incentive program which allows infill homes in RS zones across the city (at a larger size and height than LWHs), staff have focused the engagement for this review on the small building industry. The proposed height increase is modest and the other process and livability changes are of most interest to builders and practitioners, not the general public. The public hearing on the proposed changes will provide a forum for anyone concerned with the proposed changes to address council.

Other Related Matters

Amendments to accessibility requirements, including providing an accessible path of travel to low density housing forms, have been investigated and are being implemented through another work program. Changes to the accessibility requirements for laneway homes are being introduced in a separate report (RTS #10317). As proposed, LWHs on lots 50 ft. or wider will be required to provide an accessible path of travel, either from the street or an on-site parking space, to the LWH and accessibility requirements in the Vancouver Building By-law would be waived for the upper floor of 1.5 storey LWHs.

[2] When a 2 level Modular home is built it is constructed with two floors, one at the bottom of the 1st floor and one at the bottom of the 2nd floor. The extra floor adds strength to the units, allowing them to be transported and craned into place. The extra floor puts constraints on livable ceiling heights.

Implementation

Successful implementation of the changes, especially the change to an outright review process for 1.5 storey LWH, will require a coordinated and supportive approach as we transition responsibility for some aspects of the LWH Program review from PDS to the Housing Review Branch in DBL. It is anticipated that sites with complex tree issues will still require the assistance of development planners to help work through creative solutions to balance tree retention and design feasibility.

Areas identified for Future Review

Floor Space Ratio (FSR) - The LWH Program allows for 0.16 FSR for a laneway but includes a number of exemptions that push the actual gross floor area higher.[3] Other similar infill type housing (i.e. character incentives program and RT zoning) is not regulated in the same way. Aligning the regulatory approach to these similar housing types has been identified as a future work item to be completed through the Regulatory Review.

Laneway House Without a Lane - The current regulations do not allow a LWH unless there is a lane, and there are a number of solid technical and practical reasons why this approach was taken. As part of this review, the question of allowing LWHs on lots with no lanes was posed. Staff have focused on changes that will improve the LWH Program for the vast majority of properties, not on outlier situations. This question will be explored further in 2018-2019 as part of better aligning regulations that affect all infill-type buildings (infill buildings can be allowed conditionally in RT-5 and RT-6 when a character house is retained). If lots without a lane do become eligible for a LWH, they would be permitted conditionally on a case-by-case basis. LWHs would not be permitted where lots are not large enough, the lot pattern is irregular or side yards are inadequate for fire-fighting access.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

As discussed in previous sections, the change to an outright approval process will shift some of the LWH review work from PDS to DBL. The impact of this change to staff workload will be evaluated as part of the first year of the program. Fees for LWHs will be reviewed and adjusted, if needed, as part of next year's annual planning and development fee updates.

[3] Samples indicate that true FSR inclusive of exemptions is in the 0.17 to 0.2 range

Legal

Applicants who are in process will need to comply with by-law changes if enacted or permits cannot be issued. Staff are working to quantify the volume of in-stream applications and will notify applicants who may be affected by changes pending by-law referral.

CONCLUSION

Over the decade that the Laneway House Program has been in place, it has been successful in increasing the supply of secondary rental housing and introducing new, ground-oriented housing choice in neighbourhoods across the city. The Laneway House Review and recommended changes have been informed by staff analysis and industry expertise, as well as the direct experience of residents who are living in LWHs. The changes proposed will simplify regulations, reduce the time and cost to build a LWH and improve their livability. The changes will help to meet the Housing Vancouver Strategy target of providing 4,000 new laneway homes over the next 10 years.

* * * * *

Note: A By-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting

A By-law to amend
Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575
regarding Laneway Houses

1. This By-law amends or adds to the indicated provisions of the Zoning and Development By-law.

2. Council strikes out section 11.24 and substitutes the following:

"11.24 Laneway House

11.24.1 In this section 11.24, "footprint" means the projected area of the extreme outer limits of a laneway house including carports, covered porches, and enclosed or covered accessory building areas but excluding steps, eaves, and such other projections as section 10.7 of this By-law may allow.

11.24.2 In this section 11.24, height is measured from the horizontal datum plane, which is the plane created by the average of the existing site elevations as measured at the intersections of the required setback lines from the ultimate rear property line, with the side property lines.

11.24.3 A laneway house is not permissible except in conjunction with a One-Family Dwelling or One-Family Dwelling with Secondary Suite on:

(a) a site served by an open lane;
(b) a site located on a corner served by an open or dedicated lane; or
(c) a double-fronting site served by a street at both the front and rear of the site.

11.24.4 The width of a site on which a laneway house is situated must be at least 9.8 m, except that the Director of Planning may approve a laneway house on a site which is less than 9.8 m in width, if:

(a) the site is at least 7.3 m in width; and
(b) the Director of Planning first considers massing, overlook and impact on neighbourhood privacy and all applicable Council policies and guidelines.

11.24.5 A laneway house may have a basement.

11.24.6 For sites in the RS-3 and RS-3A Districts and the RS-6 District, and for sites 16.8 m or wider in the RS-5 District, the width of a laneway house, or a laneway house and an accessory building, must not exceed the permitted width for an accessory building under the applicable district schedule.

11.24.7 On east-west oriented sites, a laneway house must be located toward the south side of the site to reduce shadowing on the site to the north.

11.24.8 A laneway house may be one storey or one storey with a partial second storey.

11.24.9 Open balconies, sundecks, and roof decks are not permitted:

(a) on a one storey laneway house; or
(b) above the partial second storey of a laneway house with a partial second storey.

11.24.10 The height of a one storey laneway house must not exceed 4.3 m in height measured to the highest point of the roof if a flat roof, or to the mean height level between the eaves and the ridge of a gable or hip roof, except that no portion of a one storey laneway house may exceed 5.2 m in height.

11.24.11 The location of a one storey laneway house must be:

(a) within 10.7 m of the ultimate rear property line;
(b) at least 4.9 m, measured across the width of the site, from the one-family dwelling or one-family dwelling with secondary suite on the site;
(c) at least 0.9 m from the ultimate rear property line, except that the Director of Planning may relax the location to 0.6 m from the ultimate rear property line on sites less than 30.5 m in depth; and
(d) a distance from each side property line equal to at least 10% of the lot width, except that the Director of Planning may relax the location to:
    (i) 0.6 m from one side property line for interior lots, and
    (ii) 0.6 m from the inside side property line for corner lots.

11.24.12 Notwithstanding 11.24.11(a), where a site is 39.6 m or more in depth, the Director of Planning may permit a one storey laneway house to extend into a site to a maximum of 26% of the lot depth measured from the ultimate rear property line.

11.24.13 Site coverage must not exceed the permitted site coverage under the applicable district schedule, except that, for a one storey laneway house, the Director of Planning may permit an increase in the permitted site coverage of up to 7% to a maximum of 47% of the site area.

11.24.14 The height of a laneway house with a partial second storey must not exceed:

(a) 6.7 m to the ridge of a gable or hip roof, with a minimum pitch of 7:12; or
(b) 5.8 m to the highest point of a roof with a pitch less than 7:12.

11.24.15 On a laneway house with a partial second storey and a roof pitch of:

(a) at least 7:12, the height of the intersection of the exterior surface of the roof and the exterior wall surface of the building must not exceed 4 m from the horizontal datum plane; or
(b) less than 7:12, the walls of the partial second storey must be set back at least 0.6 m from the exterior walls of the floor below, except that there may be a single projection into the setback to a maximum of 35% of the width of the floor below.

11.24.16 The partial second storey of a laneway house must not exceed:

(a) 60% of the footprint of the laneway house, if the roof has a minimum pitch of 3:12; or
(b) 50% of the footprint of the laneway house, if the roof has a pitch of less than 3:12,

except that the calculation may exclude any floor area of the partial second storey that is not included in the calculation of floor area according to sections 11.24.24 and 11.24.25.

11.24.17 Dormers must be inset at least 0.6 m from the exterior walls of the floor below, except that there may be a single projection into the setback to a maximum of 35% of the width of the floor below.

11.24.18 The location of a laneway house with a partial second storey must be:

(a) within 7.9 m of the ultimate rear property line;
(b) at least 4.9 m, measured across the width of the site, from the one-family dwelling or one-family dwelling with secondary suite on the site;
(c) at least 0.9 m from the ultimate rear property line, except that the Director of Planning may relax the location to 0.6 m from the ultimate rear property line:
    (i) on sites less than 30.5 m in depth, or
    (ii) for the width of an existing enclosed or covered parking area that forms part of the laneway house; and
(d) a distance from each side property line which is at least equal to the required side yards for the site as prescribed by the applicable district schedule.

11.24.19 Notwithstanding 11.24.18(a), where a site is 39.6 m or more in depth, the Director of Planning may permit a laneway house with a partial second storey to extend into a site to a maximum of 21% of the lot depth measured from the ultimate rear property line.

11.24.20 The floor area of a laneway house must not exceed the lesser of:

(a) 0.16 multiplied by the site area; and
(b) 83.6 m².

11.24.21 Despite section 10.21, the floor area of a laneway house, excluding any floor area used for enclosed parking, must be at least 26 m², except that the Director of Planning may allow a reduction to not less than 19 m² if the Director of Planning first considers the design of the laneway house and all applicable Council policies and guidelines.

11.24.22 Except for a laneway house with no separate bedrooms, a laneway house must have:

(a) one main habitable room that is not a bedroom, with a minimum size of 16.7 m^2 and a minimum dimension of 2.1 m measured between finished wall surfaces; and
(b) at least one bedroom with a minimum size of 8.4 m^2 and a minimum dimension of 2.1 m measured between finished wall surfaces.

11.24.23 Computation of floor area for a laneway house must include:

(a) all floors, including earthen floor, measured to the extreme outer limits of the building;
(b) stairways, fire escapes, elevator shafts, and other features which the Director of Planning considers similar, measured by their gross cross-sectional areas and included in the measurements for each floor at which they are located;
(c) the floor area of a basement;
(d) floor area used for enclosed or covered parking; and
(e) if the distance from a floor to the floor above or, in the absence of a floor above, to the top of the roof rafters or deck exceeds 3.7 m, an additional amount equal to the area of the floor area below the excess.

11.24.24 Computation of floor area for a laneway house must exclude:

(a) areas of floors located:
    (i) above the highest storey or half-storey and to which there is no permanent means of access other than a hatch, or
    (ii) adjacent to a storey or half-storey with a ceiling height of less than 1.2 m;
(b) floors located at or below finished grade with a ceiling height of less than 1.2 m;
(c) covered porches if:
    (i) their location is at the level of the basement or first storey,
    (ii) they are open on at least one side or protected by guard rails, the height of which must not exceed the minimum specified in the Building By-law,
    (iii) the total excluded floor area does not exceed 3 m^2, and
    (iv) the ceiling height of the total excluded area does not exceed 2.75 m measured from the porch floor;
(d) 3% of the total area, where the exterior walls include a minimum of 175 mm of thermal insulation in total.

Where floor area is excluded under section 11.24.24(d), the Director of Planning may vary section 11.24.11(a) and 11.24.18(a) no more than 30 cm.

11.24.25 Computation of floor area for a laneway house may exclude:

(a) open balconies, sundecks, roof decks, or any other appurtenances which, in the opinion of the Director of Planning, are similar to the foregoing, if the open balconies, sundecks, or roof decks face the lane or, in the case of a corner site, the lane and flanking street or either of them;
(b) patios and green roofs if the Director of Planning first approves the design of sunroofs, walls, and railings;
(c) despite section 11.24.23(e), open to below spaces or double height volumes under sloping roofs with a pitch of at least 3:12 if:
    (i) the vertical distance from the floor level to the ceiling does not exceed 4.5 m,
    (ii) the ceiling attaches directly to the underside of the sloping roof rafter and follows its slope,
    (iii) the excluded area does not exceed 25% of the maximum floor space under section 11.24.20, and

(iv) the excluded area, combined with the excluded area under subsection (d), does not exceed 25% of the maximum allowable floor area;

(d) despite section 11.24.23(e), floor areas under sloping roofs with a pitch of at least 3:12 if:
  (i) the vertical distance from the floor to any part of the ceiling is between 1.2 m and 2.1 m,
  (ii) the ceiling attaches directly to the underside of the sloping roof rafter and follows its slope,
  (iii) the excluded floor area does not exceed 10% of the maximum floor area allowed under section 11.24.20, and
  (iv) the excluded area, combined with the excluded area under subsection (c), does not exceed 25% of the maximum allowable floor area;

(e) for units that have a partial second floor, an area not exceeding 2.75 m^2 for stairs, if the excluded area, combined with the excluded areas under subsections (c) and (d), does not exceed 25% of the maximum allowable floor area; and

(f) an area not exceeding 3.7 m^2 for residential storage space, clothes closets and linen closets.

11.24.26 Private outdoor space must be provided in the form of:

(a) an open balcony, sundeck, or roof deck; or
(b) a patio located at grade with a minimum size of 3.7 m^2 and a minimum dimension of 1.5 m.

11.24.27 The setback provided in accordance with sections 11.24.11(c) and 11.24.18(c) must be permeable and landscaped where not required for vehicle or fire access.

11.24.28 A laneway house must include:

(a) a minimum 75 mm wide trim around all doors and windows, excluding door sill trim, except where a window or door is recessed no less than 100mm behind the adjacent exterior wall faces; and
(b) a canopy over the main entry door.

11.24.29 A main entry door that faces the lane must be set back at least 1.5 m from the ultimate rear property line.

11.24.30 On a corner site, the main entry door of a laneway house must face the flanking street.

11.24.31 At least 10% of the building elevation facing the lane must contain windows no smaller than 1.1 m^2.

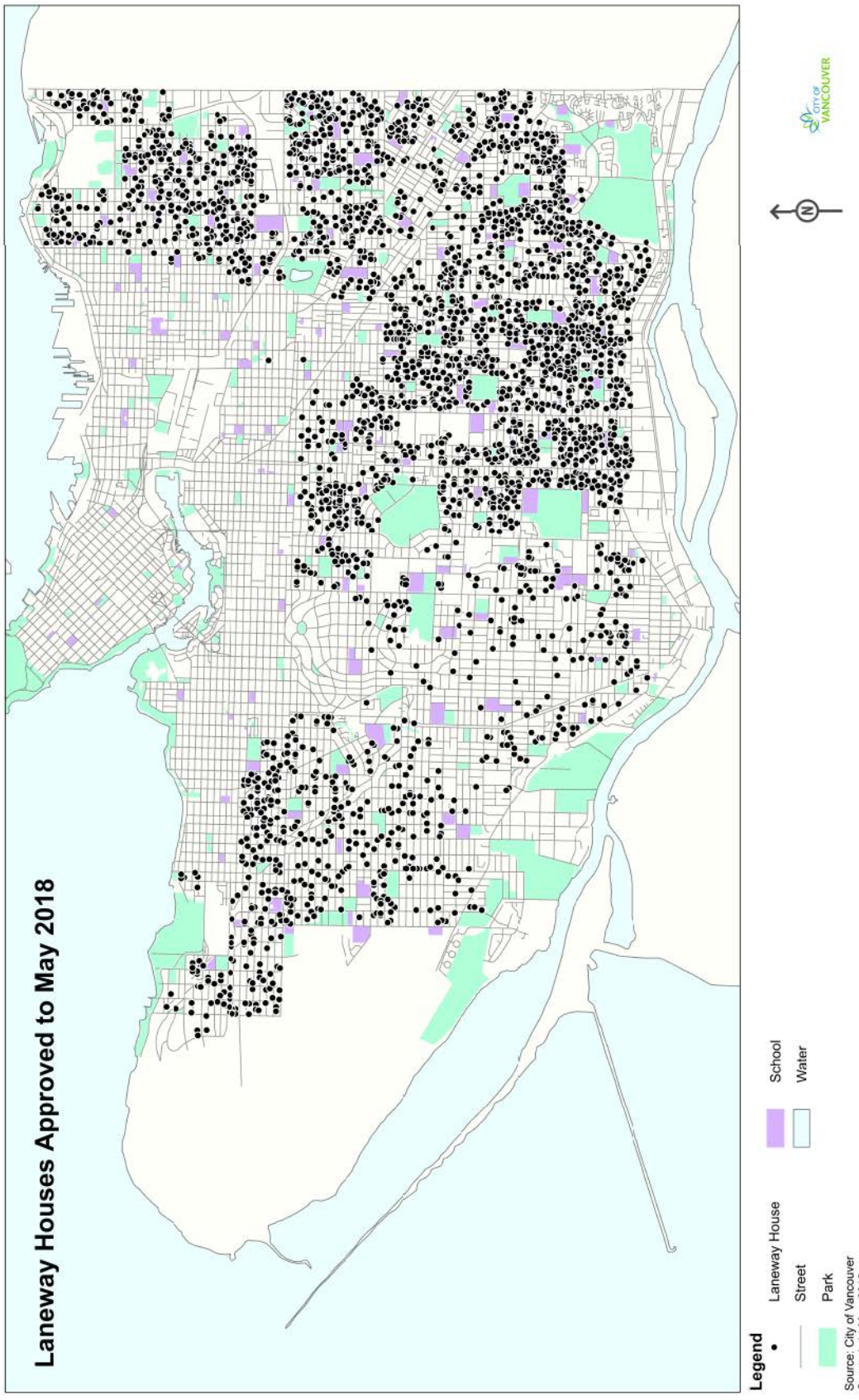
11.24.32 Unless located at least 1.5 m above the floor of the partial upper storey, or facing the lane or a flanking street, windows with transparent glazing on a partial second storey must not exceed 1.1 m^2.

11.24.33 Wall cladding materials on a building elevation facing a lane or street must be continued in equal proportions, no less than 2.0 m along adjacent side walls or 1.2 m where the discontinuation of a material occurs at a change in the building wall plane, such as at a bay or chimney projection.

11.24.34 The Director of Planning may relax the design provisions in section 11.24.15, 11.24.17, 11.24.28, 11.24.29, 11.24.30, 11.24.31, 11.24.32 or 11.24.33 if, in the opinion of the Director of Planning, the design of a laneway house meets the intent of the laneway house regulations for quality and durability of design and architectural expression and is not compatible with one or more of the design requirements in those sections.

11.24.35 If the Director of Planning first considers the effects on neighbouring properties with regard to overlook, massing and neighbourhood privacy, and the intent of this section 11.24 and all applicable Council policies and guidelines, the Director of Planning may relax the provisions of sections 11.24.6, 11.24.7, 11.24.10, 11.24.11(a), (c) and (d), 11.24.14, 11.24.18(a), (c) and (d), 11.24.22, and 11.24.26 if:

(a) due to topography or other conditions peculiar to the site, literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship;
(b) the relaxation is necessary to retain a tree; or
(c) the relaxation is necessary to allow a green roof that does not have railings or stair access.


Laneway Houses Approved to May 2018
Legend
Laneway House
Street
Park
School
Water
Source: City of Vancouver
Created: 14 May, 2018
CITY OF VANCOUVER




LANEWAY HOUSING **SURVEY SUMMARY**

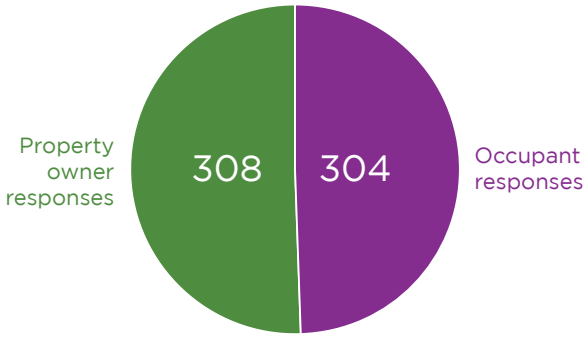
Introduction

As an early implementation action from the Housing Vancouver Strategy 2018-2027 and 3 Year Action Plan 2018-2020, the City of Vancouver launched a Laneway Housing Review and Innovation Challenge to improve the efficiency and affordability of delivering laneway housing options in Vancouver, and to streamline the review processes. As part of this work, it was important to build a clearer picture of the form of laneway houses that are being built in the city, who is living in them, and what they're like as homes.

In order to find out more, the City surveyed both owners of properties with a laneway house and laneway house occupants. The occupant survey sought input on the experience of living in a laneway house. The property owner survey was sent to both owners who decided to build a laneway house on their lot and those who purchased a lot with a laneway house that had been built by a previous owner or developer. The property owner version focused more on learning about the ways laneway houses are being used and the experience of building one. Both versions of the survey asked for details about the laneway houses themselves, how they are used, satisfaction with their features and what could be improved.

The online survey ran from January 9 to 29, 2018, and hard copy versions were available upon request.

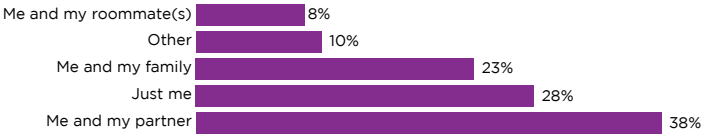
Survey Highlights



612 Responses Received

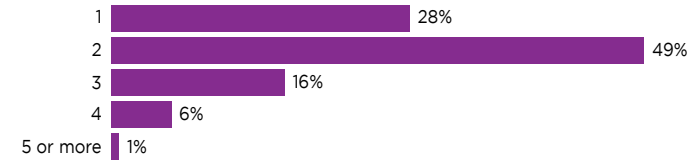
Household Income - Occupants

Household Type - Occupants

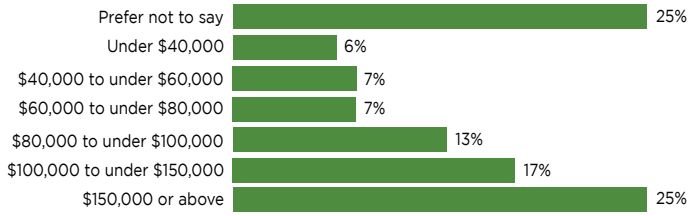


SURVEY OVERVIEW

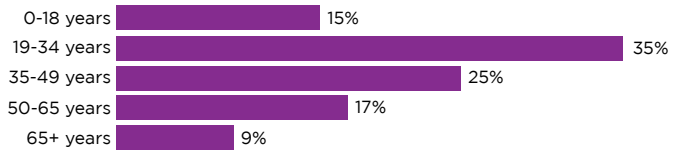
Household Size - Occupants



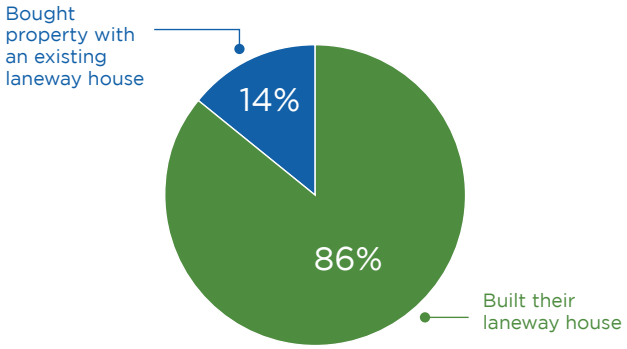
Household Income - Owners



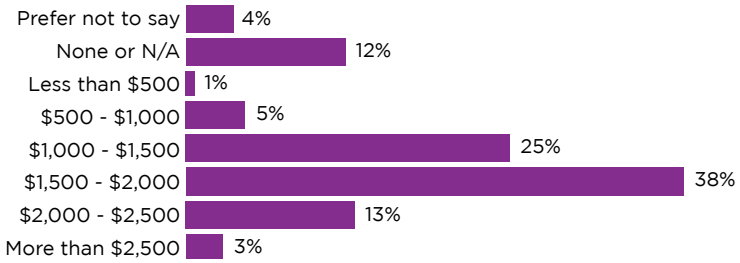
Household Age - Occupants



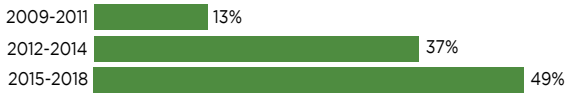
Built vs Bought - Owners



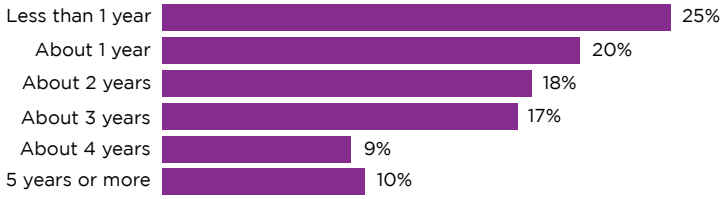
Average Rent - Occupants



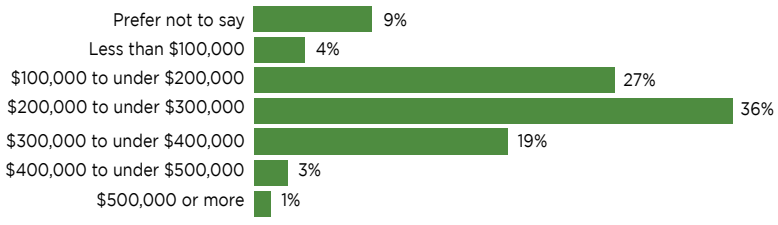
Year Laneway House was Built - Owners



Household Tenure - Occupants



Cost to Build - Owners



SURVEY OVERVIEW

Key Themes & Observations

- Laneway Houses are creating important secondary rental housing stock in Vancouver and enabling more families to live closer together, and most are occupied as full-time homes
- Residents are choosing to live in laneway houses because they are a more affordable detached housing option in the neighbourhoods they want to live in, and they offer housing options in locations that are near their families and friends, jobs, schools, transit and other urban amenities
- Most occupants and owners of properties with laneway houses expressed satisfaction with their laneway houses, but recognized the challenges of designing them with highly functional and livable interior spaces
- Most eligible lots in Vancouver present specific challenges for how a laneway house can be designed to fit. In particular, hydro poles, site slope, trees and service connections are common factors that influence laneway house design
- As reported by property owners that built them, most laneway houses take less than 1.5 years to develop and cost under $300,000; construction costs for laneway houses built at the same time as a new main house on the property were found to be lower than for laneway houses added to a lot where the main house was retained
- Many occupants reported that more and better-configured floor space, and more storage space in particular, would make living in their laneway house better. Many occupants also noted that a need for more space for their family would factor into a future decision to move to a new home. Less than one-quarter of respondents living in laneway houses identified as a family household, a finding which may be driven by their generally small size
- Many owners also referenced the desire for more space and noted that increasing the allowable size and height of laneway houses would be a key improvement to the program. Owners also expressed frustration with the approvals process, and said that more clarity and flexibility is needed.

Survey Methodology

Owners and occupants of laneway houses were invited to fill out the Laneway House survey to help guide future laneway housing policy. Both versions of the survey included a number of open-ended questions that have been coded and summarized in this report. The open-ended responses were initially coded with short descriptions. The descriptions were reviewed by staff and then coded a second time to fit into broader categories. The responses frequently fell into more than one category and were counted in each of the categories that applied. When a broad range of open-ended responses were received, specific examples are provided for reference in the appendices.

Limitations

It is important to note that all questions were optional and that not all of the respondents answered every question. Calculations referenced in the report are based on the total number of responses for each individual question.

LANEWAY HOUSE OCCUPANTS

Who is living in laneway houses?

A range of household types are choosing to live in laneway houses, with the majority being either a single person or couple household. Almost one-quarter of households living in laneway houses identified as a family, and a small proportion as persons living with at least one roommate.

In line with the household type findings, the majority of laneway occupants reported that their household is comprised of one or two persons, with nearly half being two-person households. Less than one-quarter reported that their laneway house is occupied by three or more persons.

Most laneway house occupants (85%) said they rent from a landlord. A small proportion reported that they rent from a family member or friend, or have an arrangement other than a formal rental tenancy. A very small number (3%) of occupants that completed this version of the survey reported that they own the property and live in the laneway house themselves.

Most occupants reported that they have lived in their laneway house for two years or less, and one-quarter as having lived there for less than one year. Approximately one-fifth reported being longer-term residents that have lived in their laneway house for 4 or more years. More than half of occupants indicated an intention to continue to live in their laneway house for at least two more years, and nearly a quarter said they plan to stay indefinitely.

Why are residents choosing to live in a laneway house

The most common reasons occupants reported for choosing to move into their particular laneway house were the desire to live in a detached unit (62%) and that renting a laneway house is a more affordable option that buying a home (44%). More than one-third of respondents cited the fact they chose their laneway house as the rent was affordable to them.

Locational choice was also an important factor, with many respondents reporting that the laneway house gave them an option to live close to work or school and transit, as well as an opportunity to live in a particular neighbourhood in the city. A small proportion of respondents (12%) said they moved into a laneway house to downsize. Nearly one-third of occupants also cited the opportunity to live in a new unit as a reason they chose to move into a laneway house.

How satisfied are residents with the laneway house they live in?

Occupants generally reported greater satisfaction with the living space and kitchen space in their laneway house and less satisfaction with the storage space and private outdoor space. Most occupants were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall size (62% of respondents) and functionality (74% of respondents) of their laneway house.

In regard to more experiential elements of living in their laneway house, a very high proportion of occupants (>80%) reported being satisfied or very satisfied with location, privacy, air quality and safety. Occupants generally reported satisfaction or neutral feelings about affordability, sense of community, parking and noise. Nearly one-quarter of respondents reported dissatisfaction with the affordability of their laneway house.

When asked to comment on the most positive thing about living in a laneway house, the most common theme related to living in a detached unit. Common elements mentioned as part of this included privacy and the opportunity to live in an above-ground unit (as opposed to a basement suite).

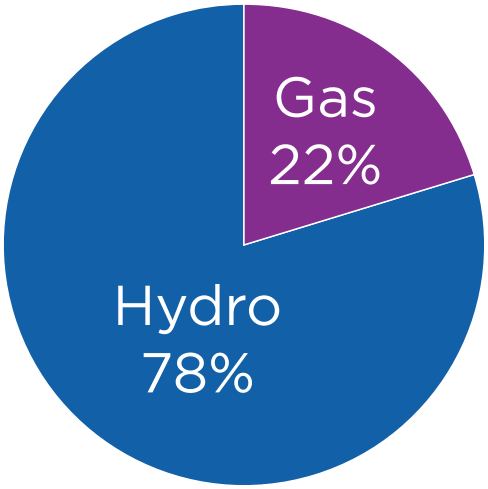
When asked to comment on the least positive element of living in a laneway house, the most common themes were lack of space (including insufficient storage, bike parking and low ceiling height) and cost. A small proportion of comments related to issues associated with living on a laneway, including noise and traffic.

LANEWAY HOUSE OCCUPANTS

What does it cost to live in a laneway house?

Of those respondents that reported paying rent, most said they pay an amount in the range of $1,000 to $1,500 (25%) or $1,500 to $2,000 (38%) per month. As expected, higher rents were generally reported for larger laneway houses and those with more bedrooms.

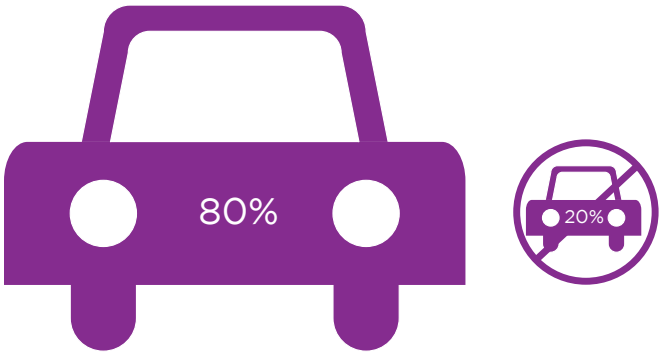
22% of respondents reported that they pay for gas, and 78% reported paying for hydro.



Of those paying for gas, about half of respondents said they pay less than $50 per month. Of those paying for hydro, approximately one-third of respondents reported paying less than $50 per month, another one-third between $50 and $100 per month, and the other one-third as either paying more than $100 per month or that their bill varies.

Where do laneway house residents park?

80% of laneway house occupants reported having at least one private automobile, but a relatively small proportion (22%) reported that they park their car on-site, either in an enclosed garage or an outdoor surface spot.



Only 5% of occupants of laneway houses with enclosed garages reported that they have use of an enclosed garage for parking. A much higher proportion (34%) of respondents reported that the enclosed garage is used for parking by the main house occupants.

Opportunities for improvement

When asked about what would make living in their laneway house better, the most commonly noted improvement would be to have more space – including more living and storage space overall, as well as better configuration of the floor area. Nearly 40% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of storage space in their laneway house.

This theme was reflected in the responses to the question of what reasons would drive a future decision to move out of your laneway house. The top reasons noted related to needing more space for family and storage, as well as a general preference to live in a larger home.

LANEWAY HOUSE PROPERTY OWNERS

Why are property owners choosing to have a laneway house?

Of property owners that responded to the survey, a large majority (86%) were owners that built the laneway house on property they already owned, as opposed to those that purchased a property that already had a laneway house.

More than half (55%) of owners reported that they chose to build a laneway house in order to generate income by creating a rental unit. Almost half (48%) reported building a laneway house to accommodate family, and smaller proportion (20%) said they intended to live in the laneway house themselves. 15% of owners that built their laneway house noted an intent of using it to accommodate guests.

Of the owners that bought a property with an existing laneway house, approximately 60% said the presence of the laneway house was an important factor in their purchase decision.

How are property owners using their laneway houses?

Most (83%) of owners reported that their laneway house is occupied as a home, either by tenants or family members or friends who may or may not pay rent. Nearly half of owners (48%) reported that their laneway house is occupied by tenants who are not family or friends. A small proportion (9%) of owners reported living in their laneway house themselves.

Of the owners reporting that their laneway house is occupied by family or friends, almost 40% noted it was their adult children living in the laneway house and nearly one-quarter by a parent or parents.

Of the owners choosing to live in the laneway house themselves, the most commonly cited reasons were to stay close to family and to downsize. 31% of owners living in laneway houses reported that the main house was rented out to tenants paying rent, and 42% reported that family or friends live in the main house. Several respondents noted a shared-ownership type circumstance.

A small proportion (9%) of owners reported that no one lives in their laneway house. When asked how their laneway house gets used, almost 30% of these respondents said for guest accommodation and 17% for a home office or work space. Nearly one-third of owners who reported their laneway house is not currently occupied said construction is not yet fully complete, or that it is current advertised for rent.

Amongst owners that reported the approximate total monthly rent they collect, the majority (64%) said their laneway house rents for somewhere between $1,000 and 2,000 per month. Less than 20% were reported by owners to rent for more than $2,000 per month. Comparing rents to the number of bedrooms and square footage illustrated that as expected, larger laneway houses and those with more bedrooms generally rent for higher monthly rates.

How satisfied are property owners with their laneway houses?

A significant majority (88%) of owners that responded indicated being overall very satisfied or satisfied with their laneway house.

When asked about the positive aspects of owning a laneway house, more than half (53%) of owners reported that the opportunity to offer long-term housing for family or friends was a key positive aspect. Half also noted the additional income and opportunity to offer long-term rental housing as a positive. Nearly 40% appreciated having a laneway house that offers flexible space for a variety of uses, and nearly 30% that having a laneway provides accommodation for visiting family and friends.

When asked about the key challenges related to owning a laneway house, almost half of owners (48%) reported there were no notable challenges. Of those that were identified, the most common challenges related to managing repairs and maintenance and landlord duties.

When asked about a potential future property purchase, more than half (55%) of current laneway house owners would consider building another laneway house. 45% indicated that they would buy a property with an existing laneway house. 8% said they would look to buy a property without a laneway house with no intention of building one.

LANEWAY HOUSE PROPERTY OWNERS

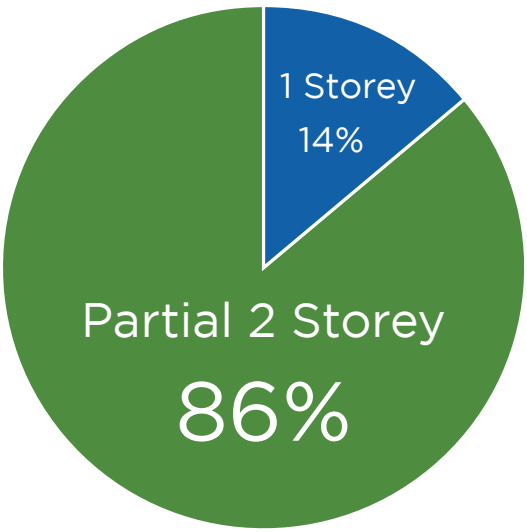
What are the key design considerations and factors for owners building a laneway house?

Most owners (87%) that built a laneway house on their property retained a professional architect, designer or design-build company to design it.

When asked about specific site challenges that impacted the design of their laneway house, nearly one-quarter of respondents that built their laneway house noted that a hydro pole was an influencing factor. 23% noted site slope as a particular challenge; 16% noted trees and 16% that the location of the service connections was an issue. 41% of respondents said there were no particular site challenges associated with building a laneway house on their lot.

Connecting a laneway house to water and sewer services are a major design consideration for laneway houses. When asked whether their laneway house service connections were tied into their main house or into the street, the majority (68%) of owners reported that their laneway house was tied into the street.

Laneway houses can be one storey buildings or they may have a partial second storey. This choice has particular implications for the way a laneway house can be designed and configured on a lot. The large majority (86%) of owners that responded to the survey reported that their laneway house has a partial second storey.



When asked about the factors that they considered when deciding to build either a one or two storey laneway house on their property, owners most commonly reported that their decision was based on general design preference, interior layout, a standard design offered by their designer, or the implications for back yard space.

When asked whether specific City regulations or guidelines posed a particular challenge for the design of their laneway house, the most commonly noted issues related to the City's restrictions on laneway house size and height, and the overall complexity and difficultly of interpreting the regulations. In response to an open-ended question regarding other challenges related to building a laneway house, the most common responses noted the need for a clearer, more flexible and more streamlined approvals process as well as a desire for more permissive size and height regulations.

What is the laneway house design and development process like for owners?

While most owners reported being satisfied with their final laneway house as built, as well as the design and construction process, only 22% reported satisfaction with the permitting process.

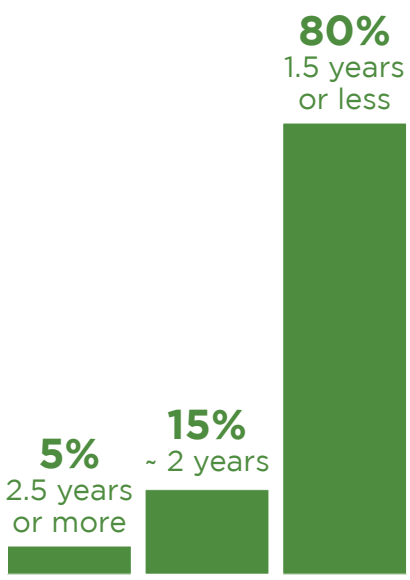
When asked about what was positive or easy about building a laneway house, the most common themes related to good experiences working with builders and/or designers, and that the final product was worth the challenges associated with the process.

When asked how the experience of building a laneway house could have been improved, the most common responses centred on the need for the City to streamline the approvals process and ensure clarity, as well as a desire for more flexibility in the regulations, particularly in relation to the size limitations.

LANEWAY HOUSE PROPERTY OWNERS

How long does it take a property owner to build a laneway house and what does it cost?

When asked how long it took from when they applied for a permit to when their laneway house was completed, most owners (80%) reported a total time of 1.5 years or less. About 15% reported that it took about 2 years, and about 5% said it took about 2.5 years or more.



The approximate total costs of designing and building a laneway house reported by respondents indicates that most (64%) laneway houses cost somewhere between $100,000 and $300,000. Nearly 20% were reported to cost between $300,000 and $400,000, and less than 4% as costing more than $400,000.

Building a laneway house as part of the redevelopment of an entire lot (ie. when a new main house is built as well) is expected to create certain efficiencies that may mean construction costs are lower than in cases where a laneway house is added to a lot where the main house is retained. Comparing the costs reported by owners on the basis of whether or not the main house on their property was built at the same time showed evidence of this. 47% of laneway houses built at the same time as the main house were said to cost under $200,000, whereas only 20% of those added to a lot with an existing main house cost under $200,000. Of those laneway houses added to a lot with an existing house, 74% cost between $200,000 and $400,000, compared to only 31% of those built with a new house.

Opportunities for improvement

When asked about ways the Laneway House Program could be improved, the most common themes amongst the responses related to increasing allowable size and height, streamlining and clarifying the approval process, creating more flexibility in the regulations, addressing parking issues by allowing more configurations including carports, and reducing associated costs. A small proportion of owners (10%) said laneway houses should be made available for ownership independent of the main house through stratification or subdivision.

APPENDIX A - SURVEY RESULTS (OCCUPANTS)

The following summarizes the responses received for the laneway housing survey aimed at occupants. All percentages are calculated based on the total answers received for each individual question. For open-ended questions with a broad range of responses example quotes are provided for the top three answers.

Total responses (partial and complete) = 304

1. Does your laneway house have one or two levels?

Response	Percent	Count
2	94.1%	286
1	5.9%	18

2. What is the approximate square footage of your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
600 - 800 sq. ft	42.6%	129
400 - 600 sq. ft.	33.7%	102
800 - 1000 sq. ft.	19.1%	58
Less than 400 sq. ft.	2.6%	8
More than 1000 sq. ft.	2.0%	6

3. How many bedrooms does your laneway house have?

Response	Percent	Count
2	46.2%	140
1	24.8%	75
1 plus a den	15.8%	48
2 plus a den	5.6%	17
Studio (no separate bedroom)	4.0%	12
3	2.6%	8
4 or more	0.7%	2
3 plus a den	0.3%	1

4. How many bathrooms does your laneway house have?

Response	Percent	Count
1	47.2%	143
1.5	29.4%	89
2	22.1%	67
3 or more	1.0%	3
2.5	0.3%	1

5. What type of private outdoor space do you have? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
Balcony	50.8%	154
Shared outdoor space with the main house	50.5%	153
Patio	42.2%	128
Not applicable - no private outdoor space	6.9%	21
Studio (no separate bedroom)	4.0%	12

6. If you have private outdoor space, how do you use it? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
Outdoor living space	51.5%	156
BBQ	40.9%	124
Storage	21.8%	66
Don't use it	13.5%	41
Children's play area	11.2%	34
Not applicable - don't have outdoor space	10.2%	31

7. How is your laneway house heated?

Response	Percent	Count
Hydro (electricity)	79.9%	242
Gas	20.1%	61

8. If your laneway house has an enclosed garage, how is it used? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
Parking for main house occupants	34.3%	104
Not applicable - no enclosed parking	32.3%	98
Storage	29.4%	89
Other (please explain)	13.9%	42
Parking for laneway house occupants	5.0%	15

8. If your laneway house has an enclosed garage, how is it used? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Additional living space - ownership unclear	5.9%	18
Storage - not for LWH occupant	3.3%	10
Landlord use - purpose unclear	0.7%	2
Workshop	0.7%	2

9. How many cars are owned by the laneway house occupants in total?

Response	Percent	Count
1	58.7%	178
None	19.5%	59
2	19.5%	59
4 or more	1.7%	5
3	0.7%	2

10. Where do the laneway house occupants park their car(s)? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
On the street	59.7%	181
In an outdoor surface parking spot on site	18.5%	56
Not applicable - no cars	16.5%	50

On the lane	15.2%	46
In the enclosed garage	3.6%	11
Other (please explain)	3.6%	11

10. Where do the laneway house occupants park their car(s)? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Pay for parking off site	0.7%	2

11. Approximately how long have you lived in this laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	24.9%	73
About 1 year	20.5%	60
About 2 years	18.1%	53
About 3 years	17.4%	51
5 years or more	9.9%	29
About 4 years	9.2%	27

12. What are the main reasons you chose to move into this particular laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
To live in a detached unit	62.1%	182
More affordable than buying a place	44.4%	130
To live in this particular neighbourhood	36.9%	108
To be close to work / school	36.2%	106
To be close to transit (bus routes, Skytrain, Canada Line)	35.5%	104
The rent was affordable for my household	35.5%	104
To live in a new unit	32.1%	94
To be close to family / friends	22.9%	67
To be close to amenities and services	22.2%	65
Access to private outdoor space	19.1%	56

Family own the property	16.4%	48
Other (please explain)	15.7%	46
To downsize	11.6%	34

12. What are the main reasons you chose to move into this particular laneway house? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
I'm allowed pets	2.4%	7
It was available in limited rental market	2.4%	7
The layout of the specific unit rented	1.0%	3

13. How long do you plan to live in this laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Indefinitely	24.0%	70
Don't know	21.9%	64
2 - 4 years	21.2%	62
1 - 2 years	16.1%	47
5 years or more	11.3%	33
Less than 1 year	5.5%	16

14. If you think you will move out of this laneway house in the near future, what would the reasons be?

Response	Percent	Count
Not applicable - not planning to move	30.1%	88
Need more space for our family	26.7%	78
Moving out of Vancouver	25.0%	73
Need more space for storage	22.9%	67
The rent is too expensive	22.3%	65
Other (please explain)	21.9%	64
Would prefer to live in a larger home (the laneway house feels too small)	21.2%	62

14. If you think you will move out of this laneway house in the near future, what would the reasons be? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Bought a property	7.2%	21
Specific complaint about unit (noise, parking, security, etc.)	4.5%	13
Possible change in ownership/price	2.4%	7
Change in personal life (move to assisted living, move in with partner, etc.)	2.1%	6

15. How satisfied or dissatisfied you are with each of the following features of your laneway house?

	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Don't know / not applicable		Total Responses
Response	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Living Space	100	34.2%	110	37.7%	42	14.4%	28	9.6%	12	4.1%	0	0.0%	292
Kitchen Space	98	33.6%	107	36.6%	43	14.7%	32	11.0%	11	3.8%	1	0.3%	292
Storage Space	55	18.8%	65	22.3%	56	19.2%	66	22.6%	49	16.8%	1	0.3%	292
Landscaping	81	27.8%	91	31.3%	68	23.4%	22	7.6%	10	3.4%	19	6.5%	291
Private Outdoor Space	61	20.9%	89	30.5%	67	22.9%	41	14.0%	16	5.5%	18	6.2%	292
Overall Size	59	20.2%	122	41.8%	49	16.8%	42	14.4%	19	6.5%	1	0.3%	292
Overall Functionality	89	30.5%	128	43.8%	45	15.4%	18	6.2%	11	3.8%	1	0.3%	292

16. Please share any comments you have about the items above (Question 15)?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Comments about garage use (don't require it, convert it to living space, etc.)	16.1%	23	"No storage in home. Would be great if the garage space was incorporated into the house space."
Comments about size, height or roof angle	10.5%	15	"Laneway houses shouldn't have slanted roofs. It makes the space so much less functional."
Comments about functionality/layout	8.4%	12	"as I age the two story configuration is less desirable due to concern for falls."
Comments about quality/design (larger windows, mold, etc.)	5.6%	8	
Comments about storage, including bike parking	4.9%	7	
Comments about affordability, including utility costs	3.5%	5	
Comments about outdoor space/landscaping	3.5%	5	
Provide more parking	2.1%	3	

17. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with these aspects of living in your laneway house?

Response	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Don't know / not applicable		Total Responses
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Privacy	138	47.4%	106	36.4%	28	9.6%	10	3.4%	9	3.1%	0	0.0%	291
Location	153	52.4%	107	36.6%	23	7.9%	5	1.7%	4	1.4%	0	0.0%	292
Sense of Community	76	26.1%	88	30.2%	74	25.4%	29	10.0%	17	5.8%	7	2.4%	291
Air Quality	104	35.7%	136	46.7%	32	11.0%	10	3.4%	6	2.1%	3	1.0%	291
Affordability	53	18.2%	93	31.8%	71	24.3%	46	15.8%	24	8.2%	5	1.7%	292
Parking	58	19.9%	99	34.0%	64	22.0%	28	9.6%	19	6.5%	23	7.9%	291
Safety	112	38.6%	130	44.8%	31	10.7%	8	2.8%	8	2.8%	1	0.3%	290
Laneway Noise	53	18.2%	111	38.1%	80	27.5%	28	9.6%	18	6.2%	1	0.3%	291
Other Noise	54	18.6%	94	32.3%	58	19.9%	29	10.0%	22	7.6%	34	11.7%	291

18. Please share any comments you have about the items above (Question 17)?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Comments about the lane (public realm, garbage, noise, etc.)	18.8%	21	"garbage days are noisy and smelly"
Comments about affordability, including utility costs	6.3%	7	"Half my net income goes to rent -- and I'm paying a very reasonable rent. And I'm making a very good wage. If I had to move from my laneway house, I don't think I'd be able to afford to rent in Vancouver which is insane for someone making more than $50,000/year."
Comments about design, layout, orientation, etc.	5.4%	6	"the requirement to have big windows facing the laneway makes no sense"
Comments about noise (laneway, construction, etc.)	5.4%	6	
Would like more space (storage, use of garage, etc.)	4.5%	5	
Comments about air quality	2.7%	3	
Comments about privacy	2.7%	3	
Comments about parking	1.8%	2	
Would like more outdoor space/better landscaping	1.8%	2	

19. What would you say is the most positive thing about living in a laneway house?: Briefly, tell us about your overall experience living in a laneway house.

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Having a detached unit (privacy, own laundry, not a basement suite, etc.)	73.9%	207	"Privacy, better than basement and living in detached place gives you a sense of livable place."
Having an affordable place to live	10.7%	30	"We have our own little house without having to come up with $1 million+."
The look and feel of the unit (comfortable, feels like home, natural light, etc.)	10.4%	29	"I like small, functional space that is open and new. Having 1.5 bathrooms and laundry right here."
Location and sense of community	9.3%	26	
Living close to family	5.4%	15	
Having a good relationship with landlord/main house neighbours	3.6%	10	
Having access to outdoor space	3.6%	10	

20. What would you say is the least positive thing about living in a laneway house?:Briefly, tell us about your overall experience living in a laneway house.

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Not having enough space (storage, bike parking, low ceilings etc.)	45.8%	119	"limited house size. i have tons of room on this property.. why not a basement and larger footprint"
The cost (rent, utilities, etc.)	19.2%	50	"Rent - we pay $1800 (no utilities included) for 550sq ft."
Issues with living next to the lane (public realm, traffic, safety, etc.)	9.6%	25	"I don't like having my windows so close to the alley without having a fence or protection."
The design (functionality, low ceilings, etc.)	9.2%	24	
Noise (from laneway, construction, etc.)	5.4%	14	
The quality (insulation, air quality, etc.)	5.4%	14	
Lack of privacy	5.0%	13	
Conflict with use of the garage (not having access, noise from main house occupants, etc.)	4.2%	11	
Limited access to parking	4.2%	11	
Lack of access to outdoor space	3.8%	10	
Not having the option to purchase one	2.7%	7	
Difficulty with wayfinding (Canada Post, visitor access, etc.)	1.9%	5	
Not being allowed to have pets	0.8%	2	
The location	0.8%	2	

21. What would make living in your laneway house better?:Briefly, please tell us about your overall experience living in a laneway house.

Response	Percent	Count	Example
More space (storage, bike parking, low ceilings etc.)	41.1%	106	“allow the laneway house height to be increased to allow full height walls for more storage space.”
More affordable	11.2%	29	“Lower monthly rental fee or utilities included in current monthly rental fee”
Having access to the garage	10.5%	27	“If we were able to use the garage as living space. It would be a perfect size.”
Better quality (heating, insulation, sound-proofing, etc.)	9.3%	24	
A specific design feature (bathtub, basement, better appliances, etc.)	8.1%	21	
More/better parking	7.4%	19	
Access to outdoor space	7.0%	18	
Improvements related to lane (public realm, security, garbage pick up, etc.)	6.6%	17	
A more functional layout	4.7%	12	
The option to own a laneway house (strata titled)	4.7%	12	
A different location/better sense of community	2.7%	7	
Better wayfinding (postal service, addressing, etc.)	1.9%	5	
More privacy	1.9%	5	
Improvements related to use (pet friendly, rental security, etc.)	1.2%	3	
Less regulations	1.2%	3	

22. What neighbourhood is your laneway house in?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Renfrew-Collingwood	11.6%	33	
Hastings-Sunrise	10.5%	30	
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	10.5%	30	
Sunset	8.1%	23	
Killarney	7.7%	22	
Dunbar-Southlands	6.7%	19	
Victoria-Fraserview	6.7%	19	

Riley Park	4.9%	14	
Kerrisdale	4.6%	13	
Mount Pleasant	4.6%	13	
Oakridge	4.2%	12	
Grandview-Woodland	3.9%	11	
West Point Grey	3.5%	10	
South Cambie	2.5%	7	
Kitsilano	2.1%	6	
Not sure	2.1%	6	
Arbutus Ridge	1.8%	5	
Shaughnessy	1.8%	5	
Fairview	1.4%	4	
Marpole	1.1%	3	

23. How would you describe your household? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
Me and my partner	38.2%	109
Just me	27.7%	79
Me and my family	22.8%	65
Other (please describe)	9.8%	28
Me and my roommate(s)	8.1%	23

23. How would you describe your household? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Single parent and child(ren)	3.2%	9
With a pet(s)	2.5%	7
Other	0.7%	2
Baby on the way	0.4%	1
Partner's child	0.4%	1

Part-time with children	0.4%	1
Part-time with partner's child	0.4%	1

24. How many people live in your laneway house in total (including yourself)?

Response	Percent	Count
2	49.5%	141
1	27.7%	79
3	16.1%	46
4	5.6%	16
6 or more	0.7%	2
5	0.4%	1

25. How many people of each age category live in your laneway house (including yourself)?

Response	0		1		2		3		4		5 or more		Total Responses
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	
0-18	76.7%	214	15.8%	44	7.2%	20	0.0%	0	0.4%	1	0.0%	0	279
19-34	57.5%	161	14.3%	40	25.4%	71	2.9%	8	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	280
35-49	63.3%	178	20.3%	57	16.0%	45	0.4%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	281
50-65	73.8%	208	17.0%	48	9.2%	26	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	282
65+	86.4%	242	9.6%	27	3.6%	10	0.0%	0	0.4%	1	0.0%	0	280

26. What type of arrangement best describes your living situation?

Response	Percent	Count
I'm renting from a landlord	77.2%	220
I'm renting from family or friends (possibly at a reduced rate)	7.4%	21
Family or friends own the laneway house and I have an arrangement other than renting	7.4%	21
Other (please describe)	5.3%	15
I own the property and live in the laneway house while family or friends live in the main house	2.5%	7
I own the property and live in the laneway house and rent out the main house	0.4%	1

26. What type of arrangement best describes your living situation? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Co-ownership	2.5%	7
Other	0.7%	2
Live in LWH during renovation	0.4%	1
Rent through property manager	0.4%	1

27. If you pay rent, how much do you pay monthly to live in the laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
$1,500 - $2,000	38.2%	109
$1,000 - $1,500	24.9%	71
$2,000 - $2,500	13.0%	37
None / Not applicable	12.3%	35
$500 - $1,000	4.6%	13
Prefer not to say	3.5%	10
More than $2,500	2.8%	8
Less than $500	0.7%	2

28. Do you pay for hydro and gas? If yes, how much do you pay monthly?

Response	Percent	Count
Hydro	78.2%	223
Gas	22.1%	63
Don't pay for hydro or gas	12.3%	35
Prefer not to say	9.5%	27

28. Do you pay for hydro and gas? If yes, how much do you pay monthly? (Gas)

Response	Percent	Count
Less than $50	47.3%	26
$50 or more	36.4%	20
Varies	7.3%	4

28. Do you pay for hydro and gas? If yes, how much do you pay monthly? (Hydro)

Response	Percent	Count
More than $50 but less than $100	31.3%	63
$50 or less	30.8%	62
$100 or more	28.4%	57
Varies	7.5%	15

29. Do you identify as...

Response	Percent	Count
Female	53.0%	151
Male	37.9%	108
Prefer not to say	7.4%	21
None of the above, I identify as:	1.1%	3
Transgender	0.7%	2

29. Do you identify as... (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Gender fluid	0.4%	1
LGBTQAPP	0.4%	1
one male, one female	0.4%	1

30. Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes?

Response	Percent	Count
$40,000 to under $60,000	16.1%	46
$60,000 to under $80,000	16.1%	46
$100,000 to under $150,000	16.1%	46
$80,000 to under $100,000	15.8%	45
Under $40,000	15.4%	44
Prefer not to say	11.9%	34
$150,000 or above	8.4%	24

Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes?

Response	Percent	Count
$40,000 to under $60,000	16.1%	46
$60,000 to under $80,000	16.1%	46
$100,000 to under $150,000	16.1%	46
$80,000 to under $100,000	15.8%	45
Under $40,000	15.4%	44
Prefer not to say	11.9%	34
$150,000 or above	8.4%	24

APPENDIX B - SURVEY RESULTS (OWNERS)

The following summarizes the responses received for the laneway housing survey aimed at property owners. All percentages are calculated based on the total answers received for each individual question. For open-ended questions with a broad range of responses example quotes are provided for the top three answers.

1. Did you build your laneway house, or was it already built when you acquired the property?

Response	Percent	Count
I built the laneway house	86.5%	268
A previous owner built the laneway house	13.5%	42

2. What neighbourhood is your laneway house in?

Response	Percent	Count
Renfrew-Collingwood	10.8%	33
Dunbar-Southlands	9.5%	29
Hastings-Sunrise	8.9%	27
Sunset	7.5%	23
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	6.9%	21
Riley Park	6.9%	21
Victoria-Fraserview	6.9%	21
Kitsilano	5.9%	18
Grandview-Woodland	5.2%	16
Killarney	5.2%	16
Mount Pleasant	5.2%	16
South Cambie	3.9%	12
West Point Grey	3.9%	12
Not sure	3.6%	11
Kerrisdale	2.6%	8
Arbutus Ridge	2.0%	6

Marpole	2.0%	6
Oakridge	2.0%	6
Fairview	0.7%	2
Strathcona	0.3%	1

3. What year was your laneway house built?

Response	Percent	Count
2017	17.5%	54
2014	15.2%	47
2013	14.2%	44
2015	13.6%	42
2016	12.9%	40
2012	7.4%	23
2010	5.2%	16
2011	5.2%	16
2018	4.9%	15
2009	2.6%	8
Not sure	1.3%	4

4. What year was the main house on the property built?

Response	Percent	Count
1950 or earlier	32.7%	100
2015	10.5%	32
2017	9.2%	28
2013	6.2%	19
2016	6.2%	19
2014	5.9%	18
2012	4.9%	15
2018	2.6%	8

2011	2.0%	6
1994	1.3%	4
2009	1.3%	4
2010	1.3%	4
1953	1.0%	3
1956	1.0%	3
1957	1.0%	3
1964	1.0%	3
1992	1.0%	3
2005	1.0%	3
Not sure	1.0%	3
1952	0.7%	2
1980	0.7%	2
1995	0.7%	2
2000	0.7%	2
2007	0.7%	2
1954	0.3%	1
1955	0.3%	1

5. What is the approximate square footage of your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
600 - 800 sq. ft.	40.1%	124
400 - 600 sq. ft.	34.0%	105
800 - 1,000 sq. ft.	21.7%	67
Less than 400 sq. ft.	2.6%	8
More than 1,000 sq.ft.	1.6%	5

6. How many bedrooms does your laneway house have?

Response	Percent	Count
2	36.7%	113
1	32.8%	101
1 plus a den	14.3%	44
2 plus a den	8.4%	26
3	4.2%	13
Studio (no separate bedroom)	3.6%	11

7. How many bathrooms are there in your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
1	47.6%	146
1.5	29.0%	89
2	22.8%	70
2.5	0.7%	2

8. How is your laneway house heated?

Response	Percent	Count
Hydro (electricity)	68.3%	211
Gas	31.7%	98

9. How many storeys does your laneway house have?

Response	Percent	Count
2 storeys	85.8%	265
1 storey	14.2%	44

10. How many people live in the laneway house currently?

Response	Percent	Count
2	42.5%	128
1	33.6%	101
None	9.6%	29
3	9.3%	28
4	4.0%	12
5	1.0%	3

11. Who lives in the laneway house? (Please select the answer that best describes the current use)

Response	Percent	Count
Tenant(s) who pay rent	47.9%	145
Family member(s) or friend(s) who don't pay rent	23.4%	71
Family member(s) or friend(s) who pay rent (possibly at a reduced rate)	11.2%	34
I live in the laneway house myself	8.9%	27
No one lives in the laneway house	8.6%	26

12. How much monthly rent do the tenants in your laneway house pay?

Response	Percent	Count
$1,000 - $1,500	32.2%	55
$1,500 - $2,000	31.6%	54
$2,000 - $2,500	14.0%	24
$500 - $1,000	8.2%	14
Prefer not to say	7.0%	12
More than $2,500	3.5%	6
None / not applicable	2.3%	4
Less than $500	1.2%	2

13. Approximately how long have the tenants lived in the laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	31.6%	54
About 2 years	22.8%	39
About 1 year	22.2%	38
About 3 years	9.4%	16
5 years or more	8.2%	14
About 4 years	5.8%	10

14. Have you had more than one set of different tenants rent your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
No, only one set of tenants	61.8%	107
Yes (please specify on average, how long they have stayed in months)	38.2%	66

14. Yes (please specify on average, how long they have stayed in months): Have you had more than one set of different tenants rent your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	28.6%	18
About 1 year	28.6%	18
About 2 years	20.6%	13
About 1.5 years	14.3%	9
About 4 years	3.2%	2
About 5 years	3.2%	2
About 3 years	1.6%	1

15. If the laneway house is occupied by friends or family, what is their relation to you?

Response	Percent	Count
They're my adult children	38.6%	39
They're my parent(s)	22.8%	23
They're other family	22.8%	23

They're friends	9.9%	10
Prefer not to say	5.9%	6

16. What were your reasons for choosing to live in the laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Close to family	39.1%	9
Downsizing	26.1%	6
Additional income	17.4%	4
Privacy	17.4%	4
Affordability	4.3%	1
Ground level	4.3%	1
Location	4.3%	1
More space	4.3%	1
New unit	4.3%	1
No other housing type available	4.3%	1

17. Who lives in the main house on the property?

Response	Percent	Count
Tenants who pay rent	30.8%	8
Family members or friends who don't pay rent	26.9%	7
Other (please describe)	26.9%	7
Family members or friends who pay rent at a reduced rate	15.4%	4

17. Who lives in the main house on the property? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Family (co-ownership)	11.5%	3
Myself	7.7%	2

18. How does your laneway house get used?

Response	Percent	Count
Other (please describe)	75.0%	18
As guest accommodation	29.2%	7
As a home office or work space	16.7%	4

18. How does your laneway house get used? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Under construction	50.0%	12
Short-term rental/family	4.2%	1

19. Why did you decide to build a laneway house on your property? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
To generate income / create a rental unit	55.5%	131
To accommodate family	47.9%	113
To live in myself / with my family	19.5%	46
To accommodate guests	15.3%	36
Other (please describe)	14.8%	35

19. Why did you decide to build a laneway house on your property? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
The previous owner built it	2.5%	6
To have additional space	1.7%	4
To have a place for retirement	1.3%	3
To increase the value of the property	0.8%	2
To help add density to the city	0.8%	2
Other	0.4%	1
To have somewhere to live during main house renovations	0.4%	1
To mitigate flooding issue	0.4%	1
To provide accomodation for a care attendant	0.4%	1

20. When you built the laneway house, did you hire someone to design it for you?

Response	Percent	Count
Yes, an architect	45.5%	107
Yes, a designer	31.1%	73
Other (please describe)	18.7%	44
No, designed it myself	6.4%	15
Other (please describe)	14.8%	35

20. When you built the laneway house, did you hire someone to design it for you?

Response	Percent	Count
A builder specializing in laneway houses did the design work	4.7%	11
A builder/general contractor did the design work	3.4%	8
Myself and architect	2.1%	5

21. Water and sewer connections are a major design consideration for every laneway house. Are the water and sewer connections for you laneway house tied into the main house or directly into the street?

Response	Percent	Count
Tied into the street	67.5%	158
Tied into the main house	32.5%	76

22. What site challenges, if any, influenced the design of your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
No site challenges	40.7%	96
Location of hydro pole	23.7%	56
Slope of the site	23.3%	55
Location of tree(s) in the rear yard	16.1%	38
Location of site services	15.7%	37
Other (please describe)	13.1%	31

22. What site challenges, if any, influenced the design of your laneway house? Other

Response	Percent	Count
The size restrictions/constraints of the lot size	2.1%	5
Being located on the lane and the configuration of the lane	1.7%	4
Building around existing site constraints (a tree in a neighbour's yard, Hydro pole, etc.)	1.3%	3
Servicing requirements (upgraded electrical, stormwater management, etc)	0.8%	2
Angle of sun	0.4%	1
Required removal of chimney	0.4%	1
High groundwater level	0.4%	1
Neighbour	0.4%	1
Lack of privacy	0.4%	1
Having space for parking	0.4%	1

23. What factors influenced your choice to either include a second storey or not?

Response	Percent	Count
Design preference	40.0%	94
Interior layout	33.2%	78
Standard design offered by designer/architect included a second storey	32.3%	76
Back yard space	26.0%	61
Other (please describe)	19.1%	45
Accessibility	9.8%	23
Expense to build	9.4%	22

23. What factors influenced your choice to either include a second storey or not? Other

Response	Percent	Count
To maximize allowable sq. footage and increase revenue	3.4%	8
Restrictive regulations pervented me from building a second storey	3.0%	7
The 2nd floor would be too small/not functional	1.3%	3
To accommodate car parking a second storey was necessary	1.3%	3

To have a better view	0.9%	2
Lot size meant 2 stories were necessary	0.4%	1
To match main building design	0.4%	1
To increase privacy	0.4%	1
Didn't want a sloped roof	0.4%	1

24. Did any specific regulations or guidelines pose a particular design challenge for your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Size and height restrictions	28.9%	41	“allow more sq.ft and height to have a decent room size and room height”
The regulations and messaging in general	16.2%	23	“The changing regulations at the city during construction. “
Comments around garage and parking (not wanting to provide it, allowing larger garages, etc.)	12.7%	18	“The necessity, at the time, of including garage. We don’t own a car so don’t use our street parking space. Also, enormous waste of space.”
Specific regulations (window trim, door widths, etc)	11.3%	16	
Landscape requirements were not viable	7.7%	11	
Permit process and cost	7.0%	10	
Tree retention requirement	5.6%	8	
Required distance from main house/setbacks	4.2%	6	
Existing site constraints (elevation, Hydro poles, etc.)	2.8%	4	
Slope of roof requirement	2.8%	4	
Energy efficiency requirements	1.4%	2	

25. Are there any other challenges you experienced building a laneway house that you want to tell us about?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Need for a more streamlined and clear approval process	37.1%	46	“It took longer to get approval from City on laneway house than mainhouse, therefore adding construction cost”
The size and height permitted are too restrictive	9.7%	12	“Increase the floor space. Laneways are being built way too small.”
The regulations should be more flexible	8.9%	11	“By not having flexibility to make lwh more livable, with adequate room size & storage space for tenant - and - also having enough space for larger one car garage would make me reconsider building the lwh when we built our house on a 33’ lot. “

Comments about parking (wanting a carport, 2 car garage, not being able to build one, etc.)	6.5%	8	
Tree rentention and landscaping policies	6.5%	8	
Problems with servicing (tieing into main house boiler, separate water connections, etc.)	5.6%	7	
Comments about specific regulations (2nd bedroom not permitted, bathroom on main level, etc.)	4.8%	6	
High costs (to build LWH, of permits, utilies, etc.)	4.8%	6	
More outreach to neighbours	4.0%	5	
Comments about use and taxation	3.2%	4	
Need improvements in lane (garbage pick up, public realm, lighting, etc.)	2.4%	3	
Comments about setback requirements	1.6%	2	
Existing site constraints (Hydro pole, drainage, etc.)	1.6%	2	
The LWH was very expensive to build	1.6%	2	

26. How long did it take from the time you (or your architect or designer) applied for a permit to when the laneway house was completed?

Response	Percent	Count
About 1 year	31.3%	73
Less than 1 year	24.9%	58
About 1.5 years	23.6%	55
About 2 years	15.0%	35
About 2.5 years	2.6%	6
3 years or more	2.6%	6

27. What was the approximate total cost to design and construct your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
$200,000 to under $300,000	36.5%	85
$100,000 to under $200,000	27.5%	64
$300,000 to under $400,000	19.3%	45
Prefer not to say	9.0%	21

Less than $100,000	3.9%	9
$400,000 to under $500,000	2.6%	6
$500,000 or more	1.3%	3

28. Overall, how satisfied were you with:

Response	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Don't know / not applicable		Total Responses
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
The final laneway house as built	89	38.2%	97	41.6%	21	9.0%	9	3.9%	5	2.1%	12	5.2%	233
The design process	66	28.3%	91	39.1%	33	14.2%	21	9.0%	4	1.7%	18	7.7%	233
The permitting process	13	5.6%	38	16.3%	57	24.5%	51	21.9%	57	24.5%	17	7.3%	233
The construction process	47	20.2%	94	40.3%	44	18.9%	26	11.2%	6	2.6%	16	6.9%	233

29. What was positive or easy about your experience building a laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Good construction experience (builder, process, easy, etc.)	45.4%	64	"Our architectural designer was very good, specialized in LWH work and was helpful and managed most of the paperwork."
The final product/design	15.6%	22	"The final result, we love living in this very efficient and well designed space. It is all the space we need"
Appreciate the benefits of having a LWH (ability to downsize, additional income, etc.)	9.2%	13	"Extra home to accommodate a growing family"
Convenient to build together with main house	5.0%	7	
City staff were helpful	2.8%	4	

30. How could the experience of building a laneway house have been better?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
More streamlined and clear approval process	55.6%	79	"Less waiting time for permits and city services like sewer and water"
More flexibility/relaxation of regulations	18.3%	26	"More flexibility in rules surrounding design"
Allowing a larger laneway home to be built	14.8%	21	"City should look at the lot size and permit to build bigger with parking spot"

Reduce costs (fees, taxation, etc.)	7.7%	11	
A better experience with the builder	7.0%	10	
More flexible tree retention/landscaping regulations	4.9%	7	
Allow for parking garage	1.4%	2	
Combine permits for LWH and main house	1.4%	2	
Coordinate construction (roofs to be built on-site, services to lane when building main house, etc.)	1.4%	2	
More outreach with neighbours	1.4%	2	

31. How important was it to you to buy a property with a laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Important	34.4%	11
Very Important	25.0%	8
Unimportant	21.9%	7
Neutral	18.8%	6

32. Overall, how satisfied are you with owning your laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Very Satisfied	50.8%	123
Satisfied	37.2%	90
Neutral	7.9%	19
Dissatisfied	2.9%	7
Very Dissatisfied	1.2%	3

33. What have you found to be the positives of owning a laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Opportunity to offer long-term housing for family or friends	52.7%	127
Additional income	50.6%	122
Opportunity to offer long-term rental housing	49.4%	119
Flexible space for a variety of uses	38.2%	92

Accommodation for visiting family and friends	29.5%	71
Space for a home office or work area	14.1%	34
Other (please describe)	11.6%	28
None	0.8%	2

33. What have you found to be the positives of owning a laneway house? (open-ended responses)

Response	Percent	Count
Having additional living space (for myself, tenant, retirement, etc.)	5.4%	13
The economic benefit	1.7%	4
It's the right size	1.7%	4
Allows me to be close to family	1.2%	3
It's accessible	0.4%	1
Providing more housing for the city	0.4%	1
It's a new building	0.4%	1
Great relationship with neighbours	0.4%	1

34. What have you found to be the challenges of owning a laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
None	48.1%	116
Other (please describe)	21.6%	52
Managing repairs and maintenance	19.1%	46
Being a landlord	17.4%	42
Finding long-term tenants	14.5%	35

34. What have you found to be the challenges of owning a laneway house?

Response	Percent	Count
Living in a small space with little storage	5.4%	13
Costs (taxes, utilities, etc.)	3.3%	8
Finding good tenants	1.7%	4

The City/process	1.2%	3
Having enough parking	0.8%	2
Garbage collection	0.8%	2
Maintenance	0.8%	2
Relationship with neighbours	0.8%	2
The quality of the laneway house	0.8%	2
Traffic in lane	0.8%	2
Keeping rent affordable	0.4%	1
Losing privacy	0.4%	1

35. If you were to purchase another property in Vancouver that is eligible for a laneway house, would you consider... (please select all that apply)

Response	Percent	Count
Building a laneway house	55.8%	134
Buying property with an existing laneway house	45.0%	108
Don't know / not applicable - I'm not planning on purchasing another property	31.7%	76
Buying property without a laneway house (with no intention of building one)	8.3%	20

36. Do you have any recommendations to improve the laneway house program?

Response	Percent	Count	Example
Increase permitted size and height	30.9%	42	“increse the maximum allowable living space and height for the laneway house.”
Have a more streamlined and clear approval process	27.2%	37	“If not already in place, provide training for city staff involved in approval/design process so that conflicting requirements are reduced. Reduce permit wait times.”
Comments about parking (allow carports, larger garages, relax requirements, etc.)	14.0%	19	“Building a cover car port or garage should be allowed without effective living space.”
More flexibility/relaxation of regulations	14.0%	19	
Reduce costs (fees, taxes, etc.)	11.8%	16	
Allow the units to be Strata Titled or subdivideable	9.6%	13	
Comments about specific regulations (number of sprinklers, slope of ceiling, etc.)	5.1%	7	
Allow basements	4.4%	6	
Encourage more laneway houses with better designs	3.7%	5	

Don't allow short term rentals	1.5%	2	
Don't restrict use	1.5%	2	
Limit number of laneway houses (one per block, don't allow)	1.5%	2	
More consultation around LWH program with public	1.5%	2	
Have more builder accountability	0.7%	1	

37. Do you identify as...

Response	Percent	Count
Male	53.1%	128
Female	39.0%	94
Prefer not to say	5.8%	14
None of the above, I identify as:	1.7%	4
Transgender	0.4%	1

38. Which age group do you fall into?

Response	Percent	Count
50 - 65	44.0%	106
35 - 49	29.0%	70
65+	20.3%	49
19 - 34	3.3%	8
Prefer not to say	2.9%	7
0 - 18	0.4%	1

39. Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes?

Response	Percent	Count
$150,000 or above	24.9%	60
Prefer not to say	24.9%	60
$100,000 to under $150,000	17.0%	41
$80,000 to under $100,000	12.9%	31




LANEWAY HOUSING
BUILDER & DESIGNER WORKSHOP

Workshop 1
Tuesday, January 30, 2018
9:30 am - 12 noon
Khalsa Diwan Sikh Temple
8000 Ross Street

Workshop 2
Thursday, February 1, 2018
9:30 am - 12 noon
Vancouver City Hall,
453 West 12th Avenue
Townhall Meeting Room

Introduction

The City of Vancouver introduced the Laneway House (LWH) program in 2009 to provide opportunities for more rental housing options in neighbourhoods across the city. The program has been very successful, with more than 3,000 permits for laneway houses issued to date.

Looking forward, the Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018-2027) contains new targets to ensure our city has the right supply of homes, including a diversity of rental and ground-oriented housing. A target has been set for 4,000 new laneway houses to be built over the next 10 years.

As part of achieving this goal, the City brought together laneway housing builders, designers and architects in two workshops to draw on their first-hand experience. Staff provided an overview presentation on the 10 years of laneway experience at the City and highlighted how laneway homes are part of the Vancouver Housing Strategy to deliver more rental housing.

Through table discussions workshop participants shared what they identified as issues and challenges with the laneway program and identified key areas for change. Participants were encouraged to share innovations they have developed in the construction of laneways or which could be considered in the future. Builders and designers were also asked to complete an individual survey to identify top issues and ideas for change.

In addition to these workshops, City staff are conducting an evaluation of the livability of laneways built to date, trends in laneway design and a survey of laneway owners and occupants to identify challenges to building a laneway and resident satisfaction. The input received and lessons learned from these activities will be used to make changes to the existing laneway program to make it easier and less expensive to build laneway houses.

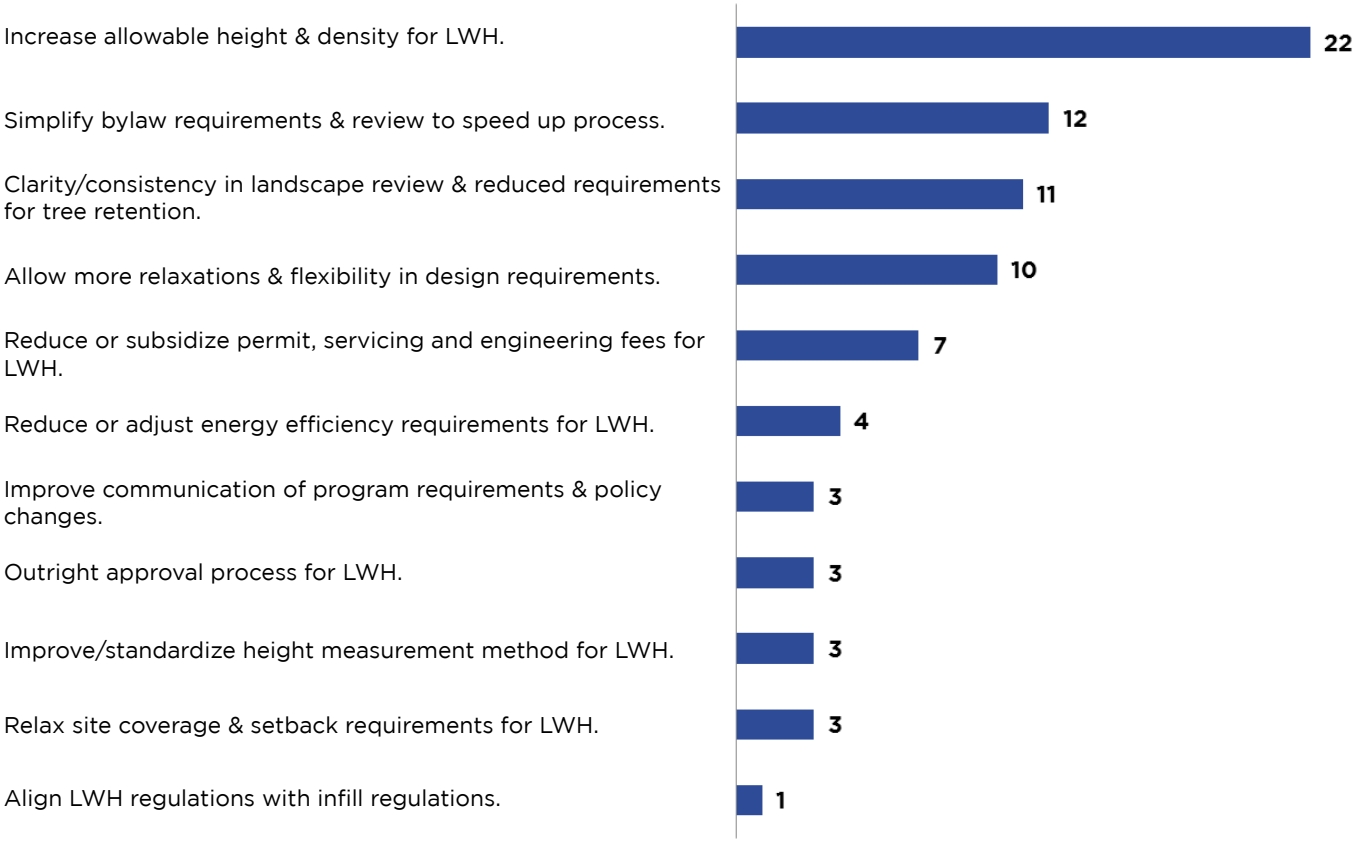
This summary document identifies key themes and priority actions put forward by workshop participants followed by detailed workshop notes on challenges and opportunities in creating laneways.

Workshop 1: 14 participants
Workshop 2: 33 participants

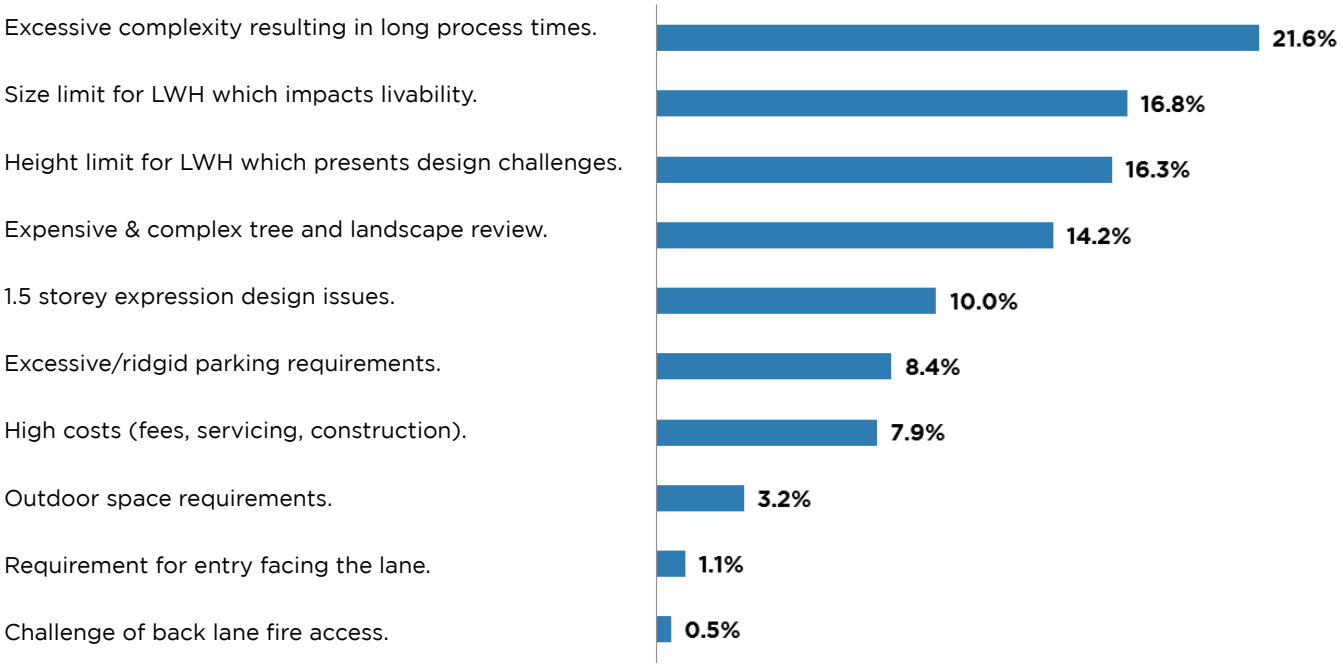
Key Themes From Table Discussions

- Initial laneway program regulations were created when this housing form was still relatively new and there was uncertainty as to how they would fit with the existing neighbourhood and impact adjacent properties. Now that the program is almost a decade old, this housing has been integrated into most neighbourhoods and the industry is able to deliver products which are familiar and widely accepted by the public.
- General feeling that LWH requirements and regulation have become overly onerous and complex. Given the maturity of the sector, the City should re-visit the initial assumptions which informed these regulations and focus on those key issues which really matter to the City when making changes to the laneway program.
- The length of the review process directly impacts the cost to build LWH, so the City should look for ways to move towards an outright approval process for LWH while maintaining quality control through thoughtfully designed polices and regulations.
- There is a need to reconcile other City priorities and policies (e.g. new energy efficiency policies and tree retention) with LWH and decide what is most important.
- Landscape review and the requirement for a professional arborist report were consistently cited as a source of frustration and a pinch point in the processing and review process which held up projects. Participants want the City to clarify and streamline this process to provide more certainty for builders and their clients.
- Additional relaxations and more flexibility in design should be introduced to help LWH builders adapt to site-specific challenges. More flexibility would result in the integration of other citywide priorities with more livable units.
- Allowing for minimal additional height (~2ft) is a quick and easy change which would reduce the design challenges and simplify construction of LWH while having minimal impact on adjacent properties.

What is the most important change the City should make to the Laneway Housing Program?



What are the top challenges that should be prioritized for quick action?



Challenges and Solutions

Participants were asked to identify and prioritize key challenges in the creation of laneways and to propose solutions to those challenges that they are already implementing or would like to see in the future.

Outdoor Space

Challenges:

- Other requirements for height, size, setbacks etc. create challenges in finding/creating space for outdoor space.
- There is confusion over what type of outdoor space is required - back yard patio, balcony.

Solutions:

- Place more emphasis on high quality landscaping while allowing for flexibility in the 16ft minimum separation requirement between the LWH and the main house.
- Remove the requirement for outdoor space as most clients want this space anyway but it would be at the discretion of the builder/ designer as to location, size etc.
- Allow for smaller patios on smaller lots.

Height Limit

Challenges:

- Most LWH have to be below grade to accommodate the maximum height limits and VBBL requires insulation for the foundation wall, creating thicker walls and taking up floor area.
- 20’ height limit is too short, we usually sink the building into the ground ~18” in order to do a properly insulated roof and to have decently high ceilings.
- Spring height regulation is pushing LWH to below grade.
- Height limit is particularly challenging on sloped sites; need to sink foundation results in retaining walls, extra grading, insulation etc. which also adds to the overall cost.
- Impacts headroom of interior living space; exacerbated when accommodating R50 batt insulation thickness in roof assembly.
- Height is measured to the ridge which greatly benefits modern shed roof style, but is a disadvantage to fit into a heritage style.

Solutions:

- Increase the height limit by 2ft to 5ft to so the first floor is above grade and can avoid VBBL insulation requirements or do not count setback and floor area for exterior insulation for the foundation wall.
- Maximum height should be raised to at least 22’ and a thermal exclusion for roofs should be allowed.
- Allow for stepped height on sloped sites.
- For a flat site keep the 20ft height maximum, for sites with >10% slope allow height relaxation to 22ft. (results in flooding mitigation and matches neighbouring properties).
- Slab on grade to reduce insulation requirement for the foundation wall.
- Increasing height limit could create potential for more flexible spaces and small accessory dwelling units.
- Allow for 2 storey expression option if interior parking or a carport is provided.
- Relax spring height for pitched roofs.
- Increase the height limit to 25ft or to allow for 8ft floor to ceiling height.
- Allow height relaxation for pitch roofs to encourage character roof line.

Size Limit

Challenges:

- Existing 40sf storage exclusion is difficult to achieve in the given space as there is a requirement for the storage to be framed in.
- VBBL adaptable housing requirements are challenging to achieve in LWH due to size limit (of both upper and lower floors), a 1.5 storey LWH is not truly accessible.
- Size limit is impacted by thickness of insulation which further reduces interior living space.
- A 1 storey LWH cannot maximize allowable FSR due to site coverage and setback requirements.
- Size limit of ~1,000sf prevents creation of three bedroom units for families which are needed citywide.
- Many clients would like basements but are unwilling to reduce floor area as basement area is not excluded; acknowledged that allowing basements will not help with costs (need for pumping, foundation walls, stairs).

Solutions:

- Increase allowable FSR in LWH to be more reflective or equal to infill housing potential (1,200sf to 1,400sf to accommodate larger families).
- Increase allowable FSR by 1% (0.17).
- Look at adaptability and accessibility over the whole site rather than each dwelling; could result in the main housing achieving AAA but not the LWH.
- Accessible housing guidelines should be relaxed or more flexible, could include options such as:
    - Minimum of 1 bathroom and 1 bedroom are accessible.
    - No requirements on upper floor.
    - Overall % requirement for the entire site with access requirements in terms of ramps.
- Allow for flexibility in requirements based on site-specific criteria/challenges.
- Increase FSR for thermal exclusion above existing 3% of floor area for LWH.
- Provide for an extra 1' to 2' to remove the foundation wall stub.
- Create an FSR cap for the entire site at 0.86, old & new to create an incentive to retain.
- Exclude basement floor area (as is done in West Vancouver and New Westminster).
- Provide storage exclusion for a wider range of storage types (e.g. built in shelves).
- Allow for smaller front yards to help with siting of LWH in back.
- Incorporate overhang to create entry cover results in building with a different form with more character.
- Give density bonus for LWH as "low cost housing" as is done for "character", "heritage" etc.

Trees & Landscape Review

Challenges:

- There can be conflicts between keeping trees on site and building footprint.
- Requirement for a professional arborist report adds time and cost to the process.
- Frustration as many participants experienced cases where staff provided direction contradicting arborist report, therefore why is it required?
- It is not clear when there will be direction to remove or protect a tree.
- Need for clear priorities – is it homes or trees?
- It is unfair to require one house on a block to retain a particularly large tree as it reduces or eliminates the option to redevelop.
- Instances where LWH projects have been cancelled because of tree retention.
- The landscape review takes too long and is too restrictive but there is no quality control or inspection on site, therefore it is an unsuccessful regulation.
- Most people change or ignore landscape plans anyways so the review is a waste of resources.

Solutions:

- Remove the landscape review from the process.
- Bring the landscape review to the beginning of the process to address issues early; include landscape staff in pre-application meetings.
- Need for better coordination between review groups and consistency in direction provided.
- Allow tree removal if the tree is within the envelope without discretionary decision.
- Allow for more flexibility in tree removal as Richmond currently does.
- Ease up on tree retention requirements if the goal is to enable new housing.
- Relax setback requirement to accommodate tree retention.
- Allow for flexibility in design for cases where tree retention is required (e.g. overhang to protect roots).
- Provide incentives for tree retention if that is identified as an important benefit to the city.

Energy Efficiency

Challenges:

- It is difficult to achieve passive house in LWH as three people in a 600 sf LWH can over-heat.

Solutions:

- Adjust insulation and PHPP modelling according to occupancy.
- Allow for R-value relaxation for LWH as they are already a more energy efficient form of housing given their small footprint.
- Consider net zero energy housing for LWH design.
- Allow for a different standard for air tightness rather than 3.5 ACH as it is harder for small homes to achieve.
- Allow for R12 RiGio insulation (3") for LWH rather than R28 insulation to foundation wall (8") as this reduces interior living space.

Process Time & Complexity

Challenges:

- Current processing times are too long which impacts project feasibility and affordability.
- The requirement for a non-stratification covenant adds a lot of time to the process.
- There is a lack of consistency in staff technical interpretation (among plan checkers, plan checkers and planner).
- Regulatory restrictions are increasing all the time, creating confusion and delays in projects.
- There is a lack of consistency in timing and review process for applicants.
- 6 month time frame for LWH permit is sometimes not long enough to get the main house permit before expiry.
- Outright rules versus conditional guidelines create confusion for applicants and are highly dependent on staff interpretation; many design issues are resolved on a case by case basis.

Solutions:

- Have one permit for constructing a new single family house and LWH rather than a separate permit of each, or link the two so they move through the system in tandem.
- Create outright stream for all LWH with external design regulations for quality control.
- Simplify current by-law regulations for LWH to only those key aspects that the City cares about – stick to the KISS principle (keep it simple...)
- Hire more staff dedicated to review process.
- Enhance tools to help clarify bylaw requirements (e.g. explanatory notes or guides/"cheatsheet" with graphics); this would also help improve consistency in the review process.
- Develop process for communicating policy changes and updates to industry and integrating these changes in a timely manner into "how-to-guides".
- Create an online LWH forum to get connect LWH industry and facilitate discussions and advice to resolve issues (i.e. a reddit for building LWH in Vancouver).
- Stop requiring a non-stratification covenant when building a new house and LWH together; strata LWH should be allowed everywhere.
- Set a time limit for review time if a builder completes a checklist specified by the City - standard form with room to clarify any assumptions made in calculations, design etc.
- Review approach should be based on a more simple matrix - e.g. look at overall massing and use simple tools like acetate overlay to judge massing.

Costs

Challenges:

- Increasing construction costs in general impact the viability and affordability of LWH.
- LWH pay twice as much per square foot as any other house or condo development in the city.
- Estimated that costs for sewer/water connections and building permit fees currently total ~$30k -$40k.
- Costs of building a LWH are closely tied to long processing times.

Solutions:

- Target reducing current connection costs and fees by half.
- Lower engineering connection fees.
- Reduce permit fees for LWH to below other housing types.
- Introduce servicing cost exemptions for accessory dwelling units.
- Allow service connections to the main house for “tiny” category of LWH.
- Relax requirements for energy efficient windows and doors to reduce construction costs.
- Relaxation of utility upgrades; potential to share costs with a % to owner and % to city when utility is located on city property.
- Introduce a payment plan or ability to defer utility/servicing costs and permit fees to address the affordability of building LWH.
- Reduce City fees for adding a LWH to lots with an existing single family house if the desire is to encourage LWH construction independent of building a new main house.
- Use funds from the Housing Affordability plan to reduce the cost of upgrading the site infrastructure via a grant tied to a limit on rental rates for the LWH.

Siting Requirements & Access

Challenges:

- Current requirement for a permeable setback from the lane creates challenges on sites with a large main house.
- It is difficult for firefighting access to the back lane.
- Lanes are service corridors with many uses, having an entrance exposed to the lane is not what residents/clients want for both privacy and safety issues.

Solutions:

- Reduce or eliminate the setback from lane (New Westminster has done similar) or allow relaxations on sites challenged by a large main house.
- Remove the 26' from lane setback as it is too constricting; keep site coverage and main house separation.
- Allow LWH on lots without lane; entrance to LWH could be achieved through side yard from the front of the main house and fire access and servicing are already done through the front.
- Rather than the 16ft separation requirement between LWH and main house, allow flexibility between different sites but making the separation requirement a percentage of site depth.
- Allow basement of the main house to open into the front yard; many sites have the LWH, basement suite and main house all trying to share a tiny backyard while the front year is an unused formal space.
- Have been creating more LWH with entrances from sideyard and incorporating additional landscaping/fencing to deal with concerns over safety from lane.
- Improve lane quality - light, surfacing etc.

1.5 Storey Expression

Challenges:

- It is recognized that the intent of the partial upper storey was important for neighbourliness in terms of fit and shadow impacts, however with greater acceptance of LWH forms can this shift?
- Unintended consequence is that garages become living space due to an unusable 2nd floor.
- VBBL requirements (e.g. for energy efficiency, adaptability) impact the livability of the upper floor.
- Partial upper floor requirement is a challenge for smaller lots which have limited building width to accommodate parking.
- 1 storey LWH is not preferred as it reduces the separation and outdoor space and there are no incentives (e.g. 1.5 storey LWH can get ~100 sf more for the under sloping roof area).
- Is there a need for a sideyard setback on the side including a parking spot?
- 60% of footprint requirement for upper floor makes it difficult to design livable inside space.
- Restrictions of the bylaw and guidelines means there is no room for creativity.

Solutions:

- Gather public input on whether a 2 storey expression would be supported in neighbourhoods.
- Re-think existing limit of 60% of footprint for upper storey to allow a larger upper floor (e.g. 3/4 of footprint) or allow a 2 storey expression.
- Allow more flexibility for the second floor setback for flat roof.
- Create a training course for designers.
- Create incentives for 1 storey LWH.
- Reduce door width to 2'-6" on upper floor.
- Allow relaxations for building envelope requirements.
- Allow for all dormers to take up 50% to 70% of the building width.

Parking

Challenges:

- Placement of required one parking space interferes with secondary suite entranceways off the side yard.
- Smaller sites present a challenge in space for the required parking spot.
- Some feedback from LWH neighbours and owners is that the required 1 parking spot is not enough.
- Feeling that parking issues are localized and area-specific; areas with good transit do not need more parking as occupants are trending away from cars.

Solutions:

- Invest in better transit across the city as experience has shown less demand for additional parking spaces when a LWH is located in an area well-served by transit options.
- Take a more nuanced approach to parking by linking requirements to location (transit, walkability, neighbourhood norms for more/less parking).
- If no parking space were required there is the opportunity for a larger side yard where parking would be to function as LWH yard/outdoor space with entrance opening onto it.
- Allow alternate parking configurations such as tandem parking.
- Allow for carports – do support the 2013 move to get rid of 'bonus' square footage for garages to put cars outside.
- Allow height relaxation to allow for carport under LWH living space (could easily accommodate 3 parking spots).

Innovation & Creative Approaches

Participants were invited to join conversations at different tables around innovation themes to discuss their potential for advancing the creation of laneways to make them easier, more livable and more affordable.

THEME: LWH Templates/Prototypes

Idea: Explore current practices and investigate innovation in laneway design and construction methods to create a cost effective template for LWH that can be adapted to different sites and conditions.

- Create an outright plan that applies BC-wide with a standardized document format.
- Wave fees for LWH applications which make use of the template.
- Focus on a 1 storey LWH template as that is easiest to prototype and is more cost-efficient to build.

THEME: Energy Efficiency/GHG emissions

Idea: Allow triplexes instead of defaulting to a house + suite + LWH. A LWH is an expensive and inefficient housing type that works really well with existing homes, but for total site rebuilds, a triplex would often work better.

Idea: Switch to a more performance based, whole-home performance (total energy use cap) approach to allow design and zoning setback flexibility. E.g. Specify a step in the BC Energy Step Code, or;

Relax height and side setbacks for LWH to accommodate thick walls and roof.

- Fixed prescriptive energy requirements are hard to work with in a small, restricted space.
- Insulation requirements for the roof (R50 for attic or R28 for sloped ceiling) are hard to fit under the current maximum height requirements.

THEME: Bridging the gap between Laneway Houses and Tiny Homes

Idea: Allow micro LWH garage conversions that can tie into the existing homes sewer, water and power connections.

- Existing laneway regulations already allow for tiny laneways (205 sf).
- Tiny homes (trailers) cannot get a building permit so what is the smallest building that could be considered (either modular or site built).
- If tie-ins to existing services were allowed, micro LWH could be built for half the price of a typical LWH.
- Would also involve relaxing building code (e.g. insulation requirements).
- Need further exploration of the financial feasibility and connections costs.

THEME: Construction Techniques

Idea: Is modular construction a way to create more cost-efficient LWH faster than traditional building techniques?

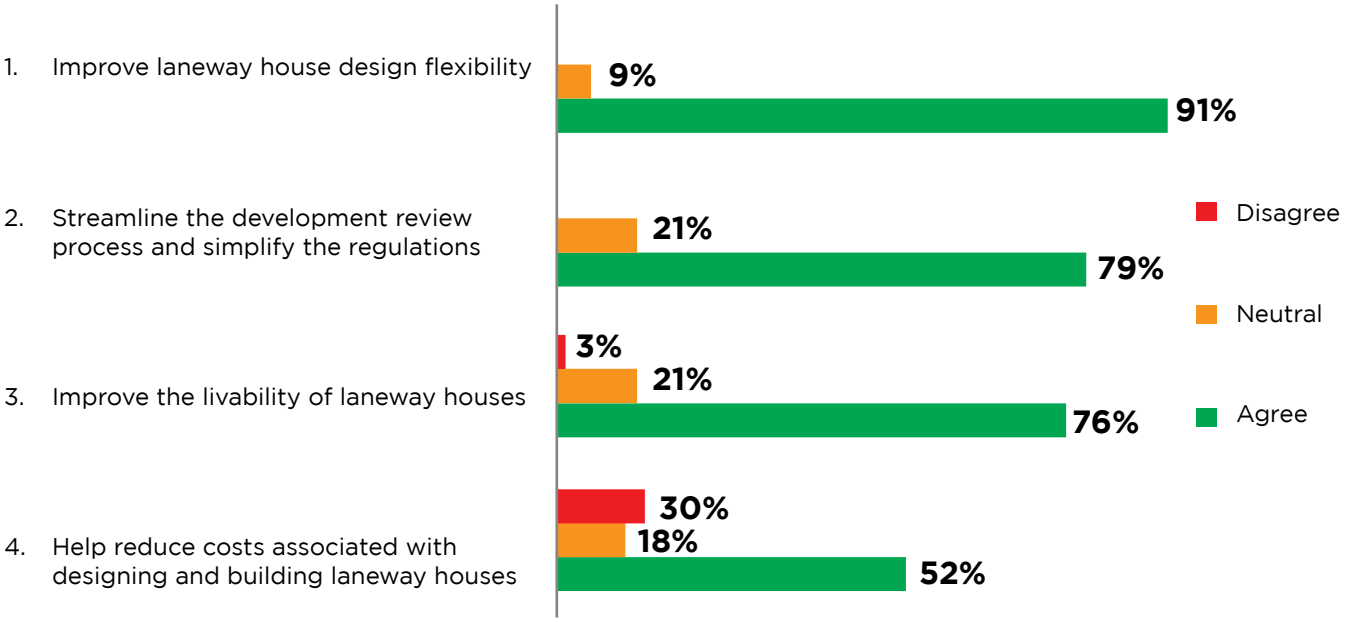
- Important to understand difference between pre-fab construction and modular – latter is built in a factory, broken into a few parts and shipped to site for assembly.
- Factory has CSA approval to certify residential building is in compliance with building code.
- Modular can be designed to different sizes to fit a variety of lots (only difference is where you "cut" it in order to transport from factory). This is a key topic as moving a completely prefabricated building onto a lot through the lane is generally not possible.
- Need to change public perception that modular means shipping containers, this is not the case as the look and materials of modular LWH are the same as traditional builds.
- Assembly takes only a few weeks, this saves time contributing to less cost.
- There are few factories in BC that are currently certified – a challenge to growing the sector.
- Some dispute over actual costs of modular vs. traditional build requiring further investigation to clarify where potential cost savings are.
- Determining costs for modular depends on many factors (i.e. including servicing costs, considering site-specific issues, if cost is rolled up with the overall cost of building a new main house etc.)

LANEWAY HOUSING
BUILDER & DESIGNER INFORMATION SESSION

In follow-up to the workshop sessions, an information session was held May 3, 2018 to share draft proposed changes to the Laneway House Program with local builders, designers, architects and other stakeholders. 36 individuals attended and 33 submitted feedback via a comment sheet that asked two summary questions.

The first comment sheet question asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on the following four statements:

Overall, the proposed changes to the Laneway House Program will:



The second comment sheet question asked participants to share any general comments or specific thoughts or ideas on the proposed changes. Feedback received to this question included:

- More clarity and consistency regarding tree retention and replacement requirements is needed earlier in the review process
- New regulations to address laneway house livability, such as minimum room sizes, may create design challenges, limit flexibility and create unintended consequences
- Introducing minimum room sizes may be helpful, but should be set in context of broader livability goals that relate to the overall unit design
- Increasing the allowable heights will help improve livability and design flexibility, and more floor area would also contribute to this, especially on smaller lots
- Increasing the flexibility of the regulations (eg. parking configurations) will help support more livable designs