

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on July 9, 2025

3. Opening Doors: Expanding Ownership Options for Laneway and Backyard Homes

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung & Councillor Klassen

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver continues to face housing affordability challenges, particularly for first-time buyers, young families, seniors, and multigenerational families;
2. Nearly 42% of single-family homes in Vancouver are owned mortgage-free by individuals aged 65 or older, many of whom are interested in downsizing, creating housing for extended family members, or wishing to age in place in their neighbourhoods and communities;
3. While the City has recently enabled stratification and subdivision for multiplex developments, the same opportunity does not currently apply to laneway homes and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), even when these units meet the siting, massing, and design guidelines of the R1-1 policy;
4. This distinction is policy-based rather than technical, and prevents homeowners from leveraging existing equity to finance and contribute to new housing supply and options, despite laneway homes and ADUs being compliant with all applicable R1-1 standards;
5. Other jurisdictions such as Seattle and California have implemented policies that allow ADUs to be stratified or subdivided, resulting in a surge of new housing production and flexible ownership models; and
6. Broader access to subdivision or stratification for all detached secondary dwellings, regardless of whether they are part of a multiplex or single-family lot, would support Vancouver's goals of aging in place, intergenerational housing, and attainable homeownership.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back on options to allow the subdivision or stratification of residential lots containing secondary detached housing units (such as laneway homes or ADUs), particularly in situations where:
 - The units comply with R1-1 zoning guidelines;
 - The form and siting are functionally equivalent to those permitted in multiplex subdivisions;

FURTHER THAT the staff report include:

- A comparison of subdivision and stratification rules for multiplex versus ADU and laneway housing forms;
- Regulatory and legal pathways to enable stratification and/or fee-simple ownership of laneway homes built alongside existing or new single-family homes;
- Best practices from other jurisdictions (e.g., Seattle, California) that have implemented similar reforms;
- Analysis of benefits related to housing supply, financing access, aging in place, and use of equity by long-term homeowners;
- Alignment with the Vancouver Plan, Missing Middle Housing program, and Climate Emergency Action Plan;

B. THAT staff engage with community members, homebuilders, mortgage lenders, and legal experts in land ownership and titles to assess feasibility and policy implications.

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