

REPORT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

To: Mayor W. Wright and Members of Council in Committee of the Whole Date: January 13, 2014

From: Beverly Grieve,
Director of Development Services File: 13.2520.01

Subject: Proposed Work Plan for Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Program

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the proposed work plan for the detached accessory dwelling unit program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of a work plan to review the interest in, and feasibility of potential amendments to the Zoning Bylaw that would allow detached accessory dwelling units (coach houses and laneway houses) in single detached residential areas.

BACKGROUND

On November 18, 2013, at the Committee of the Whole meeting, Council considered a report by staff to vary three sections of the Zoning Bylaw to permit a home office on the second floor of a garage at 901 Second Street. In considering this application, Council directed Development Services Department staff to prepare a work plan to investigate amendments to the Zoning Bylaw that would allow coach houses and laneway houses as options in single detached housing areas. This report responds to this direction.

EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE

The City of New Westminster Affordable Housing Strategy has identified accessory detached dwelling units as a housing form that is worth investigating as part of the strategic direction to support appropriate infill and intensification in existing

neighbourhoods. While it is acknowledged that detached accessory units are considered desirable and can attract relatively high rents (\$1500-\$2000 a month in Vancouver), they do provide a compact form of ground oriented housing in a traditional neighbourhood setting, can provide attractive housing for family members and are a source of rental revenue for homeowners.

ANALYSIS

Laneway or coach houses are accessory suites that are detached from the main house. Laneway houses can be one or two storeys in height while coach houses are units built entirely on top of parking structures. For the purposes of this report, the term “detached accessory dwelling unit” will be used. Detached accessory dwelling units gently increase density in existing residential areas. These homes provide rental income by renting out either the accessory house or by moving into the smaller space while renting out the main house.

Detached accessory dwelling units add to the supply and variety of housing in single-family area while maintaining their character and appeal. The units are modest in size, like the garages they replace. Adding people to a neighbourhood has many benefits. More eyes on the street means better public safety, and more people means more customers, increased business, livelier streets.

The City of Vancouver and City of North Vancouver allows accessory dwelling units as an outright use, the City of Coquitlam and District of Maple Ridge allows them through a development approval process and City of Nanaimo has recently passed bylaws allowing detached accessory houses on corner properties and properties which abut a lane.

In the attached work plan, there is an emphasis in learning from the experience of other municipalities in developing a “made in New Westminster” approach to allowing detached accessory dwelling units in residential neighbourhoods.

Summary of Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Housing Work plan

Phase 1: Information Collection and Dissemination (January-February 2014)

It is proposed that the first phase will involve collection of other municipalities’ experience with detached accessory units in the region, including results of programs and lessons learned. Specific topics of interest to New Westminster such as the role of accessory detached units in promoting the conservation of the existing housing stock will be reviewed. Technical issues such as parking, building and fire code, servicing and enforcement will be explored. Much of the information collection work has been

completed through a Masters of Arts thesis on the topic completed by a current Planning Division staff member.

The results of the information collection work will be included in a report to Council.

The work plan provides for an Open House in the first phase. The purpose of the Open House is to introduce residents to the initiative, present the results of the background research and to obtain comments on residents' interest in detached accessory dwelling units. As well, staff will establish a webpage where all information regarding the program will be posted, and which will be used to collect feedback from residents.

The results of Phase 1 will be included in a report to Council. Staff suggest that a workshop with Council may be appropriate at this time to explore issues such as the amount of required parking, design considerations to address privacy concerns, situations where two storey structures may or may not be permitted, the ability to use accessory units as a tool to preserve the existing stock, whether detached units would be allowed in addition to a secondary suite in the main dwelling.

Phase 2: Neighborhood Engagement (March –May 2014)

The second phase proposes to review the comments from residents received in Phase 1 in order to determine the neighbourhoods where there appears to be support for detached accessory dwelling units. Staff will review the typical site conditions in these subject neighbourhoods and begin to draft preliminary Zoning Bylaw amendments that would permit the accessory units while ensuring that the overall building bulk contained on the lot remains acceptable to the neighbours. Servicing and Building Code requirements would also be identified at this point. The results of this work will be the subject of a report to Council.

These preliminary bylaw amendments and guidelines will be used as the basis for further consultation with residents in the subject neighbourhoods. Depending on the feedback from specific neighbourhoods, one or more than one Open House may be held. As well, staff will be available for presentations at Resident Associations in the subject residential neighbourhoods. Feedback on the preliminary bylaw amendments and guidelines would be obtained at the Open House, through an on-line questionnaire and from the Advisory Planning Commission.

This phase will conclude with a report to Council that will summarize the findings and, if there is support, recommend that a Zoning Bylaw amendment process to permit detached accessory dwelling units under specific circumstances be initiated.

Phase 3: Zoning Bylaw Amendment Process (May-July 2014)

Phase 3 would involve the standard Zoning Bylaw amendment process, with a Public Hearing anticipated before the summer of 2014.

Phase 4: Implementation and Monitoring (Summer 2014-Annually thereafter)

The final phase of this project is the preparation of information guides for residents and builders who wish to construct detached accessory dwelling units. This guide will be available in the Planning and Building Divisions and on the City's webpage. As well, staff will establish an annual monitoring program and will report on the take-up of the program and suggest any adjustments to the bylaw and guidelines as needed.

Queen's Park and Queensborough

The Queen's Park and Queensborough neighbourhoods are the subject of separate initiatives and will not be included in the program. The Queen's Park neighbourhood is the subject of a neighbourhood planning process involving a Working Group that is looking at actions that can promote the protection of the character of the neighbourhood. It is possible that inclusion of detached accessory dwelling units as a housing option may be considered as one of the tools available to preserve the existing stock. If, through consultation with the neighbourhood as part of the area planning process there is interest in participating in the city-wide process, this will be possible.

Queensborough, due to its location in the floodplain and the general absence of lanes in the traditional single detached areas, makes the introduction of detached accessory dwelling units difficult at this time. It is noted that an action identified in the draft Queensborough Community Plan is a review of the RQ-1 Zoning Bylaw regulations that govern single detached dwellings. This would be the appropriate time to address opportunities for detached accessory dwelling units in Queensborough.

Resources and Budget

It is anticipated that the program can be undertaken with existing staff resources, although it is acknowledged that other work plan items may have their dates of completion adjusted to reflect the additional work.

OPTIONS

There are three options provided to Council for consideration, they are:

1. Council endorse the proposed work plan for the detached accessory dwelling unit program;
2. Council direct staff to defer the detached dwelling unit program until 2015; or
3. Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

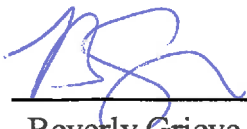
INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Building Division Staff and the Director of Engineering were consulted in the preparation of this report.

CONCLUSION

Detached accessory dwelling units add to the supply and variety of housing in single-family areas while maintaining their character and promoting more efficient use of the land. This housing option has been well-received in other cities, including the City of Vancouver and North Vancouver. This report outlines a work plan to develop a “made in New Westminster” approach to examining the interest in, and feasibility of detached accessory housing units in single detached neighbourhoods.

Report Author



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Director of Development Services

Approved for Presentation
to Council



Lisa Spitale,
City Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT 1

Work Plan for Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Housing Program

Work Program for Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Program

Phase	Tasks	Resources	Milestone	Timeline
Phase 1: Information Collection and Dissemination	Background research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in region • Technical issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parking ○ Building and Fire Code ○ Servicing ○ Enforcement 	Planning, Building Division and Engineering Staff	Background report to Council	January 2014
	City-Wide Open House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present results of research • Introduce idea • Obtain comments from residents • All residents associations invited 	Planning Division	Open House	February 2014
	Establish Laneway House Webpage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from Open House • Questionnaire 	Planning Division	Webpage	February 2014
	Phase 1 Report to Council Preparation: Summary and next steps	Planning Division	Report to Committee of the Whole	March 2014
Phase 2: Neighborhood Engagement	Identify neighbourhoods for consultation. Criteria based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of Open House and questionnaire to identify neighbourhoods • Physical characteristics of neighbourhoods • Other planning considerations 	Planning Division	Report to Committee of the Whole	March 2014

	<p>Develop preliminary zoning bylaw amendments for consideration of Council and discussion with residents in interested neighbourhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to permit accessory units and change to bulk regulations for lot • Servicing requirements • Building considerations 	<p>Planning and Building Division, Engineering Department</p>	<p>Report to Committee of the Whole Report to APC</p>	<p>March 2014</p>
	<p>Neighborhood consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be one or more neighbourhoods • Consult with Resident Associations • Hold Open House(s) • Obtain feedback through Open House, RA meetings and on-line questionnaire 	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Open House(s)</p>	<p>April 2014</p>
	<p>Phase 2 Report to Council: Summary and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend zoning bylaw amendment process to allow accessory dwelling units in one or more neighbourhoods • Webpage updated 	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Report to Committee of the Whole in Workshop</p>	<p>End of April 2014</p>
<p>Phase 3: Zoning Bylaw Amendment</p>	<p>Zoning Bylaw Amendment Process initiated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be one or more neighbourhoods • Information report to Council 	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Report to Committee of the Whole</p>	<p>May 2014</p>
	<p>Zoning bylaw preparation</p>	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Report to Committee of the Whole</p>	<p>May 2014</p>
	<p>Zoning Bylaw amendment consultation</p>	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Open House</p>	<p>May 2014</p>
	<p>Referral to Public Hearing</p>	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Public Hearing</p>	<p>June 2014</p>
	<p>Zoning Bylaw amendment adopted</p>	<p>Planning Division</p>	<p>Council Meeting</p>	<p>July 2014</p>

Phase 4: Implementation and Monitoring	Preparation of Information Guides for residents and builders Preparation of information for Webpage	Planning and Building Division	Accessory Dwelling Unit Guide Document	Summer 2014
	Establish development approvals process	Planning and Building Division, Engineering Department	Webpage	Summer 2014
	Establish yearly monitoring program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program take-up and adjustment 	Planning Division	Annual Report to Committee of the Whole	Fall 2014 then annually