

*These comments by Sue Dexter introduced the Summer 2017 study of the potential for laneway housing in Harbord Village when it was first posted on the HVRA website:*

Affordable housing has become a serious issue in Toronto. There are various initiatives underway to address the problem. Among them is a private-sector initiative asking the City to change planning rules to permit rear-yard and laneway housing, serviced from the main house, accessible to the main street for other servicing.

After meeting with the proponents, we decided to test their proposal in our laneways and prepared a study for consideration by Toronto and East York Community Council.

[Our study](#) confirms that expansion of approvals into lanes should be neighbourhood-specific. In Harbord Village, with row housing, narrow and unserviced lanes, and short lots that are already built out, backyard and laneway unit approvals would be spotty at best. In other areas of the City laneways might be more universally appropriate.

Harbord Village is already home to many affordable units, with basement units, apartments and rooming houses, and two larger shelters in our catchment. Census figures show that Harbord Village has increased its population between 2001 and 2016 by 14.35% (753 persons),

We would support an aggressive policy to build affordable units—but caution that the most efficient way to achieve growth is to find ways to encourage affordable rental housing on our main streets while preserving stable, but growing, local neighbourhoods.

The challenge remains how and where best to locate new affordable units and to find creative approaches to enhance our laneways. It will not be one size fits all.

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