

Provincial Guide on Laneway Houses

The Planning Act was changed in 2019 to require municipalities to adopt official plan policies and pass zoning by-laws that allow one additional residential unit in the primary residence (i.e., second units) and one in an existing or new building or structure ancillary to the primary residence (i.e., tiny home, garden suite, coach house, laneway suite). This change was designed to help increase the supply of housing and create more options for families. Municipalities in Ontario are at different stages of developing these policies, so Members are advised to check with local municipalities first before advising clients.

What is a laneway house?

A laneway house, often referred to as a laneway suite, is a residential unit that is separate from a primary residence and is typically located in the rear yard of a property, connected to a public laneway. While most commonly found in urban areas, laneway houses can also exist in rural settings. Since 2019, City of Toronto has updated its zoning by-laws to allow for construction of laneway suites on residential properties that share a property line with a public lane.

There is a lot to consider before building a laneway house. [This guide](#) covers key provincial and municipal rules and requirements regarding laneway houses. It will help you learn more about how to:

- build a new laneway house
- renovate an existing building (such as a garage or coach house) to create a laneway house

These rules and regulations (including the provincial ones) are enforced and implemented by municipalities. It is important that you **talk to your municipality first to find out if your property allows for a laneway house under your municipality's zoning by-laws.**

A laneway house can:

- provide rental income to property owners
- provide housing for grown children, parents or in-laws
- take advantage of existing infrastructure
- add residential units into neighbourhoods
- help vitalize underused laneways into safer, more vibrant public spaces

More information is available on the provincial website at Ontario.ca/HousingInnovation.

[Read the Guide](#)

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