

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

May 11, 2016

## City Council Side-Steps Public Engagement on Suite Rule Changes

City Council is set to vote on major suite rule changes that will affect Calgarians city-wide.

On May 16, Council will vote whether to pass controversial changes to the Land Use Bylaw. The changes would increase the number of residential properties allowed to have suites and the maximum size of those suites.

The potential impacts on residential neighbourhoods across the City are:

- Doubling of population density,
- Significant increase in building intensity,
- Significant increase in the proportion of rental properties, and
- Significant increase in traffic congestion and laneway traffic.

The Bylaw changes came to Council on Monday May 2 but a quick and quiet approval was challenged by a small number of Calgarians who recognized their significance. Council was urged to vote down these changes because they are significant and there was no engagement process. The vote was delayed to May 16 but Calgarians will not have an opportunity for input at that time.

Councillor Carra stated the objective of these changes was "... simplifying and cutting red tape". Perhaps Council believed that was the case in November, when they directed Administration to examine bylaw edits, but the resulting changes go well beyond cutting red tape.

Now that the potential impacts are known, Council needs to vote these changes down and bring them forward to Calgarians in an open manner for discussion.

We are encouraging all Calgarians to communicate their desire to be heard by Council before these changes have a negative impact on the look and character of our City.

Send your message to all of Council by email at [Alderweb@calgary.ca](mailto:Alderweb@calgary.ca) by **Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>**.

NOT4RZ is a not-for-profit group of residents and community leaders. It was organized in 2015 to provide input to Council on the package of amendments that was aimed at re-zoning inner city neighbourhoods. Fortunately, our group has continued to monitor suite issues and has been participating in the current process. We're often branded as "anti suites" and "NIMBY"; however, if you visit our website you will see that we support the rational development of safe suites in Calgary and have proposed numerous bylaw enhancements to facilitate the addition of suites city-wide.

Please see the attached Backgrounder for more details.

Website: [not4rz.ca](http://not4rz.ca) Contact: [not4rz@googlegroups.com](mailto:not4rz@googlegroups.com)

## **CITY COUNCIL SUITES BYLAW – VOTE MAY 16 - BACKGROUNDER**

The suites issue came to a head in June 2015 when Council attempted to implement a package of suite changes by re-zoning four inner-city wards. The poorly attended open-houses based the need for suite rule changes on increasing the safety and affordability of the City's rental housing stock. While it was clear that the changes wouldn't accomplish either of these objectives, the public hearing in June did provide Calgarians with an opportunity to bring forward ideas that would allow for suite development that would be more consistent with the existing characteristics of their neighbourhoods.

The consensus outcome of that process was that Council would examine the suggestions provided to them by Calgarians and pursue more rigorous engagement prior to bringing forward any future suite related Bylaw changes. No changes were expected in 2016 or even before the 2017 Civic election.

With these expectations, residents and Community Associations across the City were caught off guard by Bylaw changes approved by the Calgary Planning Commission March 10 for consideration by Council. There are two significant changes; the increased maximum suite size to 100 square meters (1,075 sq ft) and the reduction of the minimum lot width able to have a suite from 9.0 meters to 7.5meters (25 ft).

These seemingly minor changes to the Bylaw details effectively implement the changes proposed for the four inner city wards but avoid the blatant re-zoning attempted in June 2015. Instead these current changes are being described as only affecting residential areas where "suites are already permitted". For instance, a property designated R-C1 (single dwelling) cannot add any type of suite without being re-designated R-C1s. Re-designation is not a barrier and one that the City would gladly remove if they could. The City encourages these applications by waiving application fees and approving over 90% of them.

These are the two bylaw changes that will result in densification of all low density residential areas:

- 1. Increasing the maximum suite size from 70m<sup>2</sup> to 100m<sup>2</sup> (750sqft to 1,075sqft):** This 43% increase affects all residential properties and would allow an addition to a property turning the home into a duplex or a backyard/garage suite that is larger than the primary residence<sup>1</sup>.
- 2. Reducing the minimum lot width in any district to 7.5m from 9m:** This change affects 15.2m (50ft) R-C2 lots that can currently be subdivided to accommodate two dwellings, this change would allow each of those subdivided lots to add a suite up to 100m<sup>2</sup> (1,075 sqft) and parking for 6 cars.

Our group made alternative suggestions to Council on May 2<sup>2</sup> to help maintain the character, quality and stability of our established neighbourhoods and lessen the impact of such intense densification. We also referenced the suite policy in Edmonton.

**ADD YOUR VOICE:** Send comments to all Councillors at once with an email to: [Alderweb@calgary.ca](mailto:Alderweb@calgary.ca).

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<sup>1</sup> Edmonton does not permit secondary suites to form part of a condo plan and be sold separately. Their garage suites are also a maximum of 60 sq m and only allowed to be 6.5 m in height. Their minimum width for backyard suites is 15 m and ALL secondary suites require a minimum of 3 on-site parking stalls. Suites below grade can be as large as the main floor of the house, but only 40% of the main dwelling up to 70 sq m if above grade.

<sup>2</sup> Visit City of Calgary website for video of May 2, 2016 Council meeting, Agenda Item 9.2