



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### POLICY REPORT DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Date: January 13, 2004  
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CC File No.: 4654  
Meeting Date: January 27, 2004

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of the Housing Centre, in consultation with the Director of City Plans, the Chief Building Official, the Chief License Inspector and the Director of Legal Services

SUBJECT: Secondary Suites

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Director of City Plans be instructed to make application to amend Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575 to allow secondary suites in RS, RT and RM zoning districts, limit the number of secondary suites to one for each one-family dwelling, and remove the terms family suite and phase-out suite throughout, generally in accordance with Appendix A, and that the application be referred to a Public Hearing; and

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary by-law for consideration at the Public Hearing, generally in accordance with Appendix A;

- B. THAT the following recommendations be discussed and public comment sought at the afore-mentioned Public Hearing:

B1. Modifications to building standards contained in Appendix B;

B2. Continuation of the inspection and enforcement of secondary suites based on complaints from immediate neighbours or tenants directly impacted, and in accordance with the following policies:

- In the case of one-family dwellings constructed before June 30, 1956, continuation of the policy to accept suites lawfully in existence prior to that date as legally non-conforming uses;

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- In the case of one-family dwellings constructed after June 30, 1956 or for which permits have been issued after June 1956 up to the present, enforcement will address fire, life-safety and health issues, noise, standards of maintenance and compliance with zoning which shall limit the building to one secondary suite;
  - In the case of one-family dwellings constructed after the date of enactment of the changes proposed by this report, a building shall be limited to one secondary suite; and
- C. THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward a by-law to amend the Building By-law generally in accordance with Appendix B to the extent she and the Chief Building Official consider necessary if Council enacts the zoning amendments contemplated by Recommendation A;
- D. THAT the following policy of Council be adopted:
- A one-family dwelling with a secondary suite will be a conditional approval use, and will be subject to the condition that the owner must not strata title without consent. For a new one-family dwelling with a secondary suite, the owner must register a section 219 covenant prohibiting strata titling without consent. The city will release the covenant, on the owner's request, not less than 12 months after issuance of the occupancy permit because the building will then be existing rather than new. (For an existing one-family dwelling with a secondary suite, registration of such a covenant is not necessary because the Registrar of Land Titles will not accept a strata plan without municipal approval.);
- E. THAT if Council enacts the zoning amendments contemplated in Recommendation A, the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for approval all necessary consequential amendments to the Parking By-law, License By-law, Subdivision By-law, ODP By-laws and other by-laws; and
- F. THAT Council endorse staff consultation with the Province in seeking alternate means of restricting strata titling of new one-family dwelling with a secondary suite to the present requirement of a Section 219 covenant.

#### **GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS that the foregoing be approved, noting that secondary suites are an important component of the City's affordable housing supply.

#### **RECENT COUNCIL POLICY**

**1986:** The City establishes an initiative for addressing secondary suites:

- Allowing secondary suites in single-family areas of the city that want them; and return areas that do not support them to one-family dwelling occupancy [except for family suites];

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- Allowing family suites in all single-family areas;
  - Ensuring that secondary suites meet basic safety and livability standards; and
  - Enforcing closure of illegal secondary suites over time, through the introduction of “phase-out” suites.

**June 1995:** CityPlan is approved to provide directions for Vancouver. Two directions relate to secondary suites:

- “Neighborhood Housing Variety: ...increase neighbourhood housing variety throughout the city, especially in neighbourhood centres; and give people the opportunity to stay in their neighbourhood as their housing needs change and, by doing so, take a share of regional growth”; and
- “Addressing Housing Costs: ...increase the supply of subsidized and lower cost market housing throughout the city through the use of senior government programs, private sector incentives, and City regulations and subsidies”

**July 1999:** The City decides to explore ways to bring more secondary suites into legal conformity, and provide for more effective enforcement, while allowing phase-out suites whose permit expiry date comes up while this work is underway to remain in operation. The Chief License Inspector is instructed to withhold enforcement on phase-out suites for up to 3 years from the date of adoption of the recommendations, other than in cases of safety hazard, or other circumstances where enforcement is deemed necessary.

**July 2001:** The City retains a consultant to undertake a Secondary Suites Standards and Enforcement Review.

**September 2003:** Council asks staff to report back on measures to legalize and regulate secondary suites (as part of an overall policy on housing, diversity and social inclusion)

## **SUMMARY AND PURPOSE**

The City’s efforts to manage secondary suites in single-family areas date back to the 1950s. In the mid-1980s, the City embarked on a process aimed at identifying neighbourhoods which wanted suites and those that did not. Following a city-wide plebiscite held as part of the 1988 civic election, several areas of the city were rezoned to allow suites (the RS-1S zone), and several confirmed their wish to remain as single-family areas. Family suites were introduced city-wide in all RS zones, and phase-out suites were introduced to provide for upgrading or closure of some suites over a time period of up to 10 years in all single-family areas.

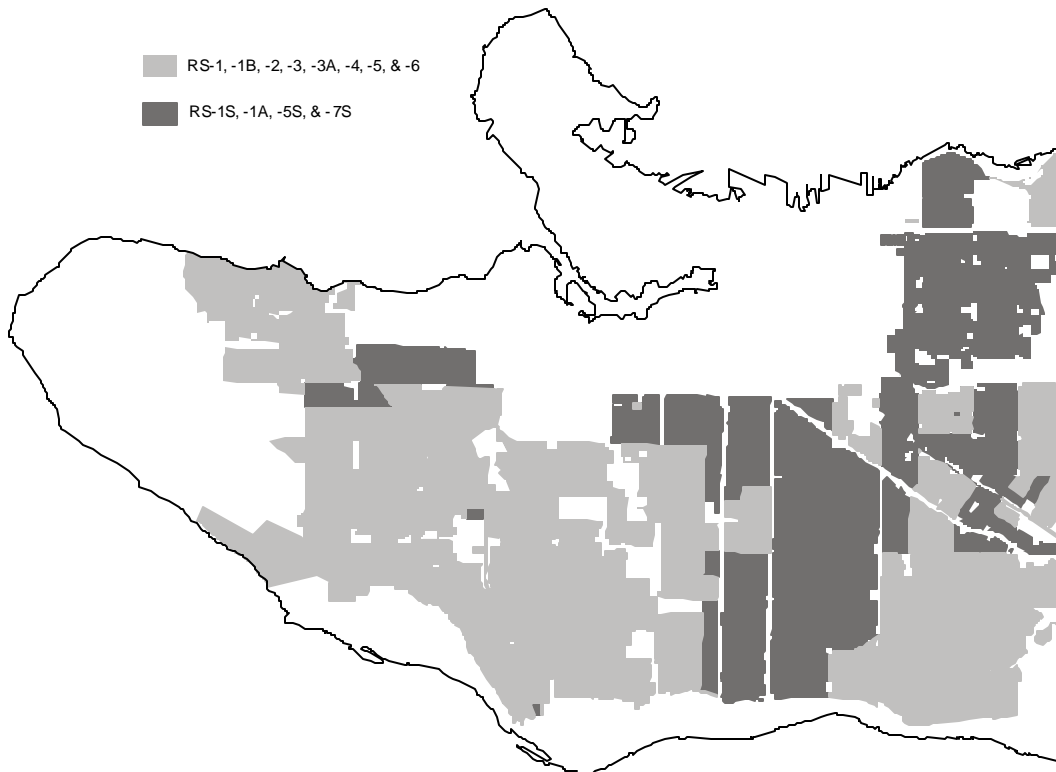
There may be 25,000 or more secondary suites in the city. These units provide much needed affordable housing during a time when property values and rents have ranked the highest in the country. Loss of over 2,200 phase-out suites through closure plus elimination of suites in areas which do not allow secondary suites, under present City policy, would represent a significant loss. The City’s housing policies call for actions to increase opportunities for affordability and social sustainability. Permitting suites city-wide would meet these objectives.

This report presents recommendations to:

- allow secondary suites as a conditional approval use permitted in all areas of the City which allow one-family dwellings;

- change zoning regulations and building standards for suites, to reduce the hurdles faced when legalizing a suite; and
- focus enforcement on fire, life-safety, health and standards of maintenance issues, and the closure of multiple suites (one-family dwellings with two or more secondary suites) upon complaint.

Map 1 - Suite and Non-Suites RS Areas of the City



Lighter shaded areas allow only family suites; darker shaded areas allow both family and non-family, or 'revenue' suites

## DEFINITIONS

The Zoning and Development By-law does not contain the term "secondary suite". A one-family dwelling where a suite is added is defined as a "multiple conversion dwelling", whereas a new 'one-family dwelling' with a suite is defined as a "two-family dwelling". For this report, the following informal definitions will be used:

**Secondary suite:** a non-strata titled dwelling unit contained within a principal dwelling; usually, but not always, located in the basement. Suites not designated for families only, sometimes called "non-family" or "revenue" suites, are permitted in single-family areas bearing the "S" designation, for example RS-1S.

**Permanent suite:** a secondary suite which has permanent approval under a development permit.

**Family suite:** a secondary suite where the principal dwelling is occupied by the owner of the building, and the secondary suite is occupied by a relative or household support person. Family suites are permitted in all RS single-family areas of the city.

**Phase-out suite:** a secondary suite which has been issued a temporary approval, for example 10 years, at the end of which the suite is to be upgraded to meet City requirements, in the

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case of a suite in an RS-“S” zone, or closed where the suite is in an area where non-family suites are not permitted.

**Legally non-conforming suites:** suites existing prior to adoption of Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575 in June 1956.

## BACKGROUND

**History:** A detailed history of the City’s consideration of secondary suites is outlined in Appendix C.

**More Recent City Actions:** In the civic election of 1988, a plebiscite allowed voters to indicate their preference for permitting suites in their area. In areas where voters responded favourably, there was a subsequent planning process which rezoned the area to RS-1S, the zoning which allows the addition of a secondary suite. City-wide family suites were also approved. This entitles the owner of a property to provide a 2<sup>nd</sup> dwelling unit, within the principal building, but only for a relative.

The other component of this initiative was the creation of the phase-out suite. An owner would be entitled to legally operate a phase-out suite for up to 10 years, depending on the attributes of the existing suite and the amount of upgrading the owner was prepared to undertake. In areas where suites are allowed, the intent was to see the suite legalized, or closed if unable to meet standards. In a non-suite area, the phase-out suite was to allow suites to gradually cease operation. The first of these suites came up for closure in 1999, at which time Council extended the closure date by a further three years. The number of phase-out suites by area is provided in Appendix D.

The map on page 4 shows the results of the 1988 Council initiatives. The non-suite RS areas of the city allow family suites, but not secondary suites (RS-1, RS-1B, RS-2, RS-3, RS-3A, RS-4, RS-5, RS-6). Single family zones which carry the “S” designation allow both family and secondary suites (RS-1S, RS-5S, RS-7S).

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Other inputs utilized in preparing the recommendations in this report are as follows:

- City Experience with Secondary Suite Programs: Staff have been involved with various secondary suite programs over the past 20 years. This experience provides information about the opportunities and concerns owners face in establishing a legal suite and the challenges facing enforcement actions;
- In 2001, the City contracted the services of Gage-Babcock & Associates to undertake a Secondary Suite Standards and Enforcement Review. The study focused on building standards and by-law issues related to secondary suites, provided a comparison between municipalities, and investigated reasons for non-compliance. The Study focused on permitted suites and did not review land use in areas where revenue suites are not permitted. The study was completed in 2003;
- Staff have also reviewed secondary suite experiences in other municipalities, for example, A Summary of Municipal Secondary Suite Policies in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, dated March 2002;

- On April 11, 2003, SmartGrowthBC sponsored a workshop on barriers and solutions for secondary suites, attended by over 120 individuals; and
- In June 2003, the Tenant Rights Action Coalition (TRAC) prepared recommendations to the City for the legalization of secondary suites.

Copies of the aforementioned reports are available on file with the City Clerk.

**Estimated Numbers:** Estimates on the actual number of suites in single-family areas range between 15,000 and 25,000. The lower estimate is taken from 1998 numbers shown in Table 1 below, based on BC Assessment Authority and City permits data, while the higher estimate is generally acknowledged by staff and the City's consultants as more representative of the situation.

Table 1: Secondary Suite Estimates (1998)

Area	Total One-Family Dwellings	Total Suites	Phase Out	Permanent	Illegal
RS zones which allow suites	30,443	10,516 (35%)*	1,257 (12%)**	1057 (10%)**	8,202 (78%)**
Non-suite RS Areas	35,587	4,900 (14%)*	606 (12%)**	0	4,195 (86%)**
Totals	66,030	15,416 (23%)*	1,863 (12%)**	1,057 (6%)**	12,397 (80%)**

\* Percentage of houses known to have suites

\*\* Percentage of total suites

Table 2 on the following page overviews the 4,300 suites which have some form of legal status in 2004. Of those, 1,589 are legal permanent secondary and family suites, 481 are identified as legal non-conforming suites and 2,298 are legal phase-out suites.

Table 2: 2004 Statistics on Identified Suites

Type of Suite	Number
Pre-1956 Legally non-conforming suites	481
Permanently approved secondary suites	1,442
Family suites	147
Phase-out suites	2,298
Total	4,368

**Summary of Issues:** Table 3 summarizes the many perceptions (which may or may not be accurate) presented in opposition to and in support of secondary suites.

Table 3: Viewpoints on Secondary Suites

In Opposition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some owners of single-family houses feel that a premium was paid to live in a single-family area. Secondary suites are seen as an infringement on the quality of enjoyment and the value of their home;</li> <li>▪ Tenants of suites increase overall neighbourhood activity levels, create a shortage of street parking and increase noise in the neighbourhood;</li> <li>▪ Problem premises impact the liveability of nearby residents;</li> <li>▪ Properties with suites do not pay their fair share of utility and service costs.</li> </ul>
In Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Suites are seen as an essential component of the affordable rental housing stock, noting that almost a quarter of the houses in the single family areas of the city have one;</li> <li>▪ Secondary suites provide reasonably priced rental housing for students and young adults, older individuals, couples and families on low incomes;</li> <li>▪ Suites provide a top up of income for home buyers who might not otherwise qualify for a mortgage in a city where housing costs are acknowledged as the highest in the country;</li> <li>▪ Suites provide a secondary source of income for seniors and others which allows them to remain in their house when diminishing income may require a move;</li> <li>▪ A secondary unit in a home occupied by a senior provides an added sense of security;</li> <li>▪ Suites provide for modest density increases without significant changes in neighbourhood character; and</li> <li>▪ Tenants may feel they are not in a position to register complaints against the owner of an illegal suite, for fear that the suite will be closed - permitting suites reduces the possibility that a suite will be closed</li> </ul>

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## **CONSEQUENCES OF IMPLEMENTING 1988 POLICY**

Following through on the 1988 suite initiative would see approximately 2,300 phase-out suites closed in the next five years, and the City pursuing closure of suites in the remaining areas of the city that did not support legalization in 1988.

Phase-out suites alone account for 10% of the secondary suite accommodation in the city. This could represent a significant reduction in affordable housing stock in a city which has seen very low rental vacancy rates over the last 30 years. Combined with the much reduced level of purpose-built rental housing and cancellation of the Province's HOMES BC program, such closures will reduce vacancy rates for affordable units to very low levels, resulting in little or no available rental housing affordable to low and modest income households. This represents a crisis for low-income renters at a time when the City is coping with increasing numbers of homeless people. While there is a considerable amount of new construction in the condominium market, much of which is finding its way into the rental market, this new housing is not aimed at lower-income individuals, couples and families.

## **ALLOWING SECONDARY SUITES CITY-WIDE**

In addition to Council's September 2003 request to bring forward for consideration at Public Hearing recommendations to legalize secondary suites, staff believe that there are strong reasons for a change in policy:

- Secondary suites go far beyond supplementing the city's rental stock, as they are essential to the City's ability to provide for low- or modest-income renters, noting there are as many secondary suites in the city as non-market or social housing units;
- The current secondary suite policies place a significant amount of the city's affordable housing stock at risk;
- Because of the illegal status of many suites, tenants are treated as second class residents; fear of a suite being closed discourages tenants from complaining about inadequate or unsafe conditions;
- A policy change would encourage and support the establishment of more suites - an option not available in some areas of the city under the current policy; and
- Suites provide for moderate intensification within the context of existing housing stock and existing neighbourhoods, in a manner fully consistent with the City's sustainability objectives.

Staff note that there appears to be increased community support for secondary suites. The results of CityPlan community vision process indicates, in areas of the city where suites are not allowed, opposition to allowing suites has been 35% or less, as shown Table 3 on the following page.

Further details on the results of the Vision surveys are outlined in Appendix E. In areas such as Victoria-Fraserview Killarney, the proposal of allowing suites in more areas came with recommendations about improved enforcement in response to complaints about parking, poor maintenance and noise.



Table 3 - CityPlan Survey Responses on Rental Suites in More Areas

Community Vision Survey Results	Support	Neutral	Opposition
Dunbar	52%	12%	35%
Victoria-Fraserview Killarney	45%* and 51%**	21%***	34%* and 28%**
Renfrew Collingwood	54%* and 60%**	25%* and 29%**	21%* and 11%**

\*general survey responses; \*\* random survey; \*\*\* same response in both surveys

## ZONING CHANGES

Staff recommend that suite and non-suite single family zoning districts be consolidated city-wide. Under the proposed zoning structure, for example, RS-1 and RS-1S zoning districts will become RS-1 with suites. The necessary changes are outlined in Appendix A.

**One Suite For Each House:** In most single-family areas of the city it is presently possible to have a principal residence and a family suite (an additional caretaker suite is allowed on very large lots). In the areas of the city where secondary suites are allowed, the owner must choose between either a secondary, non-family suite or a family suite. To simplify the process, staff recommend that each house be allowed one suite, without differentiation between family and non-family suites, or caretaker suites. Eliminating “family suite” from the Zoning and Development By-law is recommended. The few suites which have been approved as family suites would become permanent secondary suites.

Staff also recommend creation of a definition to reinforce the City’s intent of allowing an interdependent principal dwelling unit and a ‘secondary’ suite along the following lines:

**“One Family Dwelling with Secondary Suite”**, which means a building containing only two dwelling units, one of which is smaller than the other, with internal access between the two units, but which does not include a two-family dwelling, multiple conversion dwelling, or infill one-family dwelling.

Alternatively, subject to further legal review by staff, Legal Services may modify the definitions of multiple conversion dwelling and two-family dwelling, if appropriate.

Appendix A outlines the necessary changes to implement this definition.

**Extending Secondary Suites City-wide:** Staff also recommend extending this opportunity throughout the city, in essence to any one-family dwelling in all residential zoning districts. This will include RS, RT (Two-family) and RM (Multiple Dwelling) areas of the city. The no-stratification requirement (see the following section) will continue to apply because the new standards proposed later in this report apply only in the case of a one-family dwelling and the interdependent secondary suite.

**No Strata Title Policy:** The City’s present policy is to not allow strata-titling of suites. While allowing strata-titling may have the benefit of providing the opportunity for more affordable

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home ownership, suites have traditionally been viewed as providing affordable rental stock where the need is much greater. While the City has control over the strata title conversion of previously occupied buildings, the City has no control over registration of a strata title plan for new construction prior to occupancy. The existing process requires the owner to register a covenant preventing strata title registration when a new one-family dwelling with a suite is approved.

While the registration of the covenant is a minor step, it is still seen as one more step in a lengthy and costly process. Staff would like to eliminate this requirement, but until an alternate mechanism can be determined, the requirement should remain. Staff also considered the possibility of making suites an outright approval use, however until the strata title matter can be resolved, this change cannot be recommended. The covenant must remain a condition of approval. Staff will report back on this matter if the strata title restriction can be resolved in some other fashion.

Staff recommend that the City be prepared to lift such covenants, upon request of the property owner, a minimum 12 months after occupancy of the building.

**Phase-Out Suites:** Staff recommend also that the term “phase-out suite” be eliminated, as the overall intent now is to identify a means by which it is possible to “phase” the majority of suites into legal existence, rather than out of existence.

Any further action on phase-out suites will be held pending Council’s decisions at the Public Hearing. If Council approves the various recommendations contained in this report, phase-out suites would become like any other secondary suites, subject to the same complaint-based enforcement policies and building standards laid out in this report.

**Parking:** Increased on-street parking problems generated by suites is a significant concern for neighbourhoods and local residents.

Parking is a multi-faceted problem. While parking spaces may be required and provided on a site, the City has no control as to whether property owners actually use them. Garages are often used for storage of household goods or recreational vehicles, or used as workshops. Homes without a suite may have many vehicles, one for each parent, plus vehicles for young adults and teenagers. A survey undertaken in the District of North Vancouver in moving to legalize suites in the mid-1990s provides some interesting insights to tenant attributes:

- generally lower incomes;
- rental payments of about \$100 less in rent than those in apartments; and
- often did not own cars.

It is expected that parking will continue to be one of the more significant issues. Secondary suites will contribute to increased congestion along with households with multiple car ownership. However, weighing the need to provide for affordable housing against on-site parking, staff recommend that additional parking not be required on-site for secondary suites in existing houses (houses built before the enactment of the changes proposed in this report). New one-family dwellings with secondary suites will be required to provide two parking spaces, as will applications involving the addition of a secondary suite to a new one-family dwelling approved after the date of the enactment of the proposed changes. For buildings constructed after adoption of the current Zoning and Development By-law, staff will stipulate that the required parking be restored if it is not being used for parking.

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## BUILDING STANDARDS

Permitting secondary suites in single-family areas city-wide in itself is unlikely to result in a rush of owners coming forward to actually legalize suites. The 1998 statistics show that about 78% of suites in areas where suites can be made legal, remain illegal. However, allowing for suites and reducing costs of legalization should increase the number of legal suites and gradually improve the minimum safety standards and quality of suites over time.

The reasons for the continuance of illegal suites, even in areas that allow for suites, are seen as mainly financial considerations:

- The additional costs of upgrading a suite to meet building safety standards may be viewed as unrecoverable by the owner struggling to finance ownership, or by others as sufficient to negate the financial benefit of operating the suite; and
- Legalizing a suite has other cost implications including reporting rental income for income tax purposes, and the possibility of increased property assessment resulting in increased property taxes, annual license and utility fees. Uncertainty about these costs can act as a significant impediment to legalization.

The latter point is seen to be particularly important in the case of new one-family dwellings which can easily meet the building standards, but suite approval is not sought as part of the original permit. Staff are aware that often two secondary suites are installed after final inspection, which is also likely a deterrent to legalizing the one suite. An occupancy review is presented later in the report.

**Cost Considerations:** The process of legalizing a suite can involve a variety of costs, depending on the age, condition and quality of the existing house. While development and building permit fees are nominal, the owner may face significant costs in meeting building code requirements such as minimum floor-to-ceiling heights, fire separation, electrical upgrades, smoke alarms, plumbing, gas and sprinklers. Installing a sprinkler system costs between \$3,000 to \$5,000. Raising a house or lowering a basement to increase floor-to-ceiling height plus finishing the space can cost up to \$50,000, according to the City's consultant. It is understandable why in some cases the homeowner of an older home does not legalize a secondary suite.

Appendix B outlines recommendations for changes to building requirements that could be implemented to moderate the potential costs of legalizing a suite. The following sections highlight some of the important changes.

**Sprinklers:** Staff recommend elimination for the requirement for sprinklers in the case of a suite within an existing building. In place of this requirement, hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms will serve to ensure that occupants are alerted to a fire anywhere in the house. The standard proposed will be modestly higher than present, in that such alarms will need to be equipped with back-up battery power, and will need to include a "silencing switch". Two fire deaths recently occurred in an apartment where the power was off, and the smoke alarm gave no warning.

**Floor to Ceiling Height:** For houses built prior to 1956, ceiling heights pose the most significant obstacle and costs to secondary suite legalization. Careful consideration has been given to the extent to which this one regulation can be relaxed, given concerns on the part of the Chief Building Official related to fires, smoke inhalation and emergency evacuation of a suite.

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The normal minimum requirement is 2.3 m (7'6") over prescribed minimum areas. The current City standard when upgrading an existing secondary suite is a minimum of 2.08 m (6'10"). The consultants hired to review standards and enforcement recommended that the minimum for existing basements be reduced to 1.98 m (6'6"), with allowance of 1.93 m (6'4") under ducts and beams. Staff recommend a minimum 1.98 m (6'6") height over 80% of the suite and in all areas along the exit path from the suite, with authority given to the Chief Building Official to relax this requirement in areas which are not essential to emergency exiting from a suite.

**New Construction:** While there are no statistics, staff believe, supported by the consultant on building standards and enforcement, that on a regular basis owners of new one-family dwellings install suites, often two on the ground floor, after the final inspection by the City. This is seen to be an increasing problem, and is addressed in the next section.

To encourage owners to seek approval of a legal suite at the point of original construction, staff recommend installation of utilities and other fire and life-safety requirements as a part of all new one-family dwelling construction (to make them "suite ready" for the one suite). This includes electrical service sufficient to handle both the principal dwelling and the secondary suite. Smoke alarms and sprinklers are already required. There will be a marginal cost increase related to these requirements. This also provides for more flexible use of housing stock as the needs of the owner change.

Discussion included the notion of providing two parking spaces for new one-family dwellings at the outset; however, staff felt this step was unnecessary, in large part because many new one-family dwellings are built with a two-car garage. Further, it looks to promote auto use and increases the amount of impervious surfaces, notions that are contradictory to the City's sustainability policies. The additional parking area can be created when a suite is added, in a manner which is sensitive to the environment.

## **INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT**

**Permits and Fees:** Staff recommend that permitting and licensing fees be retained as a requirement, with no change other than that anticipated as part of the normal fee review. The development permit portion is presently \$340; the building and electrical permit portion depends on the cost of the construction. For construction with a value up to \$5000, the building permit fee is \$85, the fee for a secondary suite renovation permit most of the time. The total fee for a development/building permit is approximately \$425.

An annual business license for a suite is \$49 a year. Elimination of the business license was discussed as one less hurdle in the process of legalization. Staff are recommending that it be maintained, as the business license is the one established link between the owner and the secondary suite, particularly important in matters to do with enforcement.

The water connection fee for retrofitting a sprinkler system for the purpose of legalizing a suite is \$2,845 (2003 rate). Under the proposed recommendations, the requirement for sprinklers will be eliminated as a requirement for existing buildings, however, staff recommend that the present Council-approved fee waiver be maintained where the owner volunteers to install the sprinkler. New one-family dwellings with suites in RS areas are not exempt and must pay this fee.

**Enforcement:** To date, the policy of enforcement only upon complaint by a tenant or neighbour has been successful in penalizing property owners who do not adequately manage

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tenants or maintain properties. Tenants are less likely to complain under the current policy out of fear that the unit will then be removed. Making suites possible, or “legalizable”, will reduce the possibility of closure.

For the most part the City has chosen not to undertake aggressive enforcement of suites, but has generally limited enforcement to a complaint based system. Considering staff resources and legalities this approach is sensible and is recommended.

Approximately 200 complaints are received a year. Complaints are normally received in response to negative impacts around the occupancy, noise, parking and garbage issues, and usually are the direct result of property owners who do not adequately manage the tenants or maintain these properties. The onus is on the City to prove the existence of an illegal unit and as such the ability to obtain the necessary evidence can be difficult. Although these additional dwelling units are providing necessary and needed housing, they are also operating as a business, the impacts of which can seriously impact a neighbourhood. The aforementioned licensing requirement provides staff with an additional enforcement tool when required.

**Inspections:** For applications to add suites to existing buildings, the primary focus of inspections and improvements will now be on the suite. In the past, the entire house has been included. Staff will deal with serious fire, life-safety and health issues obvious elsewhere in the house, as well as utilities related to the suite, such as electrical service panels, existing furnaces and boilers, and hot water tanks which may be located in the main dwelling unit. This inspection is needed to ensure that such services are adequate to avoid fires due to electrical overload and to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, and that installations have not been compromised by the unauthorized construction which created the suite.

In the case of new construction, it is recommended that all new one-family dwellings be inspected 12 months after occupancy to determine whether or not suites have been illegally added. This new inspection should encourage the installation of legal suites at the time of construction.

The 12-month inspection of all new one-family dwellings involves 600 to 800 new inspections a year. Staff believe this may require an additional property use inspector, however, existing resources will be reviewed and staff will report back if additional resources are required.

**Multiple Suites:** A difficult issue facing the City is the matter of one-family dwellings with two or more secondary suites. In 2001, the City’s Revenue Services undertook exterior site inspections with the result that an estimated additional 3,500 to 4,000 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> suites were identified city-wide. Letters were sent to 4,000 owners, setting garbage allocation and fees based on the information. Half the owners responded to dispute the suite count in their houses, 500 owners asked for an inspection (presumably to deny the existence of a suite), and 1,500 called to correct the number of suites listed (most common correction was from 4 to 3 suites).

Staff believe that multiple suites generate the most impacts for neighbours, particularly when a property is poorly managed. In many cases, according to City inspection staff, the lack of attention to the maintenance of a property, lack of control of tenant behaviour, noise and other impacts to surrounding neighbours is often a consequence of an owner not living on the property. In many of these cases, suites are serving to generate investment revenue and not providing assistance to an owner-occupier with a mortgage. Property-use inspectors throughout the city respond to these situations on an ongoing basis.

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While there is sympathy with the concept of an owner occupancy, it is not presently requirement, nor do staff recommend such a requirement. The requirement would be difficult if not impossible to enforce and it would serve as yet another deterrent to legalization. The focus of attention will continue to be the outwardly manifestations such as noise and property maintenance. With the ability for an owner to make a suite legal, the complaint system should be more effective on an overall basis. The focus should turn to those owners who disrupt the neighbourhood, and not all owners.

The building issues related to multiple suites are more significant. For the most part the proposed building standard relaxations outlined in this report are intended to apply to a house with one suite. Higher standards are necessary in the case of multiple suites, where it is more likely that the owner does not live in the building, and where fire and life-safety considerations are more critical.

As mentioned earlier, the City responds to approximately 200 complaints related to suites every year. Staff recommend continuing with complaint-based enforcement in general, but that enforcement action as a result of complaints include a requirement to comply with the zoning, or in other words, a maximum of one secondary suite per house. Neighbours should not suffer the consequences of poor property management.

**Utilities:** Water service, sewer and recycling services are estimated at about \$155 a year for a secondary suite, or about \$13 a month. Staff believe this to be a minor consideration overall and recommend that secondary suites pay these costs. A future consideration may be further surveys to identify unknown suites such as that conducted by the Revenue Services and Sanitation Departments specifically aimed at collecting these charges. Engineering Services points out that as more suites are legalized, service costs may be maintained at current levels, even in the face of rising costs, due to the larger number of contributors.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Utilizing secondary suites is consistent with the City's objectives of promoting more sustainable and complete communities by making more efficient use of existing land and services and providing densities which support transit. As household size has been decreasing over the past 40 years, in many neighbourhoods the existence of secondary suites has maintained, rather than increased, the area population.

The City of Vancouver Regional Context Statement indicates ways in which the City is contributing to the Liveable Region Plan. One requirement in the Plan is for the City to provide more ground-oriented housing for families and children. Secondary suites provide ground-oriented housing. Fitting new accommodation into existing buildings, new or old, is economically, environmentally and socially efficient, promoting all three principal tenets of sustainable growth.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Staff are recommending that this initiative proceed directly to Public Hearing. A tentative date has been set for March 2, 2004. Once Council has made its decisions, staff will investigate and report back on a campaign to encourage more property owners to voluntarily seek approval of their suites.

Experience in other municipalities suggests that brochures and other communications are required to advise people about Secondary Suite Programs. The City has a “Housing Renovation Centre” to assist homeowners with renovations. If a large number of owners come forward to legalize their suite some additional staffing may be required.

Staff expect to undertake further work on the elimination of the no-strata title covenant, in response to comments from the public during the Public Hearing, and will monitor the impact of these changes and the extent to which more suites are legalized should the changes be approved. A report back to Council would occur at the appropriate time.

## CONCLUSION

Staff believe there to be real danger to the stock of affordable housing from implementing the current policy to close 2,200 phase-out suites. Rather it would seem appropriate to allow suites city-wide and ease the process of legalization, to stabilize the existing supply of suites and facilitate the development of new suites. Consequently, this report recommends:

1. Allowing secondary suites in all RS, RT and RM districts of the City;
2. Allowing one suite for each house;
3. Introducing moderate changes to the zoning regulations and building standards for new and existing suites, as shown in Table 4 below ;
4. Continue enforcement based on a response to complaints from neighbours or tenants who are directly impacted by the maintenance and operation of a property; and
5. Focus enforcement on fire, life-safety and health concerns, and in the case of complaints related to poor property management, compliance with the zoning (maximum of one principal dwelling and a secondary suite per house).

Table 4 - Summary of Recommended Changes to Zoning, Building Standards and Inspections for New and Existing Single Family Dwellings

Measure	New Construction	Existing Building
Limit of two residential units	Yes	Yes
Parking Requirement	Two spaces	None for suite, required parking for existing dwelling to be provided*
Code up-grade	n/a	Suite only*
Floor to ceiling height	7'6" required; 8'0" normally provided	6'6" minimum over 80% of the suite area, and in all areas of egress from the suite*
Sprinklers	Currently required	Install as part of subsequent major upgrade to remainder of building (more than 50% of the replacement value of the house); the water connection fee waiver will still apply to those who volunteer to install*
Fire separation for suites	<i>Install at point of construction*</i>	Accept existing gypsum or

		plaster separations*
Sound separation	<i>Install at point of construction*</i>	Not required
Electrical service capacity for one-family dwelling including one secondary suite	<i>Install at point of construction*</i>	Required
Electrical outlet provisions	<i>Install at point of construction</i>	Not required to meet current code regarding number and location
Hard-wired smoke alarms interconnected throughout and between the principal dwelling and the secondary suite	<i>Install at point of construction*</i>	Required
Development and building permit requirements	Needed if suite not installed under the permits for original construction	Joint DB Required
219 No-strata Covenant	Required for new construction with suite, with release after 12 months*	Not required
Inspection	Follow-up inspection to occur after 12 months for all one-family dwellings *	n/a

\* new requirement or modification of present standard

***Italics denotes requirement to make new one-family dwellings "suite ready"***

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## APPENDIX A

### Amendments to Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575

A draft by-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions set out below, which are subject to change and refinement prior to By-law posting:

1. To Section 2 add the following definition:

**"One Family Dwelling with Secondary Suite"**, which means a building containing only two dwelling units, one of which is smaller than the other, with internal access between the two units, but which does not include a two-family dwelling, multiple conversion dwelling, or infill one-family dwelling;

or, subject to further legal review by staff, to modify the definitions of Multiple Conversion Dwelling and Two-Family Dwelling, as appropriate;

2. Repeal the RS-1S and RS-5S Districts Schedules;
3. Strike out references to zoning districts RS-1S and RS-5S wherever they appear including section 9.1;



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4. Amend Schedule D to add the territory covered by zoning districts RS-1S and RS-5S to zoning districts RS-1 and RS-5 respectively;
  5. Repeal special provisions in Districts Schedules RS-1 and RS-1S and RS-5 and RS-5S that apply only to RS-1S and RS-5S;
  6. In the RS, RT and RM Districts Schedules, to section 3.2.1.DW or 3.2.DW, as the case may be, add "One-Family Dwelling with Secondary Suite";
  7. From section 3.2.1.DW of the RS-1, RS-3, RS-3A, RS-5 District Schedules, strike out references to "Multiple Conversion Dwelling", "Multiple Dwelling", "Phase-Out Suite" and "Two-Family Dwelling";
  8. Repeal all references to "Family Suite" and "Phase-Out Suite" in the RS Districts Schedules;
  9. Repeal section 11.12 for Family Suite (Additional Regulations);
  10. To make all other appropriate amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law necessary to effect the legalization of secondary suites.

## APPENDIX B

### Recommendations on Building and Related Standards and Inspections - Secondary Suites

**New Construction:** All new single family dwellings constructed as of the date of enactment of these changes will meet the following requirements:

- Installation of electrical service and wiring capable of providing sufficient electrical capacity for two households, and located in an accessible common area;
- Installation of necessary sound separation;
- Installation of hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms on each floor;
- Installation of sprinklers;
- Requirement for a development-building permit to add suite if approval not part of original development permit; and
- New single family dwellings will be inspected 12 months after occupancy to determine whether the existing use complies with the approved development and building permits.

**Existing Construction:** The following requirements are established for dealing with existing buildings:

- Field inspections for secondary suites will be initiated either upon application by the property owner, or upon a complaint by a tenant or neighbour;
- For building constructed in 1956 or before, building code upgrades will be limited to the additional unit, except in the case of fire, life-safety and health issues;
- For a basement level secondary suite, a floor to ceiling clearance of 6' 6" is required over 80% of the suite and in all areas of essential access and egress for the unit;
- Upgrade of electrical service and wiring to provide sufficient electrical capacity for two households;
- Installation of hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms, as well as the alarms being interconnected between dwelling units, including battery back-up and silencing features; and
- Installation of sprinklers in the case of major renovations to the whole building (renovations above 50% of the replacement value of the house);
- Some gypsum/plaster fire separation required between the principal unit and the secondary suite

## APPENDIX C

### History of Suites in Vancouver

- 1940 War Measures Act, applied throughout Canada by the Federal Government, encouraged homeowners to relieve wartime housing shortages through suites in single-family homes
- 1956 Council decision to close secondary suites in RS-1 areas. However suites installed prior to 1956 were given a temporary reprieve. These suites were referred to as "moratorium" suites.
- 1959 Council orders closure of all suites in RS-1.
- 1960 City Council adopts policy to eliminate all illegal suites in RS-1 Districts within 10 years.
- 1961 Council agrees to withhold enforcement action for suites occupied by parents, grandparents and children (added in 1973) of the owner.
- 1963 Council agrees to withhold enforcement action where there is recognized financial or medical hardship of the owner or tenant.
- 1960-1974 Through a series of four resolutions, instructs the Director of Planning to renew development permits for suites until December 31, 1974.
- Dec. 1974 Council instructs the Director of Permits and Licenses to temporarily withhold enforcement action on illegal suites in the RS-1 areas with respect to which a development permit expires on December 31, 1974.
- 1975 Council establishes a plebiscite process, resulting in the creation of the RS-1A zoning district in two small areas of the city (Kitsilano and Grandview-Woodlands).
- 1977 Council adopts specific financial and medical guidelines for approving hardship applications. These are reviewed and updated as required.
- 1978 Council resolved that Hardship applications not be considered in building built since January 1, 1975.
- 1980 Council authorizes a Committee of Council to be the final appeal for hardship suites.
- 1981 Council reviews its secondary suite policy, decides to continue to withhold enforcement action for approved parent, family, hardship and moratorium suites, and enforcing closures on a complaint basis.
- 1983 Hardship Committee is disbanded. The Director of Permits and Licenses is given responsibility for hardship applications, with an appeal to a Committee of Council.

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1983	Council rescinds the October 1978 resolution not to consider hardship applications in buildings erected after January 1, 1975.
1983	Council approved a \$100 processing fee and requirement to meet minimum life safety standards.
1986	Council directs the Director of Permits and Licenses to refuse any hardship applications for withholding of enforcement where there are known legitimate complaints from residents in the neighbourhood.
1986-1998	Council considered and chooses not to permit suites in all RS-1 areas, but as an alternative establishes a plebiscite process, where by voters indicated a yes/no preference in the 1988 municipal election, which was followed by an implementation program in those areas that indicated yes. Several areas of the City are now zoned RS-1S as a consequence of that initiative.
1987	Courts determine that the City's hardship policy contravenes both the City Charter and the RS-1 Zoning Schedule.
Jul 8, 1999	Council adopts a policy to pursue ways to bring more secondary suites into legal conformity while also investigating more effective enforcement methods; and in the meantime allow phase-out suites whose permit expiry date comes up while this work is underway to remain in operation. The Chief Licence Inspector is instructed to withhold enforcement on phase-out suite use for up to 3 years from the date of adoption of these recommendations, other than in cases of safety hazard, or other circumstances where he may deem enforcement necessary.
July 31, 2001	Council approves a recommendation to award a contract to Gage-Babcock & Associates to undertake the Secondary Suites Standards and Enforcement Review.
Sept. 2003	<p>Council adopts a position on Housing and Social Diversity and Inclusion:</p> <p>WHERE AS the City of Vancouver is known for its social diversity and inclusion, and sustaining social diversity and inclusion is crucial to the long term social and economic health of the city;</p> <p>AND WHEREAS the 2010 Winter Games are committed to social inclusion;</p> <p>AND WHEREAS reductions of Federal and Provincial expenditure on social infrastructure such as social housing and on social services such as income and employment assistance, threaten the City's social diversity and inclusion;</p> <p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver undertake the following actions:</p> <p>A. THAT, as safe, secure and affordable housing is a necessary condition for social inclusion, staff report back on the development of a</p>

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comprehensive housing and homelessness action plan for Vancouver that includes:

1. Urgent Measures to ensure a minimum level of shelter for the homeless within the city, including a cold, wet weather strategy, and recommendations to manage the growing number of transient homeless in the city, and the needs of the shelterless;
2. Measures to address the replacement of Single Room Accommodation and to protect Single Room Accommodation residents from displacement;
3. **Measures to legalize and regulate secondary suites;**
4. Measures to encourage the private sector to deliver affordable rental housing;
5. Measures to facilitate private sector involvement in the expansion of social housing through density bonuses and similar instruments;
6. Initiatives to reduce or limit the time housing units remain vacant pending redevelopment;
7. Initiatives to facilitate and support the development of non-profit rental and co-operative housing in Vancouver; and
8. Designated City staff working with the National Housing Policy Options Team (NHPOT) of the FCM to secure appropriate federal housing policies and programs across Canada to house people in their own communities.

## APPENDIX D

### Phase-Out Suites

The following table shows the number of phase-out suites in areas throughout the city, and the date by which suites are to be closed.

Area	Phase-Out Permits	10 Year Expiry Date
Joyce Station Area	166	April 1, 1999
East Riley Park	206	February 1, 2000
Kitsilano	162	May 1, 2000
Kensington-Cedar Cottage	391	August 31, 2000
Sunset	317	February 1, 2001
Hastings-Sunrise/Grandview Woodlands	298	August 15, 2001
West Riley Park	35	March 2, 2002
Renfrew Collingwood	241	November 2, 2002
Point Grey	90	November 30, 2003
Victoria-Fraserview	192	June 1, 2004
Shaughnessy/Marpole/Oakridge	39	March 1, 2005
Dunbar/Kerrisdale	80	August 1, 2005
Other Zones (CD-1)	19	Various
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,236</b>	

## APPENDIX E

### CityPlan Vision Results

The following provides:

- the full text of the Directions relating to suites in each community of the six communities which have completed a Vision (Hastings-Sunrise and Renfrew-Collingwood have completed the process but the Visions have not been sent to Council for adoption. In the other four communities, Council adopted the supported Directions as policy without any changes or omissions).
- relevant introductory text from the Choices Survey is also included to provide context.
- at the end of each community section, the stats for the general and random surveys are provided.
- in all surveys it is made clear that supported Directions which would require rezoning would not be implemented without further planning, including establishing boundaries, considering developer contributions to costs, and addressing impacts on parking and community facilities.

The Choices Survey is distributed in two ways: first, to a random selection of households (the random survey) and second to remaining households, businesses, and absentee owners (the general survey). In order to be sent to Council for adoption as City policy a Direction must have support of 50% plus 1 in the general survey AND support of more than 55% in the random survey (to ensure community support given the margin of error in the survey which is plus or minus 4.5%, 19 times out of 20).

Some Directions which are not 'approved' because they did not receive enough support in the general and random survey are classified as 'not approved (uncertain)'. These Directions remain on the table for community discussion when there is further planning on this topic in the community.

## DUNBAR

### "5. Rental Suites

Under current zoning, houses in the area north of W. 20<sup>th</sup> are permitted to have a rental suite. This is based on community consultation some years ago. However, because of various City regulations, very few suites are actually being built in new houses, and few other suites are being brought up to building code standards.

#### Approved Vision Directions

##### 5.1 Suites More Feasible

**Approved:** In areas where rental suites in houses are currently permitted, they should be easier to do, and be better designed for the resident.

Support: 65% (support)/17% (neutral)/18% (opposed)

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People's Ideas...

- allow full basements without reducing space allowed above the basement
- relax building code regulations
- allow front entrances”

“5.2 Suites in More Areas

Houses with a rental suite should be permitted in more areas of Dunbar than now, in order to provide “mortgage helpers” and to provide affordable housing”

Support: 52%/12%/35%

<b>Dunbar</b>	<b>General</b>			<b>Random</b>		
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
5.1 Suites More Feasible	62%	18%	20%	75%	16%	9%
5.2 Suites in More Areas	52%	12%	35%	57%	13%	30%

**KENSINGTON-CEDAR COTTAGE**

“The current zoning in most of Kensington-Cedar Cottage permits homes to have a rental suite. This is based on community consultation some years ago. However, because of various City regulations, very few suites are actually being built in new houses, and few other suites are being brought up to building code standards.

Approved Vision Directions

18.2 Suites More Feasible

Rental suites in houses should be made easier to do, and be better designed for the resident.

Support: 68%/14%/17%

People's Ideas...

- allow full basements without reducing the floor space allowed above the basement
- relax building code regulations for suites
- allow front entrances”

<b>Kensington-Cedar Cottage</b>	<b>General</b>			<b>Random</b>		
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
18.2 Suites More Feasible	67%	15%	19%	77%	14%	9%



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## SUNSET

*Since all but a few blocks of Sunset already permits suites, no Vision Directions emerged to allow suites in more areas. There were no Directions relating to enforcement of the impacts of suites.*

## VICTORIA-FRASERVIEW/KILLARNEY

### “12. Single Family Houses and Rental Suites

The single-family areas of VRK are zoned RS-1 and RS-1S. Both zones have the same regulations for house size and position on the lot. In both zones any house may have a family suite, that is, a suite occupied by relatives or home support such as a nanny or senior’s caregiver. However, only the part of VFK zoned RS-1S allows houses to have a rental suite. This was based on community consultation that occurred about 10 years ago.

#### 12.2 Rental Suites in More Areas

**Not Approved (Uncertain):** Houses with a rental suite should be permitted in more areas of VFK than now, in order to provide mortgage helpers and affordable housing. But only if the suites:

- are rented rather than strata-titled
- have an on-site parking space for tenant use
- pay their fair share for services (garbage, schools, water, etc.)
- are provided with adequate community facilities (parks, schools, etc.) and services for the additional population.

Percent agree 45% (general survey)/51% (random survey)

Comments: This Direction did not receive the necessary agreement in either survey to be classed as supported. However, the agree and neutral votes substantially outweigh the disagree votes so it is classed as Uncertain. Uncertain directions remain topics for more public discussion should planning on this topic occur in the future. *(Note: This comment is part of the Vision document.)*

*Note: The condition that a suite “...have an on-site parking space for tenant use” clearly emerged from the workshops because people in different break-out groups felt spaces may be provided but were actually being used by the owner for storage, etc. Assigning a space to the suite was seen as important.*

### “12.3 Improve Enforcement

Workshop participants expressed concern that enforcement of the suites by-laws appears inconsistent and ineffective. Action is usually taken only in response to a complaint. Workshop participants saw some merit to this approach since most suites peacefully co-exist with neighbours. However, they felt that there should be more effective resolution of complaints when suites create impacts like local parking problems, excessive noise, or poor upkeep.

**Approved:** The City should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its enforcement procedures to solve complaints generated by rental suites such as parking problems, poor maintenance of the dwelling or yard, and noise.

Percent agree 78%/79%

People’s Ideas...

- increase fines to cover cost of more staff
- let people know what happened as a result of their complaint
- increase penalties for repeat complaints to level that acts as a real incentive to correct the problem.”

*Note: The Direction is worded to improve enforcement to address the negative impacts of rental suites. It is not worded to shut down illegal rental suites. This is consistent with the concerns raised in the workshops where the issue is the impacts not whether or not there are illegal suites.*

<b>Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney</b>	<b>General</b>			<b>Random</b>		
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
12.2 Rental Suites in More Areas	45%	21%	34%	51%	21%	28%
12.3 Improve Enforcement	78%	16%	6%	79%	16%	5%

**HASTINGS-SUNRISE**

“Rental Suite Enforcement

Vision participants expressed concern that enforcement of the suites by-laws appears inconsistent and ineffective. Action is usually taken only in response to a complaint. Vision participants saw some merit to this approach since most suites peacefully co-exist with neighbours. However, they felt that there should be more effective resolution of complaints when suites create impacts like local parking problems, excessive noise, or poor upkeep.

Participants were also concerned about new homes which are designed to easily accommodate two suites in areas where only a single suite is permitted. Many of these homes get their permits and are constructed as single family homes to avoid the additional requirements imposed on a development with a suite. After the final City inspection, minor changes are made to make the suites operational and then they are rented. Vision participants felt this illegal use was accelerating the demolition of existing houses.

More Info

Since rental suites have been permitted, relatively few owners have made their suites legal by taking out a City permit. The City is reviewing the building code standards and enforcement practices related to suites to remove, wherever appropriate, barriers to bringing more suites into legal conformity and to develop a more effective enforcement strategy and capability.

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## “11.2 Improve Enforcement

**Approved:** The City should improve its enforcement procedures to solve complaints generated by rental suites such as parking problems, poor maintenance of the dwelling or yard, and noise. New homes suspected of being designed to include two or more rental suites should be regularly inspected to ensure they are complying with the Zoning By-law.

*Percent agree 69%/66%*

### People's Ideas...

- enforce clean-up and repair of rundown houses and illegal suites
- check double garages which are often closed in and rented
- reduce the cost and hassle of putting suites in existing houses
- ensure suites pay their fair share of costs (garbage, schools, etc)
- stop houses with two suites from over-running our neighbourhood

*Note: The Direction is worded to improve enforcement to address the negative impacts of rental suites. It is not worded to shut down illegal rental suite, except where there are more than two units per lot. This is consistent with the concerns raised in the workshops where the issue is the impacts not whether or not there are illegal suites. The concern about homes with two suites accelerating redevelopment was raised in the context of character areas.*

## “Homes with Two Suites

Description: Workshop participants created the option of a home with two legal rental suites and about 25% more floor space than permitted under the current zoning. Additional space may be in a full rather than a partial basement. Extra floor space may be permitted only where design guidelines are met. Each unit would require a parking space.

Status: A new housing type.

Attractive to: Suites appeal to people moving out of their parental home, to seniors who want less space but who wish to retain access to a garden and contact with other people, and to extended families who would like to stay together but have a little more independence than living within a single unit. The main unit would likely be smaller than a new single family home (with or without a suite). This, combined with the income from two rental suites, would tend to provide a more affordable housing option for families with children or established couples.

## 15.1 Homes with Two Suites

**Approved:** Housing variety should be increased in Hastings-Sunrise by allowing the development of some homes with two legal suites, provided that the units are:

- designed to fit into the single family area, with good landscaping
- provided with adequate community facilities (parks, schools, etc.) and services for the additional population
- accompanied by a plan to address any parking and traffic impacts.

*Percent agree 62%/60%*

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## People's Ideas...

- provide more secondary suites for the rental market
- look at micro suites to create more rental housing
- create standards for these suites which allow them to be more affordable to build and liveable for tenants
- ensure privacy between units
- encourage one level (for seniors) but avoid poor environment (lack of light, small space, dampness)

*Note: This Direction is not at odds with Direction 11.2 Improve Enforcement (above) because this new housing type would require further planning to address parking, community impacts, and would likely require design control of any building with two suites. The idea of providing the space in a full basement could make it an attractive re-use alternative for character building, encouraging their preservation..*

Hastings-Sunrise	General			Random		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
11.2 Improve Enforcement	69%	18%	13%	66%	25%	9%
15.1 Homes with Two Suites	62%	17%	21%	60%	20%	20%

## RENFREW-COLLINGWOOD

“Workshop participants expressed concern that enforcement of the suites by-laws appears inconsistent and ineffective. Action is usually taken only in response to a complaint. Workshop participants saw some merit to this approach since most suites peacefully co-exist with neighbours. However, they felt that there should be more effective resolution of complaints when suites create impacts like local parking problems, excessive noise or poor upkeep.

Participants were also concerned about new homes which are designed to easily accommodate two suites in areas where only a single suite is permitted. Many of these homes get their permits and are constructed as single family homes to avoid the additional requirements imposed on a development with a suite. After the final City inspection, minor changes are made to make the suites operational and they are rents.

### 11.2 Improve Enforcement

**Approved :** The City should improve enforcement procedures to solve complaints generated by rental suites such as parking problems, poor maintenance of the dwelling or yard, and noise. New homes suspected of being designed to include two or more rental suites should be regularly inspected to ensure they are complying with the Zoning By-law.

*Percent agree 71%/73%*

*Note: The Direction is worded to improve enforcement to address the negative impacts of rental suites. It is not worded to shut down illegal rental suites. This is consistent with the concerns raised in the workshops where the issue is the impacts not whether or not there are illegal suites.*

“Vision participants felt that rental suites in single-family homes are an appealing form of housing which should be permitted in more areas of the community. There will be more planning with significant public input before City Council considers changing the existing zoning to allow suites in more areas.

“11.3 Rental Suites in More Areas

**Approved:** Houses with a rental suite should be permitted in more areas of Renfrew-Collingwood than now, in order to provide ‘mortgage helpers’ and affordable housing, but only if the suites:

- are rental rather than strata-titled
- have an on-site parking space for tenant use
- pay their fair share of costs for services (garbage, schools, water, etc.)
- are provided with adequate community facilities (parks, schools, etc.) and services for the additional population.

*Percent agree 54%/60%*

“People's Ideas...

- attractive to first households, extended families (separate dwellings for grandparents and family but still close by), and seniors
- adds housing option to community
- offers more privacy than an apartment
- allow suites in all areas provided they are legal and meet requirements
- seems new single family houses are too large, add suites to make them more useful
- encourage good use of space and soundproofing between upstairs/downstairs”

*Note: The condition that a suite “...have an on-site parking space for tenant use” again emerged in the workshops because people felt spaces may be built but were actually being used by the owner for storage, etc. Assigning a space to the suite was seen as a way of reducing street parking from suites.*

<b>Renfrew-Collingwood</b>	<b>General</b>			<b>Random</b>		
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
11.2 Improve Enforcement	71%	21%	8%	73%	21%	7%
11.3 Rental Suites in More Areas	54%	25%	21%	60%	29%	11%

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