



## **COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** 18 June 2024  
**Subject:** Accessory Suites Update Project  
**Directorate:** Strategic Growth and Investment

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### **Issue:**

Airdrie City Council is being asked to accept this report on potential changes to the City of Airdrie's Land Use Bylaw (LUB) regulations for accessory suites as information.

### **Policy / Council Direction:**

Section 6.14 of the [Airdrie City Plan](#) requires the city to promote a broader range of housing types including secondary suites. Also, increasing accessory suites is directly aligned with the focus of the City of Airdrie's 2024 - 2030 [Affordable Housing Principled Action Plan](#) unanimously supported by Council in June 2023. In addition, greater access to accessory suites is one of the seven initiatives in the City of Airdrie's [Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan](#) endorsed by Council in April 2024.

### **Background:**

The LUB recognizes three types of accessory suites: secondary suites, garage suites, and garden suites. Starting in October 2023, Administration undertook a comprehensive review of the current regulations contained in the LUB in response to:

1. A surge in accessory suite applications indicating growing demand as illustrated in Attachment 1;
2. Feedback received from the former Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) and the Subdivision & Development Appeal Board (SDAB) on applications subject to variances, and/or appeal; and,
3. The opportunity to apply for the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan and meet the goals of the Affordable Housing Principled Action Plan.

On review, Administration found that the existing regulations that do not align with the evolving housing trends. As illustrated in Attachment 1, approximately 70% of approved accessory

suite applications between 2016 and May 2024 required a variance to a regulation – most frequently to lot width and area.

### Regulatory and Best Practices Review

Administration reviewed the current accessory suite regulations found in Sections 6.22 and Section 4.4(1) of the LUB. The review examined accessory suite regulations including, but not limited to, housing types in which accessory suites are allowed, the nature of permissibility (Permitted Use versus Discretionary Use), lot dimension requirements, parking requirements, and the mitigation of cumulative impacts.

Following that, Administration compared the City of Airdrie's accessory suite regulations against those of seven (7) other municipalities, placing each on the continuum found in Attachment 2.

Next, Administration engaged with stakeholders (the public, the development industry, and internal departments). The public engagement started with a public education campaign aimed to inform residents about accessory suites, followed by an online survey. The online survey gathered public feedback on the opportunities and challenges of allowing accessory suites on more residential parcels. A key opportunity identified by respondents included “more opportunity for rental income”, as a way to help with mortgage payments, aging in place, and providing retirement income. Key challenges identified by respondents included finding on-street parking and worrying about changing the characteristics of their neighbourhood. The ‘What We Heard Report’ provided in Attachment 3 shows a detailed breakdown of the 734 responses received from public, principally received from existing property owners or realtors.

Lastly, Administration conducted an accessory suites site tour, visiting six (6) areas within Airdrie with a clustering of approved accessory suites to review cumulative impacts.

### Next Steps

The information gathered so far and feedback from Council will be considered when drafting recommended changes to the current accessory suite regulations that will intend to balance housing diversity objectives with successful community integration.

Administration anticipates that changes to the number of districts in which suites are allowed, increases the permissibility of suites in some districts (i.e., R2-T, R2-A District and R3, R4, R5 District), and elimination of minimum lot width and lot area requirements to have a suite will achieve the desired increase in housing diversity without removing the requirements for parking and cumulative impact that remain strong in public consciousness.

Administration will present the recommended amendments to Land Use Bylaw No. B-01/2016 to the Community Infrastructure and Strategic Growth (CISG) Committee en route to a public hearing at Council in Q3 2024.

**Council Committee Routed Through:**

The recommended changes to the LUB regulations for accessory suite will be routed through the Community Infrastructure and Strategic Growth Committee (CISG).

**Administration Recommendation:**

That Council accepts this report for information.

**Alternatives/Implications:**

There are no alternatives or implications.

**Budget Implications:**

There are no budget implications anticipated.

**Communications and Engagement:**

Administration used the municipal engagement platform of “Involve Airdrie” to gather input on the issue of integrating secondary suites into communities, and maintained the project page at [Accessory Suites Bylaw | Involve Airdrie](#).

Administration has also placed several evidence-based reports on the importance of housing diversity at [www.airdrie.ca/housingforall](http://www.airdrie.ca/housingforall).

**Recommendation:**

That Council accepts this report for information.

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Jeff Brunen (Senior Planner - Current Planning)  
Tega Odogu (Planner II - Policy Planning)

Staff Presenter:	Jeff Brunen , Tega Odogu
External Presenter:	None
Department:	Current Planning
Reviewed by:	Stephen Utz, Director, Strategic Growth & Investment
Attachments:	#1: Accessory Suite Applications (2016 to May, 2024) #2: Municipal Comparison Review #3: What We Heard Report (Accessory Suites)