



COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 17 December 2024
Subject: Accessory Suites Regulation Update (Bylaw No. B-30/2024)
Directorate: Strategic Growth and Investment

Issue:

Council is being asked to give three readings to Bylaw No. B-30/2024, being a bylaw to amend the Accessory Suite regulations of Land Use Bylaw No. B-01/2016 and other associated regulations as deemed necessary by Council.

Policy / Council Direction:

The Airdrie City Plan provides direction on housing diversity and community integration. Policy 6.14 requires the City to promote a broader range of housing types including Secondary Suites. The housing affordability policies (Policy 6.21) support Secondary Suites in new development and in existing neighbourhoods which have sufficient servicing and parking capacity. Further, Policy 6.22 directs the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) to address the compatibility of accessory residential units in neighbourhoods by mitigating impacts, such as requiring adequate on-site parking.

Increasing Airdrie's inventory of accessory suites is also 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:

November 5, 2024 Public Hearing & Council's Motion

At the Council Meeting and Public Hearing held on November 5, 2024, City Council voted to table a decision on [Bylaw No. B-30/2024](#). This resolution included a motion which directed Administration to return with the following:

- 1) The Bylaw to include an amendment that provides notification of a Development Permit's Notice of Decision to adjacent neighbours for attached dwellings; and

- 2) Options brought forward to provide delineation of new construction for the purpose of determining acceptability of suites.

Since the Public Hearing on November 5, 2024, Administration has explored Council's motion and is accordingly proposing amendments to Bylaw No. B-30/2024 to ensure that sufficient public notification is provided for suite approval decisions. Administration has also evaluated different area maps of Airdrie indicating various boundary distinctions between old and new communities that could be considered for suite approval regulations.

Public Notification Revisions

The following adjustments were made to the proposed Bylaw as a result of Council's motion:

- Where Suites are added to a land use district for the first time as part of this Bylaw, they are designated as Discretionary Uses, which carry a mandatory 21-day public advertising and appeal period following a Notice of Decision on a Development Permit;
- New standard added to the R2, Low Density Residential and M1, Neighbourhood Mixed Use districts which clarifies that Secondary Suites are a Discretionary Use when part of a semi-detached dwelling;

Also in alignment with this motion, Administration is proposing changes to the Direct Control District section of Bylaw No. B-30/2024. These changes remove mention of Secondary Suites being a Permitted Use in semi-detached dwellings and clarify that Secondary Suites shall be considered a Discretionary Use where a semi-detached dwelling is listed in a Direct Control District. Since this change was not included in the advertised bylaw for this Public Hearing, Administration will propose it as an "on-the-floor" amendment.

New Construction Options

Administration has prepared several options illustrated through maps of Airdrie which could be used to delineate boundaries between old and new communities to help determine where Suites could be more broadly permitted. These maps each demonstrate a different way in which this distinction could be made:

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- Map 1: Neighbourhoods still under development and lands within the post-annexation boundary;
- Map 2: Subdivision phases that are still under development;
- Map 3: Neighbourhoods within the post-annexation boundary;
- Map 4: Neighbourhoods whose NSP was approved after 2015; and
- Map 5: Neighbourhoods below their peak population.

Administration explored a spatial approach to regulate Accessory Suites, which would differentiate between new and existing communities. However, it was determined that such an approach would limit the ability to develop suites fairly and equitably across the City. The *Airdrie City Plan's* housing affordability policies emphasizes that secondary suites should be

considered for both developing and developed neighbourhoods. Restricting suites to specific areas would contradict these policies and reduce opportunities to create affordable places to live in proximity to Airdrie's employment areas.

Administration found that older, established communities tend to have larger lots which make it easier to accommodate Suite development, especially in terms of meeting parking requirements. Retrofitting homes in these areas may require greater financial investment by homeowners, as such Administration anticipates a manageable uptake, reducing concerns about overwhelming demand. Additionally, imposing spatial limitations on where Suites could be developed would add another layer to Administration's review, leading to increased processing times.

Finally, many of the City's older neighbourhoods have experienced population decline over time and are currently below their historical population levels. Allowing Accessory Suites more broadly in these areas could help reverse population decline without causing excessive densification or overburdening infrastructure and transportation systems. Based on these reasons, Administration recommends that Council does not proceed with this approach to administering Accessory Suites, as it would counter the city's goals of promoting balanced growth, affordability, and efficient service delivery. However, Administration has prepared wording to amend proposed Bylaw No. B-30/2024 if Council does wish to restrict suites as Permitted Uses to certain geographic areas, based on degree of future planning or construction. Please see Attachment #3 for this wording and map options.

Minor Amendments from November 5

Administration notes that the revised Bylaw also includes the two minor amendments that Administration proposed at the November 5, 2024 Council meeting. These amendments clarify tandem parking rules and the acceptable locations for a suite entrance.

Council Committee Routed Through:

The Community Infrastructure and Strategic Growth Standing Committee reviewed the proposed amendment at their meeting on August 27, 2024 and accepted [Administration's report](#) for information.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration recommends that Council adopts Bylaw No. B-30/2024 as presented. In addition to the new amendments related to public notification, Administration has also included two minor amendments to clarify tandem parking rules and the acceptable locations for a suite entrance.

Administration is in support of the proposed bylaw because it would mark progress in achieving goals within the Council endorsed City of Airdrie's [2024 - 2030 Affordable Housing Principled Action Plan](#) and the Council endorsed Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan. It also would realize the benefits outlined in the background section of this report.

Alternatives/Implications:

Alternative 1: Council could choose to amend Bylaw No. B-30/2024 outside of the recommended version.

Choosing this option means that Council amends the Bylaw in alignment with their philosophy and priorities.

Alternative 2: Council could choose to table a decision on Bylaw No. B-30/2024.

This option allows Council to direct Administration to prepare any additional information deemed necessary to decide on the proposed bylaw.

Alternative 3: Council could choose to defeat Bylaw No. B-30/2024.

Choosing this option means that Council is not in support of the proposed amendments and that the existing regulations should remain.

Budget Implications:

Some budgeting and financial implications are anticipated because of this proposed Land Use Bylaw amendment to increase housing choice in Airdrie. This may involve more staff time in processing and tracking applications. However, this is not anticipated to greatly impact staff resourcing requirements. There may be additional development revenue if there is an uptake in Accessory Suites applications.

Communications and Engagement:

Public notification of the Public Hearing was provided in keeping with the City's Public Notification Bylaw No. B-02/2019. Public engagement on changes to Accessory Suites was conducted in the spring of 2024 and a copy of the [What We Heard Report](#) is linked here.

If Council adopts the proposed Bylaw No. B-30/2024 Administration will provide updates to residents and the development industry, including BILD Calgary Region. Administration will also inform internal City departments of any changes to the review process, application forms, and file management for Accessory Suites. Relevant City webpages would be updated to apprise the public of the changes to Accessory Suite regulations.

Recommendation:

That Council gives three readings to Bylaw No. B-30/2024, being a bylaw to amend Accessory Suites regulations and other associated regulations of Land Use Bylaw No. B-01/2016, as presented.

Jeff Brunen (Senior Planner)
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Staff Presenter:	Jeff Brunen, Tega Odogu
External Presenter:	None
Department:	Strategic Growth & Investment
Reviewed by:	Stephen Utz, Director
Attachments:	#1: Existing Regulations & Proposed Changes (redlined) #2: Proposed Bylaw No. B-30/2024 #3: Alternative Amendment for Map-based Approach