



The **Agenda** of the **Mission Sustainable Housing Committee** meeting to be held in **Welton Conference Room 2** at 7337 Welton Street and by videoconference on Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 3:00 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

- (a) Minutes of the Mission Sustainable Housing Committee meeting held on September 14, 2023. Page 2

4. NEW BUSINESS

- (a) 2024 Meeting Schedule Page 6
- (b) Secondary Suites Program – Bylaw Introduction Page 8
- (c) Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation
- i. Housing Coordinator Updates

5. RECONVENE

6. ROUNDTABLE (TIME PERMITTING)

7. NEXT MEETING

8. ADJOURNMENT



The **Minutes** of the **Mission Sustainable Housing Committee** meeting held in **Conference Room 2** at 7337 Welton Street and by videoconference on Thursday, September 14, 2023 commencing at 3:00 pm.

Members Present: Dawn Hein, Mission Association for Community Living, Chair
 Camilla Boisvert, Fraser Health Authority
 Gerald Heinrichs, Heinrichs Developments
 Judith Ray, Citizen Representative
 Emily McDowell, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
 Sasha Iverson, Mission Association for Seniors Housing -
 (left meeting at 3:12 pm)

Members Absent: Carol Hamilton, Councillor
 Danny Plecas, Councillor, Alternate Council Representative
 Michelle Puffer, SARA for Women Alternate Chair
 Mission Hope Central Representative
 Nate McCready, Mission Community Services Society
 Danya Druckrey, Mission Friendship Centre
 Annie Charker, Citizen Representative

Staff Present: Mike Dickinson, Manager of Long Range Planning and Special Projects
 Dena Kae Beno, Housing Coordinator
 Sandra Horvath, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Blossom MacMillan, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order.

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Moved and seconded,

That the agenda of the Mission Sustainable Housing Committee meeting held on September 14, 2023 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

Moved and seconded,

That the minutes of the June 8, 2023 meeting of the Mission Sustainable Housing Committee be approved.

CARRIED

4. NEW BUSINESS

(a) Secondary Suite Program Update

M. Dickinson provided an overview of the progress of the Secondary Suite Program. During a Special Council meeting on August 28, 2023, Council received a report and presentation from staff that addressed several questions that had been raised by Council during the Special Council meeting on March 27, 2023, concerning the implementation of the Secondary Suites Program. Some of the highlights of the report include the guiding principles the Program, the framework of the Program, the \$200 annual fee, elimination of the maximum floor area restriction of 90 sq m, not allowing secondary suites in duplexes, townhomes, or fee-simple rowhomes for the time being, and incentivizing water meter installation.

A full communications rollout will be in November and December, suite registration will be from January to March; and by April/May, the program will be fully implemented.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- a recommended checklist for homeowners;
- upgrades to existing houses;
- a tenant relocation policy;
- a safe and secure rental policy;
- a standards of maintenance bylaw; and
- Incentivizing homeowners to come forward.

(b) Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation

i. Quarterly Update to Council

The Committee was provided with a copy of the staff report to Council dated August 21, 2023, "Affordable Housing Strategy Quarterly Report – Q2 2023", detailing the City's progress towards implementing the top 13 strategy areas of the City of Mission Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) for the second quarter of 2023. M. Dickinson and D.K. Beno provided an overview of the report.

Discussion ensued regarding non-profit partnerships for new housing projects. Committee members are encouraged to provide the names of organizations to either D.K. Beno or M. Dickinson to be added to a "list".

The Standards of Maintenance Policy and Bylaw have been drafted and early engagement with City Departments has commenced in preparation of Council and external stakeholder engagement this fall. The drafts will be provided to the Committee beforehand. The Committee expressed interest in partnering with the City to provide input on what these events should entail to maximize the outcome.

ii. SARA for Women – Santa Rosa Project Update

There were no updates at this time.

iii. CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund Application

The City has made a submission to the CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), a \$4B grant program to help municipalities increase housing supply and accelerate

the pace of development by creating (across Canada) 100,000 new units of low carbon, climate-resilient, affordable housing.

Eleven housing initiatives were included in the City's application:

1. Affordable Housing Reserve Fund;
2. Affordable Housing Density Bonusing (DB);
3. Safe and Secure Rental Housing Policies;
4. Affordable Housing Creation;
5. Resources and Capabilities Enhancement;
6. Innovative Focused Population Approaches;
7. Land Acquisition and Utilization;
8. Integrating Affordable Housing into Decision-Making;
9. Affordable Housing Innovation Lab;
10. Performance Measurement; and
11. Affordable Homeownership Strategy.

Applications will be assessed during the fall of 2023. Those awarded the grant will receive disbursement of funds in four, annual increments, where the first 25% is disbursed upon signing of a funding agreement. If the City's application is approved, CMHC will confirm the total amount of funding.

iv. Housing Coordinator Updates

D. Kae Beno's updates to the Committee include:

- Most of the policy foundation work has now been done and the focus now is working on the finalization of the financial analysis.
- BC Community Housing Fund is accepting proposals from until November 17, 2023 for the BuildingBC: Community Housing Fund (CHF) for non-profit, co-operative and municipal housing providers, and First Nations that have an interest in developing and operating new low- and moderate-income rental housing units within BC. Proposals must reflect the following mix of rents and income eligibility within a single building:
 - 30% of Units - Market Rent Unit
 - 50% of Units - Rent Geared to Income
 - 20% of Units - Deep Subsidy

5. ROUNDTABLE

The Committee members provided various updates.

6. NEXT MEETING

Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 2 at 7337 Welton Street, Mission, BC and by videoconference.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Moved and seconded,

That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.



2024 MSHC Meeting Schedule

Unless advised otherwise, the Mission Sustainable Housing Committee meetings for 2024 will be held in Conference Room 1 at 7337 Welton Street and by Zoom videoconference, link to be provided to members for each meeting.

Meeting dates are as follows:

Thursday, February 8

Thursday, April 11

Thursday, June 13

Thursday, October 10

Thursday, December 12

2024 MSHC Meeting Schedule

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Statutory Holidays
 Mission Sustainable Housing Committee Meeting (3:00 pm – 4:30 pm)



STAFF REPORT

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** November 6, 2023
From: Dan Sommer, Director of Development Services
Subject: **Secondary Suites Program – Bylaws Introduction**

Recommendations

1. That Zoning Amending Bylaw 6238-2023-5949(143) be granted first and second reading;
2. That Bylaw Notice Enforcement Amending Bylaw 6238-2023-5700(9) be granted first and second reading;
3. That the 2024 budget reflect the expenditures and the revenue of the new Secondary Suite Program as approved by Council.
4. That a discounted registration fee be introduced as approved by Council;
5. That a new Exemption Processing Fee of \$50 be added to the User Fees and Charges Bylaw 4029-2007 starting 2024 with the ability to be waived for up to two years when the customer enrolls in the Water Meter Program;
6. That signing up for the Water Meter Program would be mandatory to receive the exemption as an additional incentive to have properties join the water meter program sooner rather than later;
7. That signing up for the Water Meter Program would be mandatory to receive the exemption in Recommendation #5 as an additional incentive to have properties join the water meter program sooner rather than later; and
8. That the double utility exemption share be reduced from 100% in 2024 to 75% in 2025, to 50% in 2026, to 25% in 2027 to removal of exemptions by 2028 as an additional incentive to have properties join the water meter program.

Purpose

This report introduces amendments to the City's bylaws that are needed to implement the proposed Secondary Suites Program. The amending bylaws respond to the specific direction given by Council at the August 28, 2023, Special Council meeting as they related to the implementation, administration, and scope of the Secondary Suites Program.

Background

At the March 27, 2023, and August 26, 2023 special meetings of Council, staff provided reports concerning the launch of a Secondary Suites Program (hereafter, the Program). Recognizing the importance of secondary suites in Mission, the reports outlined a new approach to managing secondary suites emphasizing a 'low-barrier regulatory approach' centered on a registration-oriented framework catering to the range of suite types known to exist in Mission. A description of the proposed framework and registration process for the Program is provided in Attachment A.

At the meetings, Council provided direction on certain aspects of the Program relating to a proposed annual fee, expansion of housing types where suites would be permitted such as within duplexes and properties with detached secondary dwellings, as well as the scope of the communications strategy. While the proposed bylaws introduced accommodate all of Council's direction, final confirmation is requested regarding the application of exemptions to utility fees.

When developing the Program, staff continued to adhere to the following principles to ensure that community concerns, OCP and Council priorities, including best practices to managing secondary suites were considered in a Program.

- Rules that are easy to understand and follow;
- Consistent and fair distribution of utility and other municipal servicing and infrastructure costs amongst the citizens;
- Graduated permitting of unauthorized suites with issuance of conditional permits aimed to encourage full bylaw compliance over time;
- No displacement of renters unless absolutely necessary; and
- Assurance that minimum threshold for life safety and building standards are met.

The following table summarized Council's resolutions resulting from the August 26, 2023 special meeting along with staff's response and resulting action:

Resolution	Council direction	Staff response	Result
SC23-030	City of Mission charge an annual secondary suite fee for all residential dwellings with a secondary suite, on a sliding scale during the registration process, to a maximum of \$200.	The simplest approach for both the public and staff is to have annual fee applied to the tax notice	Starting in the 2024 tax season, the \$200 fee will be added to properties with registered suites. Early registrants to the Program will be offered a reduced fee in the first year.
SC23-032	That Council include duplexes in the housing type permitted to have a secondary suite provided bylaw and Building Code provisions are met, and also provided that the duplexes are on larger lots that are served by City infrastructure.	Staff noted a that secondary suite will be allowed within a duplex when situated within the Urban Growth Boundary and ensuring all zoning regulations can be met and connected to City infrastructure.	Zoning Bylaw amended to allow for a secondary suite within duplexes under the parameters noted by Council
SC23-033	That Council allow a secondary suite in detached dwelling where there is a coach home or garden cottage provided that it is a large urban lot that is connected to City infrastructure.	Staff noted that a property needs to be zoned properly, connected to City water and within the Urban Growth Boundary.	Zoning Bylaw amended to allow for Secondary Dwelling Unit (coach home/garden cottage) and a secondary suite to coexist under these parameters.
Resolution	Council direction	Staff response	Result

SC23-034	That Council ask staff to consider alternative ways to register exemptions and report back, including an option for people to demonstrate that they do not have a suite but rather a complete family unit on the premises.	Refer to financial implications section of the report.	To be determined
SC23-035	That staff report back with a mechanism for enforcing business license bylaws on vacation rental properties.	Enforcement for unregistered suites will follow current ticketing process. Report on short-term rentals is forthcoming given recent changes to provincial legislation.	Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw on the agenda to be amended to apply fines for unregistered suites within Mission. All other bylaw infractions enforced as per current process.
SC23-036	That staff report out on ways to allow for the registration of prospective suites.	Staff discussed that as long as the registration was completed including payment of applicable fees and declarations were completed, prospective suites would be accepted as conditional.	Registration is available for all suites / prospective suites if all aspects are completed (fees, forms etc.)
SC23-037	That the secondary suites communications strategy include at least one public, in-person meeting on the program.	Communications and various departments are working on guidelines, resource material and public meeting dates.	Communications will happen through various streams, website, social media, newspaper ads, handouts/hard copy materials as well as a Public Meeting held at the beginning of December.

Discussion and Analysis

Bylaw amendments, new policies and informational materials are needed prior to the launch of the Program. The amending bylaws to support the Secondary Suites Program are listed in the 'bylaws for consideration' section of the Council agenda.

The amendments to the Zoning Bylaw propose a change to the definition of a "secondary suite" that focusses primarily on the use of a space within a home as a 'self-contained dwelling unit' and not on how or who uses the space. The new definition would remove the maximum size restriction which is in line with the recent changes to the British Columbia Building Code. The definition also stipulates that all secondary suites must be registered with the City of Mission.

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw also introduce secondary suites as an outright permitted use in all zones that currently allow for a Single-Family Dwelling or Duplex (Duplex

provided it is within the Urban Growth Boundary) in the City of Mission. Other provisions have been added to specific zones in order to allow for both a Secondary Detached Unit and Secondary Suite to coexist provided that they are within the Urban Growth Boundary and there is municipal water servicing and any other restrictions that already exist within the respective zones.

To support the Program, changes to the City's Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw are needed to enable enforcement of unregistered suites, suites in contravention to the Program and those considered to have life safety concerns that require immediate attention.

It is noted that a staff presentation regarding the financial implications of establishing the Program will be made at the November 6, 2023 Council meeting.

Financial Implications

Budget to Administer Program

The administration of registering and maintaining the Program will require on-going operational costs. Within the first 12 to 18 months, staff will be focusing on establishing the registration program of suites, educating applicants on how to make their suite safe and the process should they choose to bring their suite up to building code standard. Thereafter, staff will transition to maintaining customer accounts, investigating complaints, setting up and administering water meter accounts, and following up on consumption and billing inquiries and complaints.

Ongoing resources required, unless otherwise noted, that will impact the budget include:

- \$5,000 for supplies in Finance.
- \$10,000 for increased supplies and staff time in Engineering for GIS maintenance.
- \$20,000, one-time, for communication.
- \$46,000 for a ½ time Tax & Utility Clerk.
- \$81,500 for a ¾ Bylaw Officer (starting April 1) for complaints, investigations, and education.

These total a \$162,500 impact to the General Operating Fund in 2024. The budget for communications will not be needed in 2025 and can be redirected to support bylaws.

There will be additional costs in the utility funds associated with this program. As the new secondary suites are registered, the curbside collection contract will increase. These costs will be covered by the current user fees for curbside collection. As we transition water customers to meters, there will be additional costs for billing, leak investigations, and consumption complaints and inquiries. While the billing costs will be incrementally increased during the transition period, it is difficult to estimate the costs for leak detections or for consumption complaints and inquires.

The actual costs can vary depending on the number of secondary suites that register, the complaints received, and the transition of these customers onto the water meter program.

Phasing in the Secondary Suite Fee

This secondary suite fee is a separate fee to cover the on-going administration of the program and the increase to services funded by taxation (road repairs, police services, etc.) where the purpose of double billing is to recover costs associated with consumption of those services.

The City is currently charging approximately 2,300 properties with double utilities. While all 2,300 pay for curbside collection, of these there are 1,800 that pay for water service, and 1,650 which pay for sewer services. In addition, some of the 2,300 are coach homes or garden cottages and

under the new program will not be charged a secondary suite fee as a stand-alone dwelling (no secondary suite in the complex). The City estimates that between 1,000 to 1,800 secondary suites are not currently paying double for utilities and some of those property owners may choose to not register their suites under the new program.

The proposed annual secondary suite fee of \$200 will be included on the homeowner's property tax notice that is sent out at the end of May of each year. Since there is no fee required to be paid at the time of registering, staff are estimating that 80% of all those who ultimately register their secondary suite will do so by February 15th, with 17% who will likely register by the April 1st deadline, and approximately 3% anticipated who will miss the deadline to register.

The current proposed discount for early registration for the secondary suite fee would be a 50% discount (a \$100 fee) for those who register by February 15 and a 25% discount (a \$150 fee) for who register by April 1st, which could encourage early registration.

Based on the assumptions that:

- An estimated 2,100 of the current secondary suites will register, with 80% by February 15th and 17% by April 1st, and
- 85% of an estimated 1,100 unknown suites will register and use the same percentages as the current secondary suites for registration timing above, and
- The secondary suite fee would be discounted by 50% if registered by February 15th and by 25% if registered by April 1st,

the estimated revenue for the secondary suite fee would be \$338,400 for 2024.

To promote a stronger compliance of the secondary suite registration program, Council could consider a greater discount structure for the secondary suite fee, such as 75% of the fee (a \$50 fee) for those who registered by February 15th, and a 50% discount (a \$100 fee) for those who register by April 1st, with a 25% discount (a \$150 fee) for the remainder of 2024 and charge the full fee of \$200 starting in 2025.

Those properties with coach homes or garden cottages will not be charged a secondary suite fee under the new program as those secondary dwelling uses remain an outright use permitted under specialized "S" zoning unless a secondary suite is on the property where permitted. There will also be some homeowners who may choose to decommission their suite for various reasons.

Utility Exemption Impacts

Exemptions impact the user fees charged for each utility service. User fees are based on the total cost to provide the service divided by the number of users of the service. Exemptions reduce the number of users thus increasing the user fee share for the remaining customers. While considering the possible elimination of exemptions altogether, Council directed staff to consider alternative ways to register exemptions and report back on options for residents to demonstrate that they do not have a suite but rather a complete family unit on the premises.

Under the current practice, exemptions from double billing of utilities are offered provided one of the following conditions is met:

- The owner is using the space for personal reasons; recreation room, playroom, home business, i.e., the space is not rented out;
- Two unrelated families purchased the home to share expenses and are all listed on title of property similar to a duplex type arrangement where utility costs, home maintenance, etc. are shared by both parties;

- The homeowner puts a family member on title, are presumed to be living in the suite, and who may or may not be paying a nominal amount of rent for the suite; or
- A family member under 18 occupies the space as a separate living dwelling.

In all cases, the homeowner resides on the property and the exemption expires December 31st of each calendar year. While the exemption entitles the homeowner to an increase in water and sewer resources without an increase in user utility fees, they cannot place more containers for curbside collection that are currently permitted for a single-family dwelling.

Under the new Secondary Suite Program, exemptions would expire on December 31st, of each year as living situations can change year over year and exemptions would have a processing fee of \$50. An exemption would be extended if:

- The suite is occupied by a family member as defined by the *Residential Tenancy Act* or as defined by the *City's Zoning Bylaw*; or
- The suite is not rented out.

As a condition of being exempted for utility fees, and as an incentive for properties with an exemption to move to the water metering program, a homeowner who is granted an exemption under the Suite Program will be required to apply for a water meter installation and would be given priority to be connected. In addition to the exemption of the double utility user fees, the exemption fee itself could be waived for up to 2 years, once they have signed up for the metered program should delays with the meter installation occur. To promote a stronger compliance to move to the water meter program, the exemption for double utilities of 100% of the flat rate user fee charges, could be reduced to 75% or 50% of the flat rate user fee charges after the first year.

Under the current practice for managing secondary suites, approximately 20% of the homes have exemptions for double billing of user fees. This represents a reduction in utility revenue of approximately \$539,000 for all three utilities which is subsidized by the other users of the services. This subsidy results in an approximate 3% increase to all user fees (up to \$43 per year for customers with all utility services). If exemptions were removed the additional revenue could be redirected toward reducing the overall user fees, or reducing the annual incremental increases over the next two or three years, or this additional revenue could be transferred to the capital reserves, where applicable, to bring the reserves balances closer to minimum or optimal levels.

Under the new Secondary Suite Program, and retaining the 20% ratio for properties applying for an exemption, the subsidy could increase the revenue loss up to \$783,000 for all three utilities, which results in an increase share of \$63 per year for the current user (up from \$43). The exemption ratio may be as high as 30% for the group of new suites currently not being double billed. In this scenario, the revenue subsidy could be up to \$910,000, which represents a share increase of up to \$73 per year in user fees.

Table 1: User Fee Exemption Impacts

	Current Program		New Program @ 20%		New Program @ 30%	
	Fees Exempted	User Fee Subsidy	Fees Exempted	User Fee Subsidy	Fees Exempted	User Fee Subsidy
Water Fund	209,899	15.52	303,595	22.44	352,799	26.08
Sewer Fund	200,221	17.89	298,156	26.64	349,299	31.21
Curbside Collection	129,234	10.13	181,301	14.21	208,700	16.36
	\$539,355	\$43.53	\$783,052	\$63.29	\$910,798	\$73.65

Note that the above Table is based on the following assumptions:

- 2,100 current customers (net of the estimate for coach homes and garden cottages) will continue and not decommission.
- 935 new properties will register.
- 20% (or 30%) of the new customers will apply for exemption.
- 2023 flat rate user fee values as used.
- The exemptions continue at 100% of the double utility charges.

Utility Exemption Application

Under the City's current approach, homeowners applying for an exemption for the first time complete a form with a declaration stating they qualify for an exemption, pay an inspection fee, followed by a site inspection. If the property complies, then the exemption applies for that year. After the initial year, an annual renewal form with a declaration of qualification is sent to the property owners to be completed and returned.

Under the new program, homeowners applying for an exemption for the first time will complete a form with a declaration stating they qualify for an exemption and pay an exemption fee of \$50. Should they sign up for the meter water program, in addition to the exemption to the double utility user fees, the exemption fee itself is waived for up to 2 years, in case of delays with the meter installation. After the initial year, an annual renewal form with a declaration of qualification will be sent and a fee requested if the property is not signed up for the meter program.

Staff are recommending that signing up for the water meter program would be mandatory to receive the exemption as an additional incentive to have properties join the water meter program sooner rather than later. It would reduce the amount of administration to continually renew exemptions for customers if they moved to meters.

For some context, homes in Mission that are currently on a water meter are using, on average, 290 cubic meters of water per year. At our current metered rates for water and sewer, the annual bills would be approximately \$780 to that of the \$1,068 for the flat rate user fees for water and sewer, without a secondary suite. Currently, and on average, moving to a meter when the home has a secondary suite will have a financial benefit to the owner.

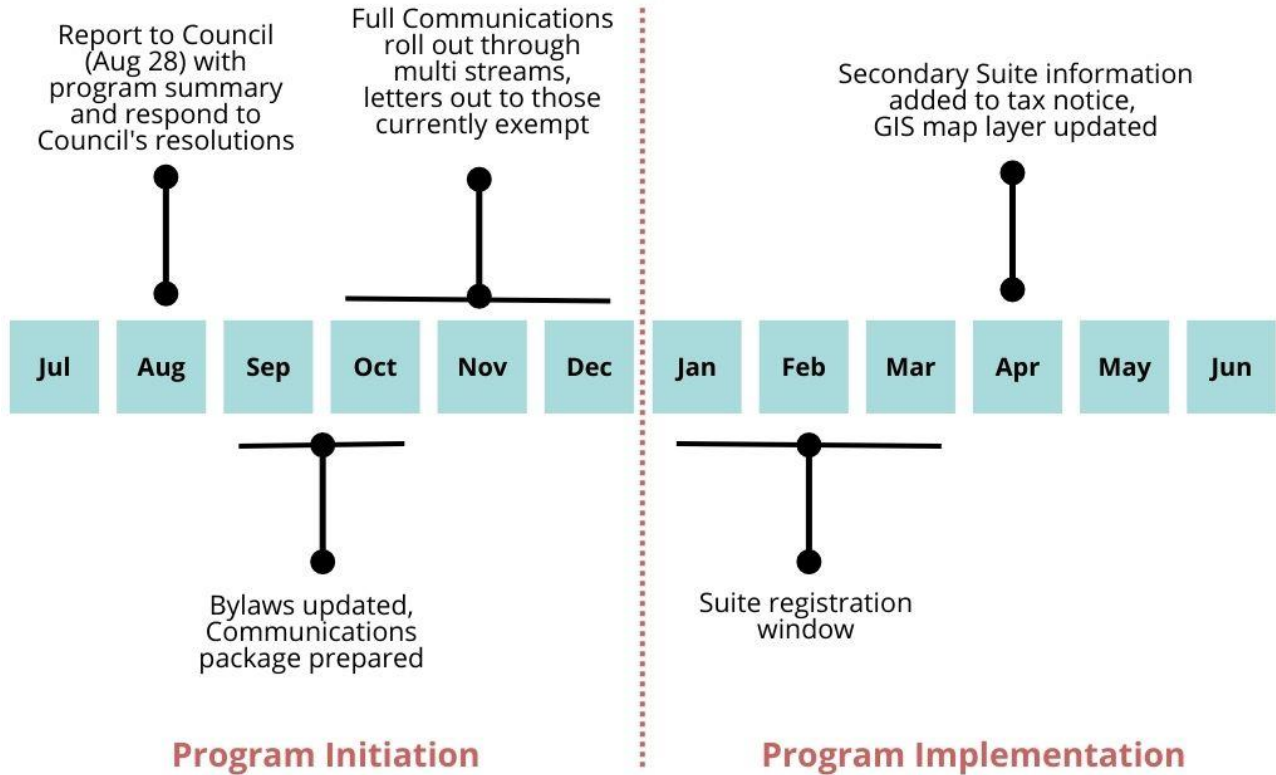
The curbside collection contract is up for renewal in the summer of 2025. Staff are currently considering providing different sized bins, each bin size with a different fee attached for each of the curbside services. Exemptions could continue to be considered for curbside services until the new collection contract is in place.

It should be noted that the amending bylaws need to be given readings at the November 6, 2023 Council meeting to ensure that the program rollout timelines can be met to ensure the correct information appears on the 2024 tax notices.

Communication

A communications and rollout plan introducing the registration program is currently being drafted. This includes the development of a new page on mission.ca, a detailed guide, a news release, social media posts, newspaper ads, and an in-person information session scheduled for late fall where interested parties can ask staff questions.

Secondary Suites Program Timeline



Report Prepared by: Dan Sommer, Director of Development Services

Reviewed by: Kerri Onken, Deputy Treasurer/Collector

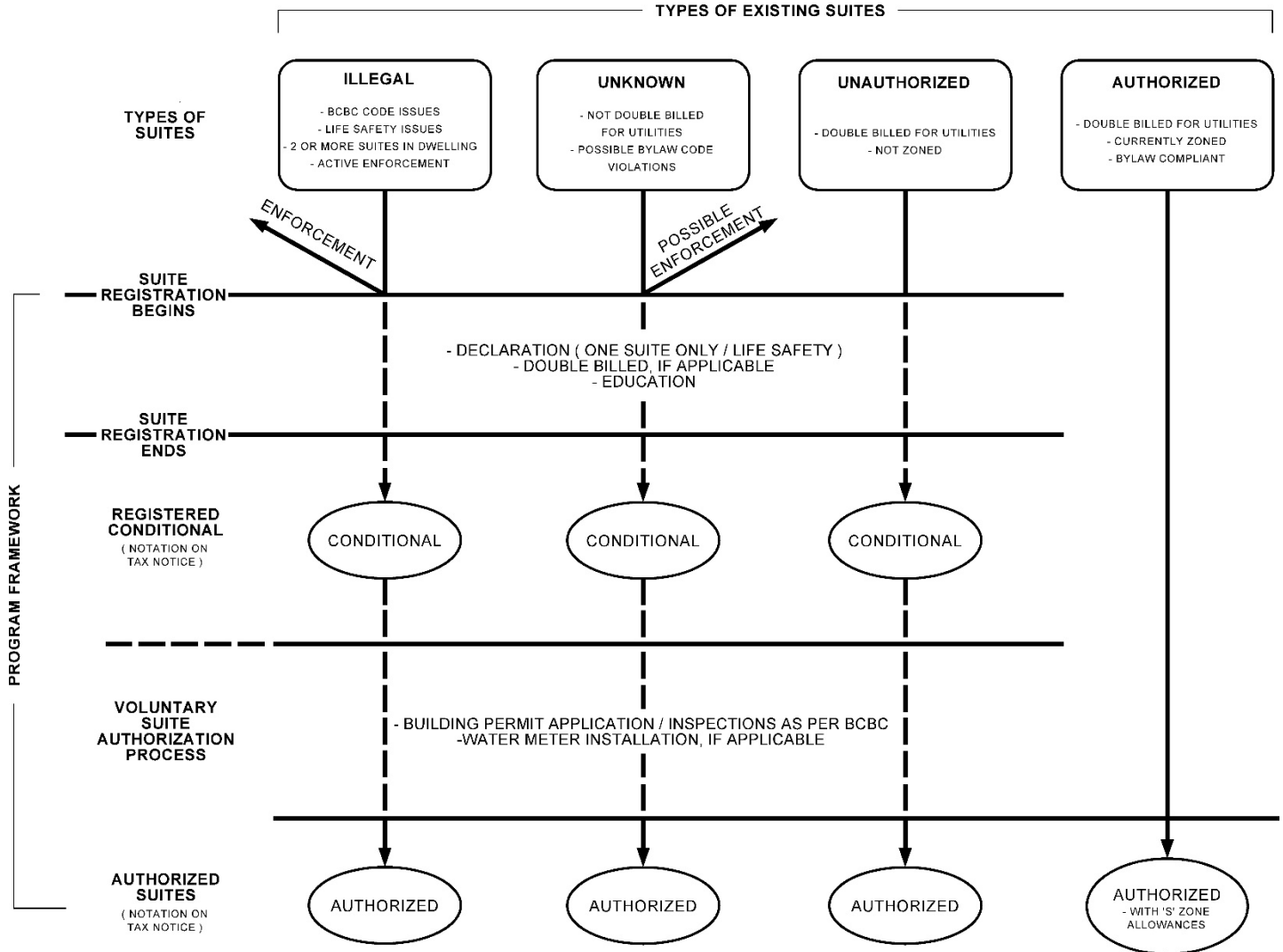
Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

Attachment A: Secondary Suites Program Framework

Attachment A

Secondary Suites Program Framework



Types of Existing Suites (Mission’s Current Situation)

“ILLEGAL” suites, means those that have been found to have two or more suites in a single-family dwelling and or have been identified as having serious life safety concerns or, to a lesser degree, have been identified as having an associated nuisance complaint. The BC Building Code and the City’s Zoning Bylaw prohibit multiple suites in a single-family dwelling.

Municipalities typically use zoning bylaws to confirm the BC Building Code limitation that a maximum of one secondary suite is allowed per dwelling unit or property. While illegal suites are the subject of current enforcement, the program would allow these owners to register one suite

provided they remove the additional suite(s) and work to address any known life safety concerns, otherwise face progressive enforcement. The considerations around bylaw enforcement are aimed at balancing the need to ensure health and safety in suites, promote compliance with municipal regulations, and manage the financial impacts to the City for enhanced bylaw enforcement and administration. At this time, there are over 100 known “illegal” suites currently under investigation or active enforcement.

“UNKNOWN” suites are just that, “unknown”. Many homeowners avoid regulations because of the potential cost of conforming to Building Code standards or other regulatory requirements, such as rezoning and the provision of additional parking spaces, or licensing fees. These types of suites are not paying additional utility fees and may have existing Building Code or bylaw violations that may be subject to additional enforcement.

When discovered, an “unknown” suite become known and is then charged double for utilities or otherwise required to decommission. Decommissioning of a suite typically involves removal of cooking facilities and associated wiring. It also involves the removal of permanent barriers separating the unit from the rest of the building, all of which puts strain on enforcement and building staff resources.

“UNAUTHORIZED” suites are those known to be in contravention to the City’s Zoning Bylaw but have been allowed to keep the suite under a double-billing provision provided the ongoing absence of complaints to the City. There are approximately 2,000 known “unauthorized” suites in the City.

“AUTHORIZED” suites are those that have followed the proper process of legalization through rezoning and building permit applications. These suites are conforming to all provisions of the City bylaws including the requirements for off-street parking. The Zoning Bylaw requires one additional off-street parking space and specifies that this space be independently accessible (i.e., the space has direct access to the street and is not blocked by another parking space).

Suite Registration

The proposed Program framework identifies a narrow registration window to encourage property owners to declare the existence of their secondary suite(s).

The steps to implement the Program begins with a public awareness and engagement campaign followed by a ‘call for registration’ of all existing suites in the municipality. The registration will be much like registering for a homeowners grant.

Registration of secondary suites is used by municipalities to keep track of how many secondary suites are in operation and where they are located. The objective is not to force those registered to apply for building permit or undergo inspections for bylaw compliance but rather to provide landlords education and guidance on how they can work towards full authorization of their suite now that site-specific zoning is no longer a requirement.

Those registering their suites will be asked to complete a “declaration” form that confirms that only one suite exists in the dwelling and that the owner/landlord has satisfied themselves that the suite meets Building Code life safety standards.

One requirement of registration is the payment of fees for additional utilities. Fairness of utility billings is a major concern where the development of a fairly applied secondary suite program can recover some costs to the taxpayer as well as those currently being double-billed for increased utilities. The amount of utility fees paid for a suite requires consideration by Council. Also, depending on Council direction, the declaration may include provisions around exemptions to utility fees.

Registered Conditional

Those owners who have responded to the call for registration within the registration window will be listed as being “Registered Conditional” unless previously “Authorized” through rezoning. What this means is that these “Registered Conditional” suites have not yet been confirmed as meeting all City bylaws and Building Code requirements.

It is anticipated that some suites will have to remain under this category indefinitely as it may not be possible or perhaps cost prohibitive for these suites to advance in the Program to become fully Bylaw and Code compliant (i.e., listed as “Authorized”). For those suites where full legalization is attainable, some municipalities have established a higher utility billing rate than those of authorized suites as an incentive to legalize their suite.

While not “grandfathered” in the legal sense of the term, “Registered Conditional” suites would be offered some leniency given their existence prior to Program launch. This consideration acknowledges that some suites may never be able to fully comply with Bylaw and or Building Code requirements despite having paid double utilities for their suite. This underscores the importance of the registration window as those landlords not responding to the registration call will be required to fully legalize their suite if found out otherwise face progressive enforcement.

As for “Authorized” suites, these suites will be considered fully Bylaw and Building Code compliant where no further action is required on the part of the property owner. The City is aware of these suites and will automatically include them in the suite registry.

It should be noted that whether a suite is listed as “Registered Conditional” or “Authorized”, a notation on the property’s tax certificate will be made to this effect. This notation provides transparency at time of sale of the property by informing prospective purchasers of the status of an existing suite in the home they are considering purchasing.

For those with the “Registered Conditional” notation, prospective purchasers of the property with the suite are advised whether additional upgrades may be required to keep the existing suite through the Program’s authorization process.

Those properties listed as having an “Authorized” suite on the tax notice will be able to advertise this status with confidence at time of sale. The intention of this notation on the tax notice is to provide leniency to property owner with suites as long as they own their home but incentivize them to formally legalize their suite before selling.

Suite Authorization Process

This is a voluntary process whereby the City encourages all homeowners to legalize their secondary suites through the “Authorization Process” of the Program. Apart from rezoning, which will no longer required, suite authorization involves the application for a building permit to

ensure that all Building Code requirements have been met including life safety standards. As is currently the requirement for all building permits involving the construction or installation of a secondary suite, the installation of a water meter will be required if the property falls within the City's water specified area.