

Post-secondary students feeling rental squeeze

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CALGARY HERALD

A low vacancy rate combined with a lack of progress on legalizing secondary suites is making it difficult for Calgary post-secondary students to find safe, affordable rental accommodation, say student leaders.

"Calgary is an expensive city and it's extremely hard for young people to find affordable housing," said Erik Queenan, president of the Students' Association of Mount Royal University.

Queenan said, anecdotally, it appears finding a rental suite in Calgary is easier than last year at this time — when the vacancy rate hovered around one per cent and displaced flood victims competed with students for scarce accommodation — but that doesn't mean it's easy.

A spring rental market survey released in June by the Canada



Calgary Herald/Files

As Calgary post-secondary students prepare for classes next week, many say finding rental accommodation is "very difficult."

you used to see quite a bit of," he for on-campus housing," said

scheduled to be discussed at council this fall, and plans are in the works to get fellow students involved.

Levi Nilson, University of Calgary Students' Union vice-president external, said the association is working on an information campaign to get students up to speed on secondary suites.

"We do know that at the U of C, one-fifth of all renters are living in these secondary suites. We want to make sure that those people who are in the suites know that they have a lot of problems as far as legal rights go," he said.

Nilson said he's hearing from students that finding safe, affordable student housing in Calgary is "about as hard as it was last year."

Statistics provided by RentFaster.ca, comparing August 2013 to August 2014, show an increase in the number of available units of all types, and an increase in average rents.

"You start seeing different ways of living — (single) rooms for rent more people sharing," he said.

RentFaster statistics show 17 shared rental accommodations at an average price of \$748, listed on the site this August that are within three kilometres of either the U of C, MRCJ or SAIT, compared to 103 in 2013. The hot rental market also means landlords have a lot of choice when it comes to who to rent to.

"It's really tight, especially if you have possible bad credit, or a pet or you smoke, or things like that," said Paddock.

When landlord Tony Dinh posted his Marla Loop condo for rent online in May, he was so overwhelmed with calls and emails from people wanting to view the home, he decided to host a two-hour open house.

"I changed the ad and said come by and take a look at the place," said

secondary suites - a place to live

focus on 3 themes



where are we



who are secondary suites ?



can we focus on

outcomes ?

safety

affordability

housing choice



where are we



council

direction

29 since 2005



council

direction

review policies
develop guidelines
stakeholder engagement
explore ideas | options
business licence framework

review of applications



enforcement

is **not** a housing policy

if a person is made **homeless** we fail as a city

if a suite is made **safe** we succeed



first make them

our current policy is

legal ?

driving suites underground

+ to the housing problem

not creating legal suites

not making suites safe



the best thing to date

waiving the fee

big uplift in dp | land use applications

this helps get **safe** suites

should **not** be a cornerstone of housing policy



no outcome defined to date

13,500 illegal units? **5 %** of the housing stock

290 % increase in development permits

increase in land use applications **3,100%**

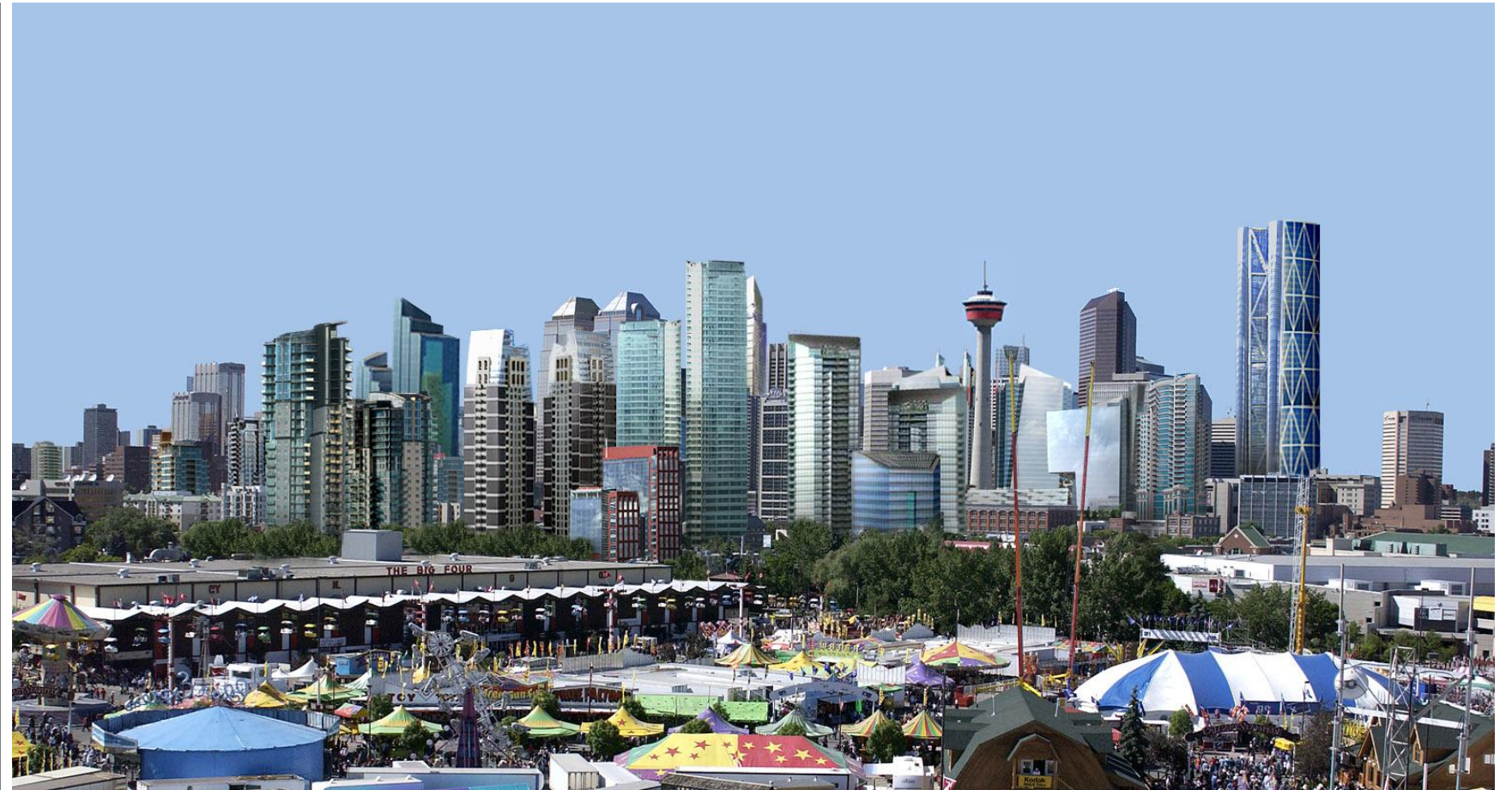
26 % drop in complaints since 2010



уyc 2005



ууц 2014



our housing strategy has

not kept pace



who are secondary suites ?

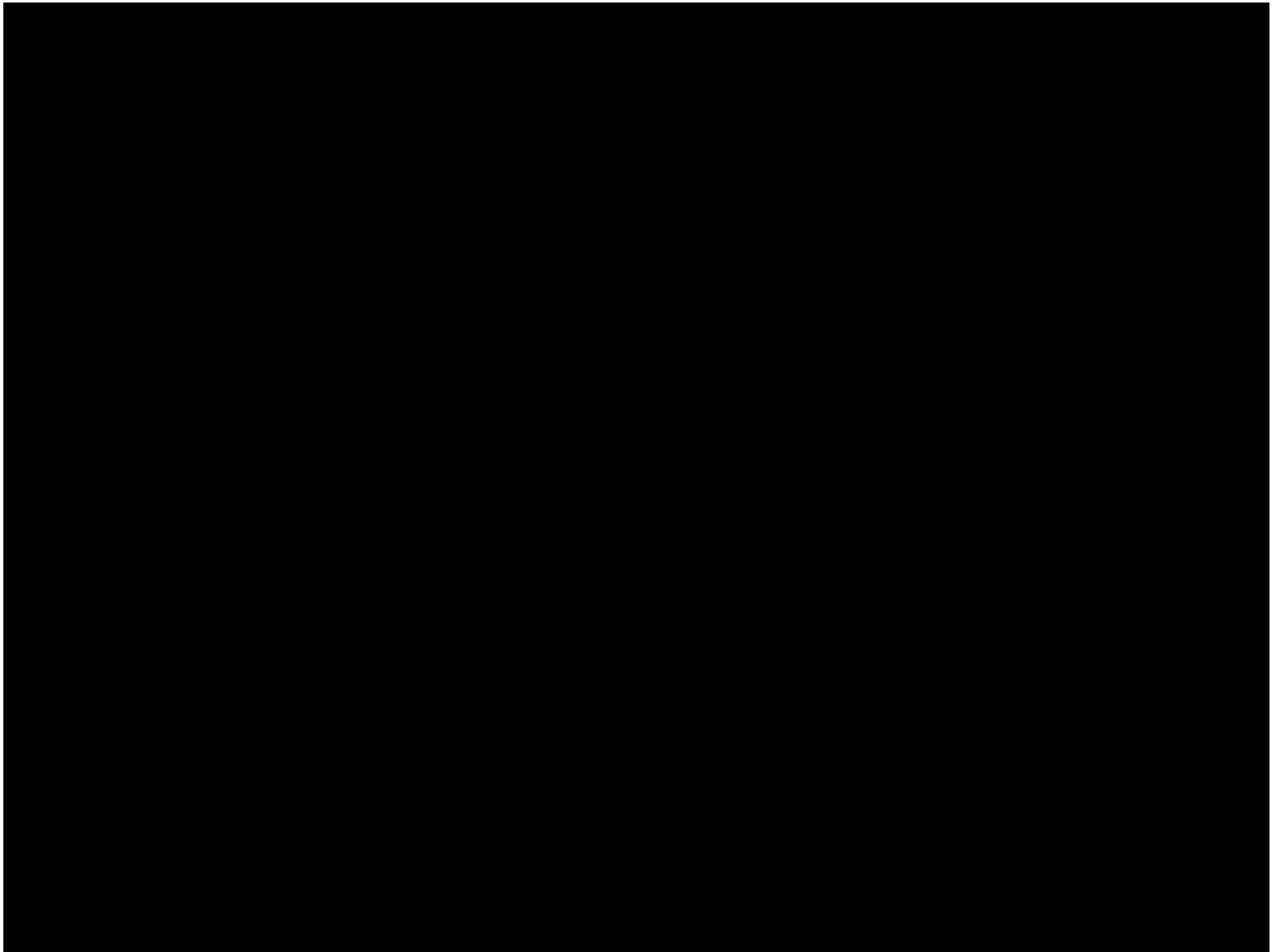


the misconceptions





there goes the neighbourhood





there goes the neighbourhood

city	owner occupied	rental
calgary	72 %	28 %
regina	71%	29 %
ottawa	68 %	32 %
toronto	68 %	32 %
downtown toronto	35 %	65 %
vancouver	66 %	34 %
halifax	63 %	37 %
montreal	55 %	45 %

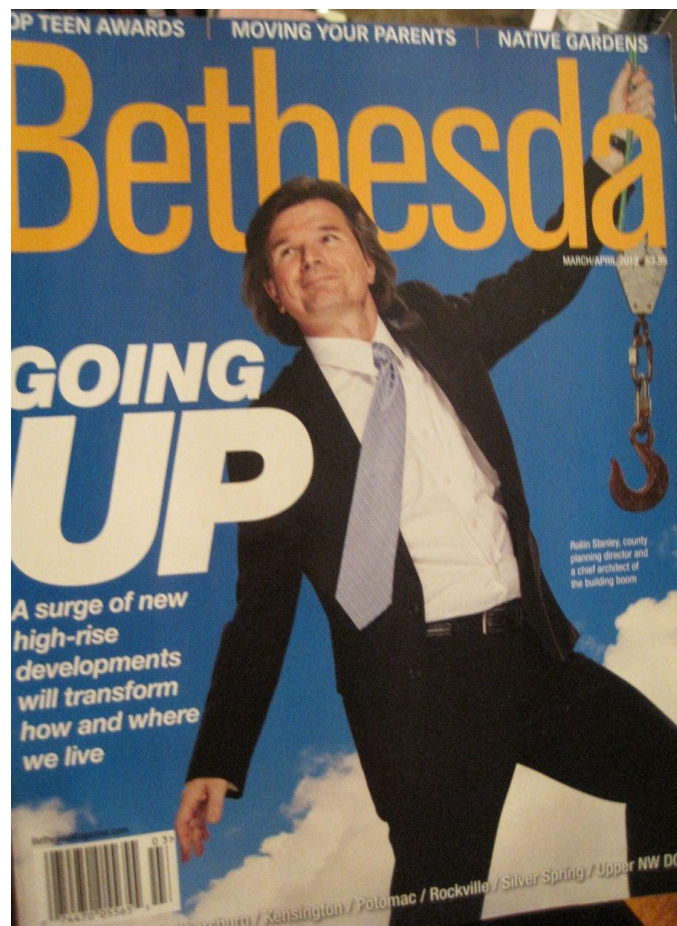
investors



there goes the neighbourhood

renters

this guy lived in 4 different bsmt suites
qualified for a mortgage with a bsmt suite
in a semi & yes it was a permitted use

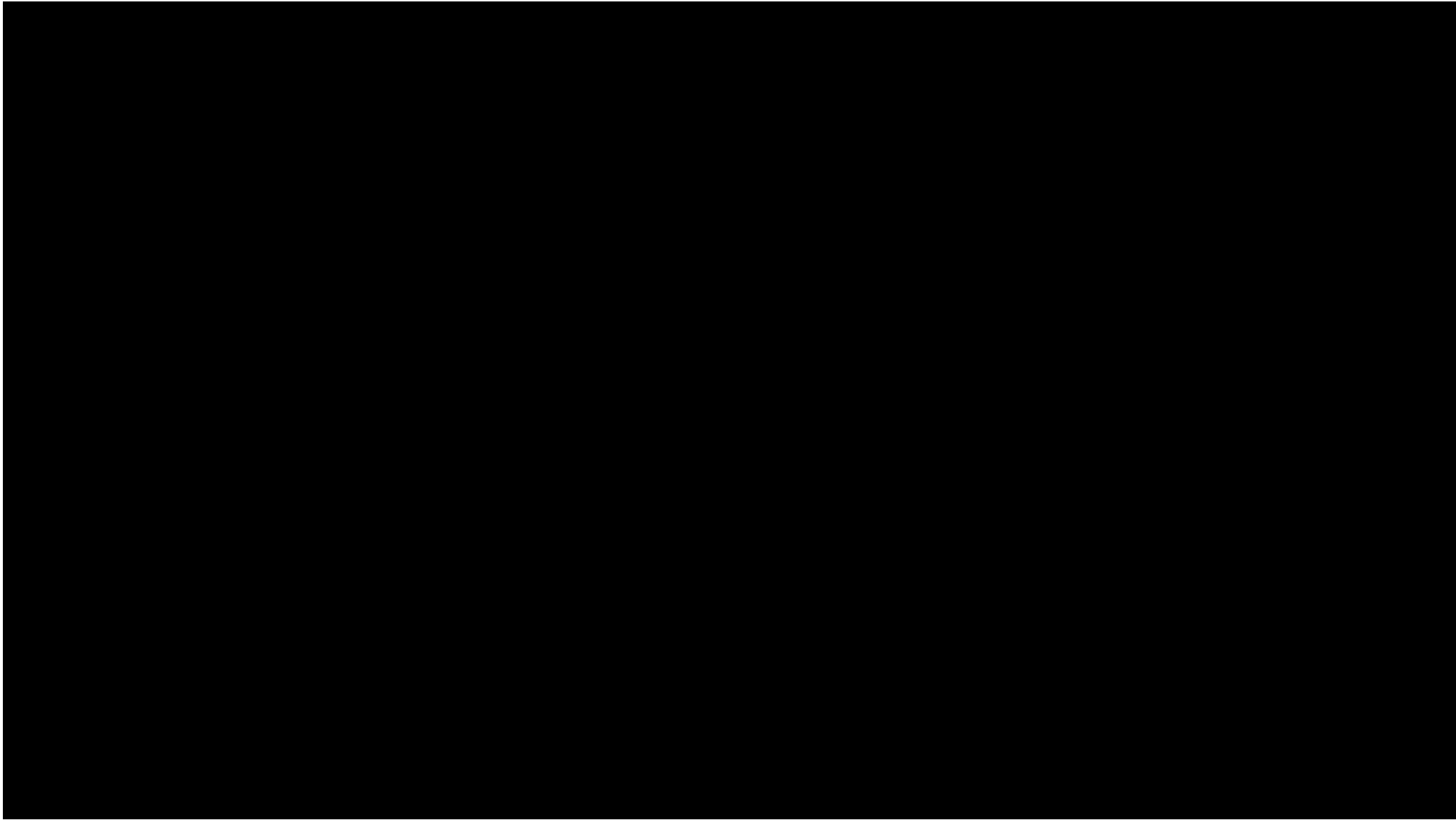


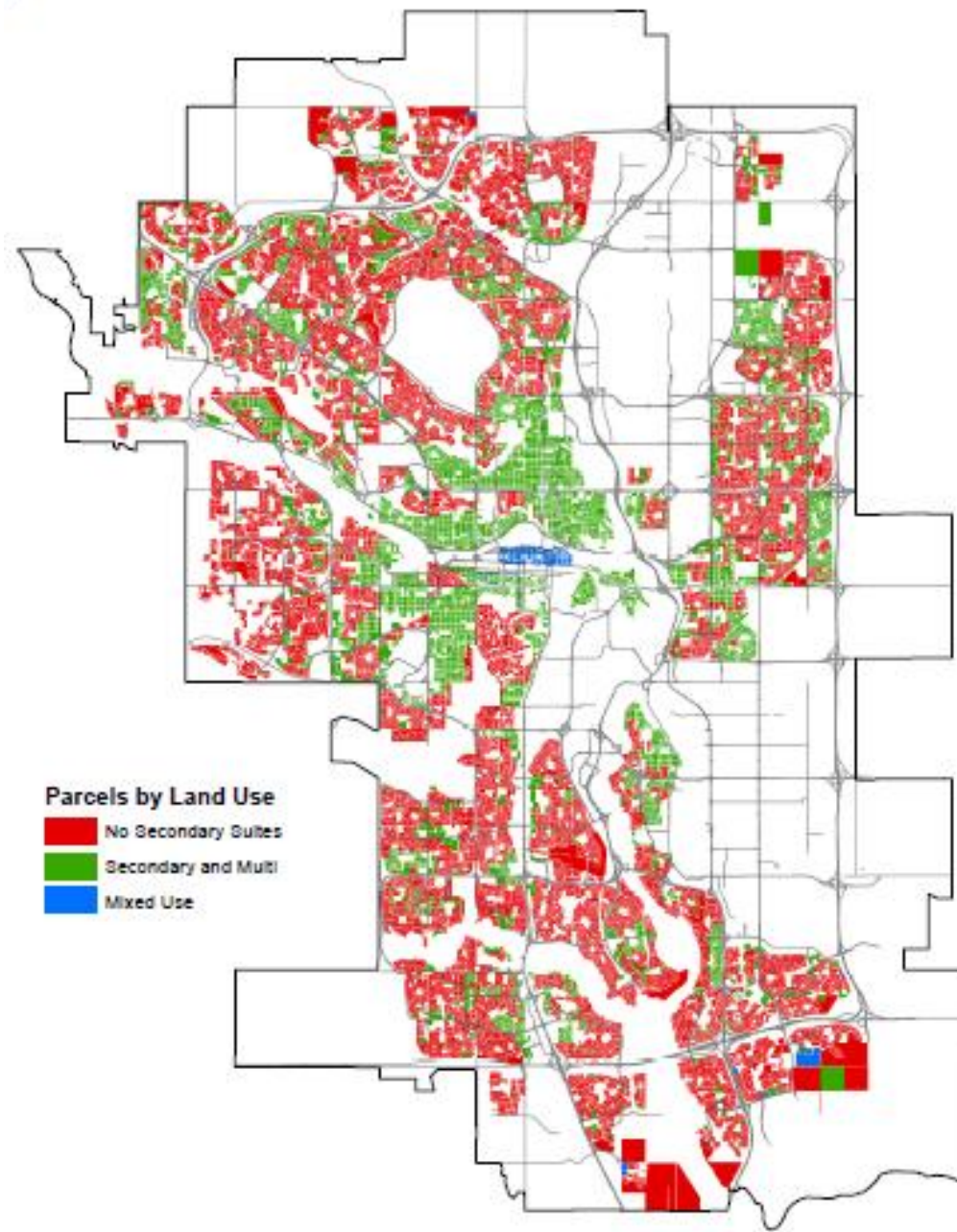
Tenants simply want security of tenure in safe and legal housing.





there goes the neighbourhood





single family areas should only be that

53 % of all residential land in YYC is zoned sfd

38,000 + yr growth go to the other 47 % ?
big potential to meet part of the demand
people can live in neighbourhoods they can't afford

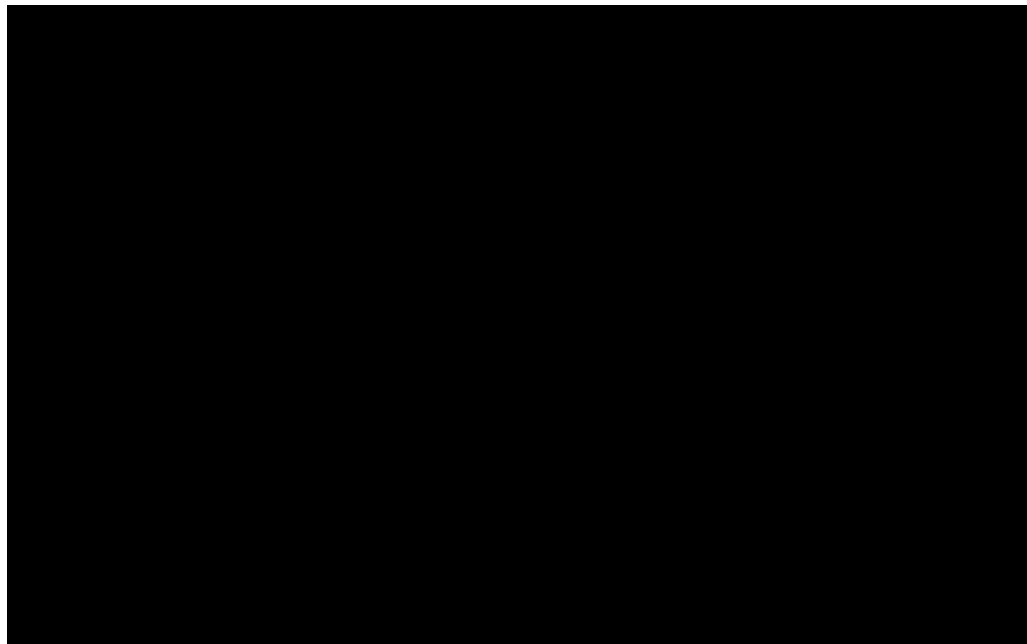


there will be too many people

no limit on the number of people in a house
extended families
sharing a mortgage or rent payment

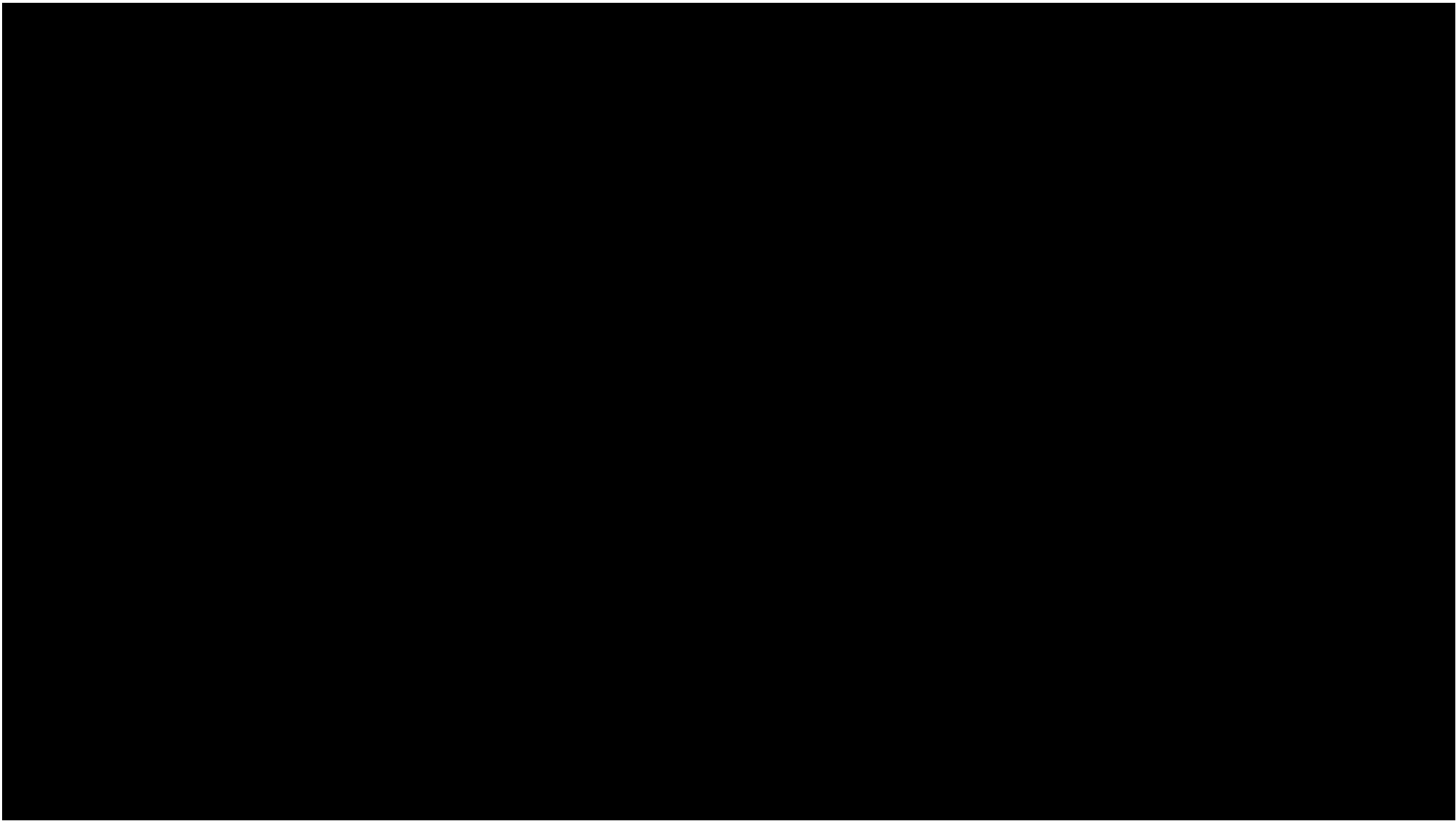
rental units have lower occupancy than sfd
owner occupied 2.75 pp house
rental 2.38

ex 1 bungalow - 7 people for 3 bdrms rental to students





there will be too many cars





my property values will go down

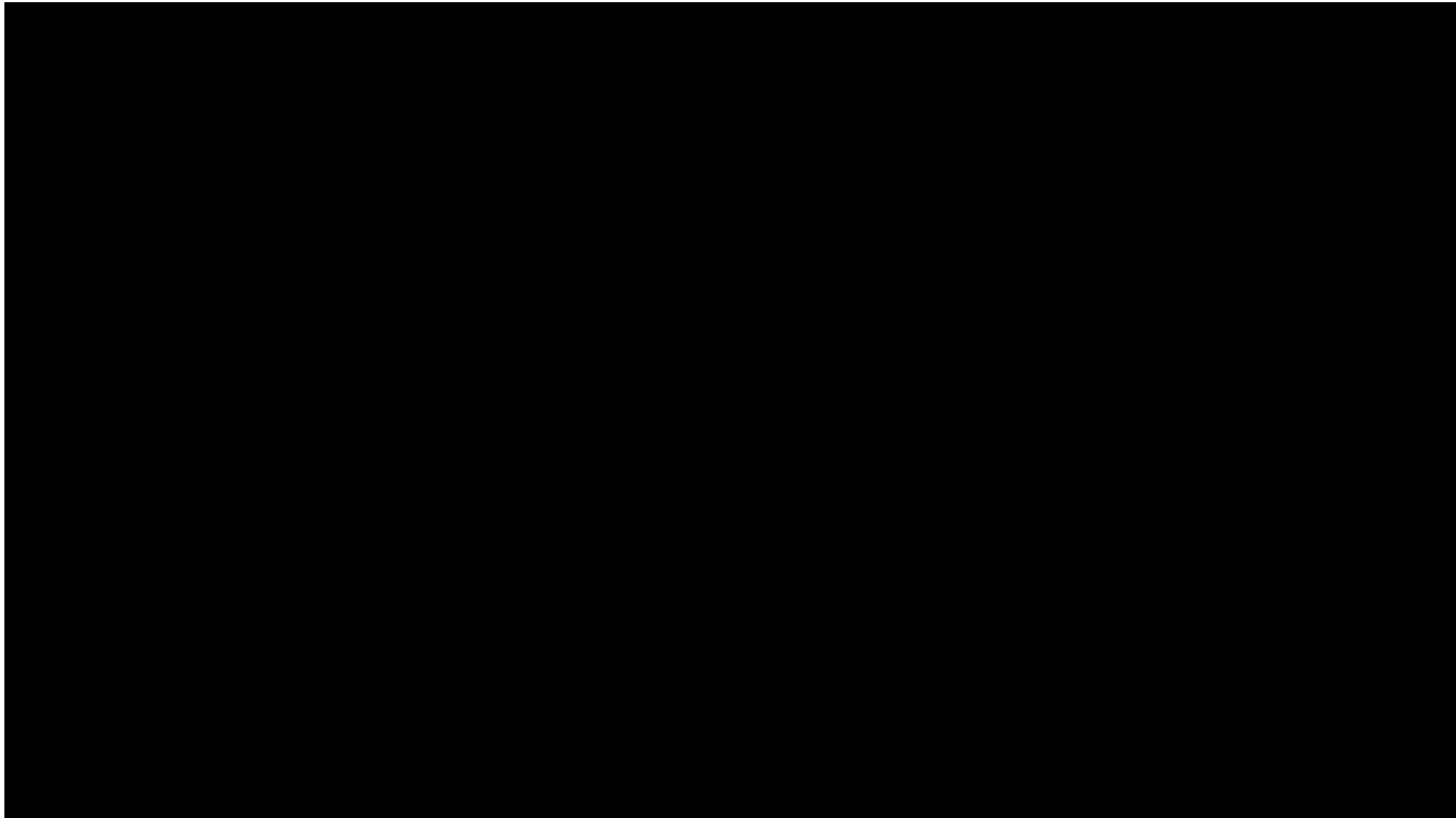
general expectation is it is worth more

track building permit values
property improvement





my property values will go down



there is widespread opposition

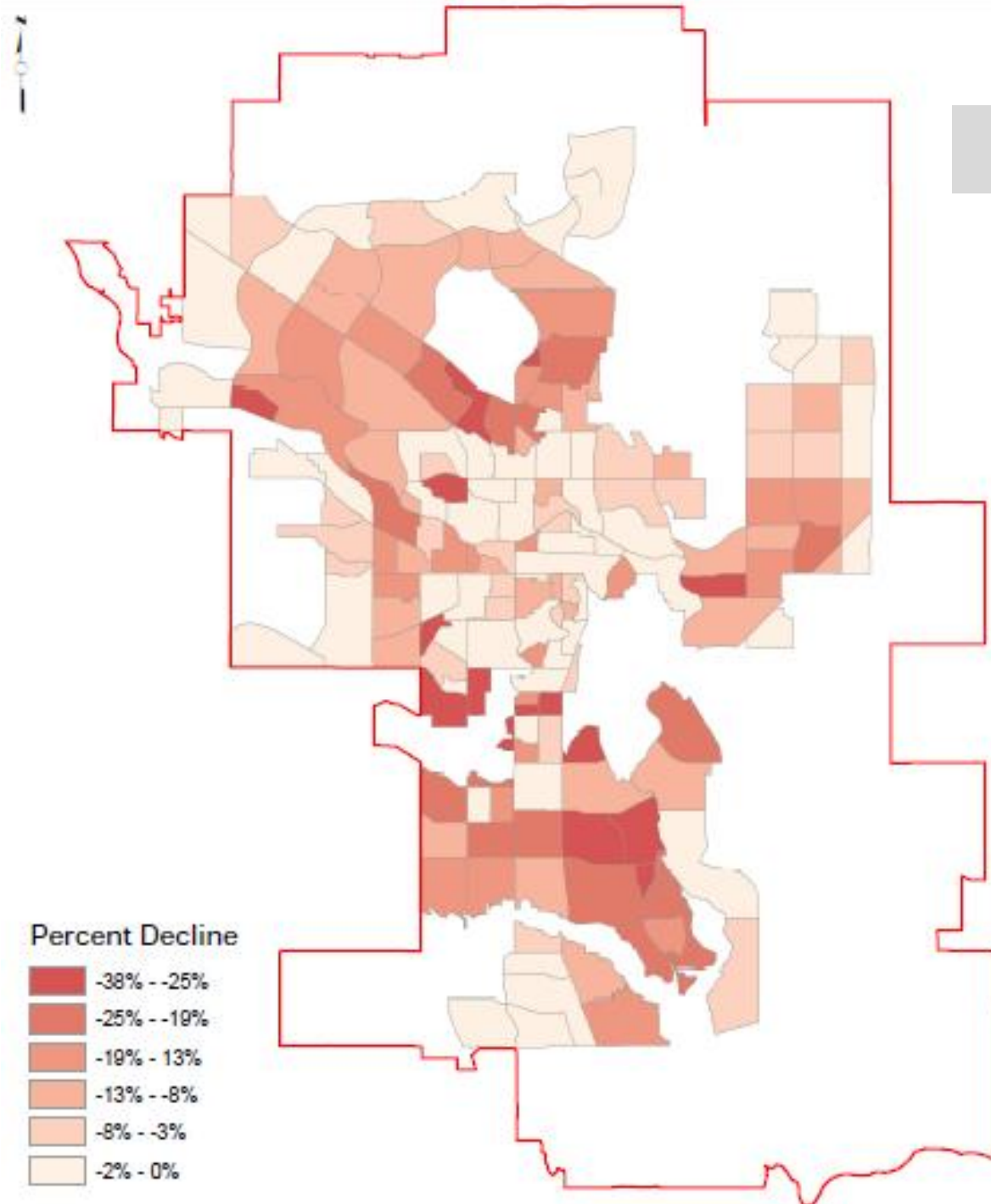
that's not what the polling shows

76% support - public consultation
1,244 signed up online campaign
1,000 signed petition



Calgary has the country's **lowest** multi-family vacancy rate at 1.4 percent
Monthly rents for one bedroom units are the **highest**, averaging \$1,127 -
+12% from last year.
Colliers





keep my neighbourhood the same

many existing areas have a lower population

canyon meadows

1976 7,600

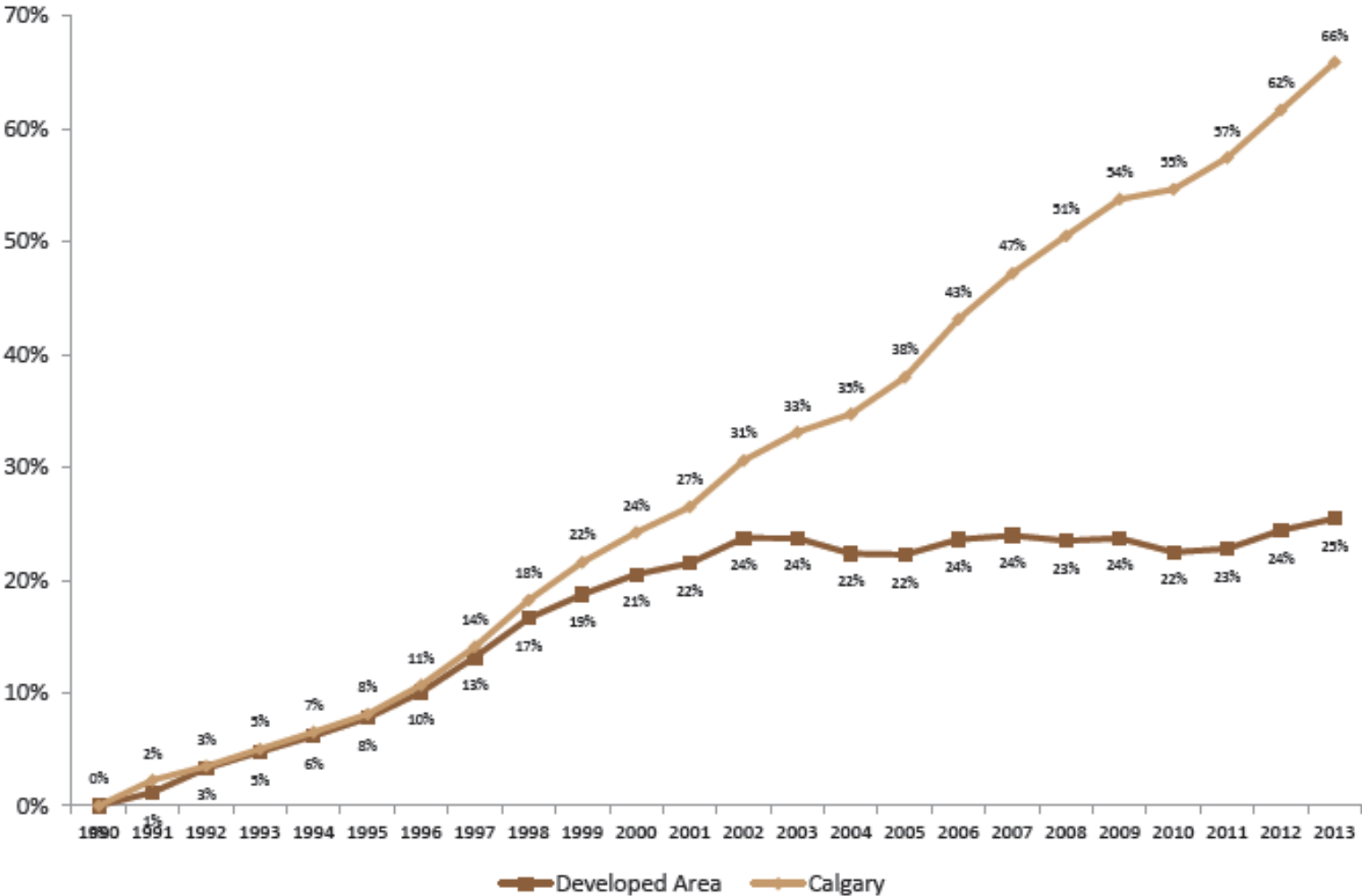
1990 8,600

2014 7,838

13 % drop

keep my neighbourhood the same

Population Growth Trend (%), 1990-2013 (Developed Area and Calgary)



people per household - citywide

1980	3.0
2014	2.69

patterson heights

1980	3.14
2014	2.21

my neighbourhood is special

this is a business issue

53 % of our tax base is commercial

ontario - if housing not affordable - hurts commercial

yes - expanding to all areas does work

Sweden - attefallshus



can we focus on outcomes ?

safety

affordability

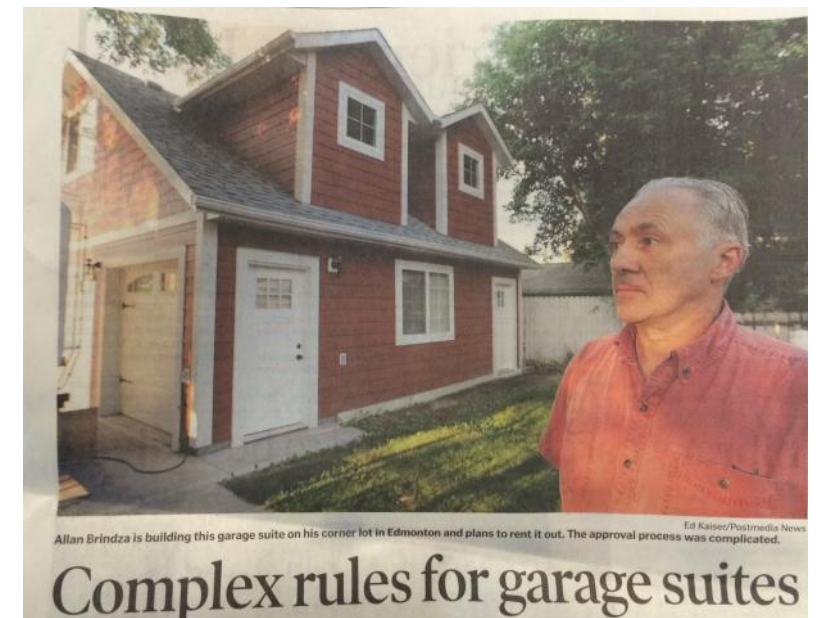
housing choice



next steps

what direction are we asking for ?
agreement on framework - 4 objectives

tenant **safety**
diversify the housing options
promote **essential** standards
cut the red tape - focus on the **outcomes**



what direction are we asking for ?
agreement on framework - 5 actions

discuss objectives
policy | guidelines | land use changes
report back Q2 2015
monitoring



matrix

secondary
suite



above
grade



detached
suite



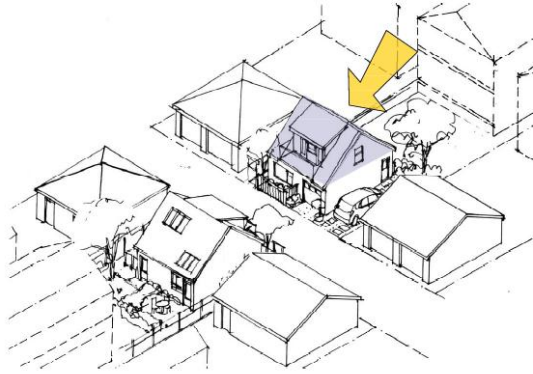
matrix

discretionary use
parking requirement
number of units
height
windows
lot coverage
unit size

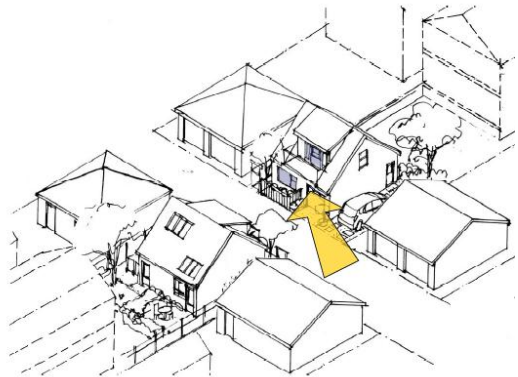
secondary suite	above garage	detached suite
in which areas of the city tandem spaces 1 space per unit secondary unit vs converted house 4 m is standard		
the same not relevant	facing interior size of garage 25 m2	facing interior accessory bldg 25 m2



upper storey



windows



lanescape



guidelines

let's solve the challenge

let's focus on **outcomes**

