

Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2025-0068 / LOC2024-0185
heard at Calgary Planning Commission
Meeting 2025 January 23



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
Commissioner Hawryluk	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This proposed Direct Control (DC) District is based on the current Residential – Grade-Oriented Infill (R-CG) District and would allow 2 Secondary Suites in an existing detached home if there are no backyard suites. The R-CG Land Use District allows a basement suite and a backyard suite but allows neither 2 basement suites nor 2 backyard suites. No stock Land Use District in the City’s current Land Use Bylaw allows 2 basement suites, so a DC was required. According to Administration and the Applicant, the current building has 2 illegal basement suites (Cover Report, page 1; Attachment 3). A Land Use Amendment is required before these suites can be legalized and added to the City’s Secondary Suite Registry. <p>The most important part of the proposed DC is Section 7, which would allow 2 Secondary Suites in an already existing building (as of the date of this DC’s approval).</p> <p>After Commission received the reports and before Commission’s meeting, Administration revised the proposed DC by adding Section 8 to require a Development Permit for Secondary Suites. The Land Use Bylaw does not require Development Permits for Secondary Suites (see LUB, 1P2007, 25(1)(s)). Because Council has already decided that Development Permits are not required for Secondary Suites and any site-specific consideration should have been part of Administration’s review of the Land Use application, Commission voted unanimously to “delete Section 8 titled ‘Development Permit Requirement for Secondary Suite’ in its entirety and renumber the subsequent Section accordingly.” A Building Permit will still be required prior to construction.</p> <p>Section 546(1) of the Land Use Bylaw requires 1.0 stall per unit or suite in this location, meaning that 3 parking stalls will be required on the lot. The front driveway and garage appear large enough to meet this requirement.</p> <p>The Applicant is aware that these suites will need to be built under the commercial building code, which will have higher costs per square foot than the residential building code.</p>

	<p>One Commissioner opposed this application, noting the precedence that legalizing multiple existing suites could encourage landowners to create multiple illegal suites and then apply for DCs like this one instead of going through the process in the correct order. Conversely, approving this DC could signal willingness to allow an option for landowners to go through the process in the correct order. It could also let Administration and Council gauge interest in multiple suites in detached homes, which might inform future decisionmakers.</p> <p>The strongest argument that I can make against this application is that the R-CG District already allows up to 3 units and 3 suites in a new building on this location, but the DC would allow 2 Secondary Suites only in the existing building. If something were to happen to this building, insurance would cover the cost to rebuild the current building but the DC would not allow a new building to have 2 Secondary Suites. In that case, the owner would be forced to come back to update the DC. A simpler DC could avoid that process.</p> <p>Some additional reasons I supported this application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Household sizes have fallen over the last century. Two basement suites in an existing building are going to be smaller than the single suite that is already possible there, which may produce an appropriate living situation and policy response for smaller households. - The building already exists. This application should not make it cast a larger shadow. Environmental advocates argue that the greenest building is the one that already exists. Adapting an existing building should be cheaper and faster than new construction. - If Calgary has not been building enough homes at prices that people can afford and at a rate that meets or exceeds population growth, then applications like this one that help with housing supply, price, and timing are in the broad public interest.
Commissioner Montgomery	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This change sets a precedent. • Concern is that it sends a message that the City will create a DC district to accommodate situations that people created illegally. • What stops the next person from building 2 suites in the main building and then asking the City for special treatment to accommodate these suites. • We have now allowed the City to fix a financial decision someone made.