

Background and Previous Council Direction

Background

The Secondary Suite Incentive Program is a crucial component of Home is Here: The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2024 – 2030 (CD2023-0749). The Program aims to increase the supply of housing to address affordability challenges in Calgary.

Since the spring of 2018, The City of Calgary has been adjusting the regulatory environment and pioneering initiatives to encourage the development of safe secondary suites. Administration has leveraged the Council-approved Secondary Suite Amnesty Program to encourage the registration of safe legal suites. Rather than The City searching for illegal suites, a program was developed that encouraged property owners to approach The City voluntarily.

An Advisory Bulletin on the building code interpretation for existing secondary suites was also developed in the spring of 2018 and communicated to the public. Suites that were built prior to 2018 March must comply with the building code and are considered existing. The primary focus is to meet four minimum life safety requirements:

- Proper egress window from bedrooms
- Interconnected, hard-wired smoke alarms
- Proper smoke separations between suites and common areas
- Proper egress to the exterior (stairwells with smoke separation, protection of exterior exit stairs, etc.)

The amnesty program centered on an education first approach, included the waived development permit and registry fee, and partnered with the building code interpretation.

Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Secondary Suite Incentive Program in 2024 May, and the program launched 2024 June 3rd. Since launch the program has processed over 5,000 applications, seeing over 1,500 suites registered with an additional 2,500 in progress. The Incentive Program is supported through both municipal and federal funding and is expected to continue into 2026.

Previous Council Direction

Secondary Suite Program Timeline

DATE	REPORT NUMBER	DIRECTION/DESCRIPTION
2024 May 28	CD2024-0661	Secondary Suite Incentive Program Council approved the Secondary Suite Program Incentive Program Terms of Reference.
2023 September 16	CD2023-0749	Home is Here – The City of Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024 – 2030 Action 1.C.8. Create incentives for more affordable non-market and market units: i. Establish an incentive program of at least \$10,000 per unit for secondary suites, to produce at least 400 net new secondary suites each year.
2023 June 08	CD2023-0585	Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan The Secondary Suite Incentive Program, through initiative 4 “Incentivize legal secondary suites,” is approved for funding by Council through the endorsement of the application to the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund.
2023 November 28	IP2023-1177	Secondary Suite Amnesty Extension Extended the amnesty to 31 December 2026
2021 December 01	IP2021-1614	Extension of Secondary Suite Amnesty Extended the amnesty to 31 December 2023
2020 April 06	PUD2020-0407	Secondary Suites Amnesty Period Extension Extended the amnesty to 31 December 2021
2018 March 12	C2018-0128	Secondary Suite Process Reform Council approved the mandatory registration of a secondary suite as per the Suite Registry Bylaw 11M2018. Council also approved the Amnesty Program which focuses on education and removes development and registry fees.