

NO: R242

COUNCIL DATE: December 4, 2017

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **December 1, 2017**

FROM: **Director, Public Safety**

FILE: **5480-01**

SUBJECT: **Multiple Suite Compliance Program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Public Safety Division recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Direct staff to suspend previously endorsed enforcement action on illegal multiple suites;
3. Direct staff to develop a comprehensive Multiple Suite Compliance Program; and
4. Endorse guiding principles for the governance and development of a program to manage secondary and multiple suites.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's support to suspend enforcement action on illegal and multiple suites pending the development of a Multiple Suites Compliance Program.

BACKGROUND

Concerns and issues associated with secondary and multiple suites have grown in the last 10 years. Multiple suites place additional burdens on the infrastructure in neighbourhoods (e.g., roads, water, sewers etc.) by creating higher demands. This can lead to increased traffic congestion and may lead to traffic collisions and discord in neighbourhoods. In areas underserved by public transit residents are overly reliant on private vehicles which, in turn, worsen traffic and parking congestion. Multiple suites also raise the risks from potential violations of the BC Building Code and related potential fire risks for the owners and renters.

The impact of multiple suites has led to a significant number of complaints regarding parking, overcrowding and general nuisance. These concerns must be balanced with the need for affordable housing and the impacts of potential disruption brought about by either legislation or decommissioning of multiple suites.

There are 2,395 properties registered with the City of Surrey that contain multiple suites (more than one).

Since 2010, the City has received 11,247 complaints in relation to multiple suites, as well associated parking and congestion issues. Complaints relate to a variety of issues, including an excessive number of vehicles in an area for which there is not sufficient parking, vehicles parked in laneways obstructing residential driveway, renters parking commercial vehicles, excess garbage, unsightly property, criminal activity from renters, loud music, excessive partying, issues with electrical wiring and other miscellaneous issues.

In order to alleviate these concerns, in East Clayton where it is evident that parking demands brought on by multiple suites far exceeds supply, staff developed an information and enforcement plan to provide six months' notice for residents to make arrangements to eliminate multiple suites. This plan was endorsed by Council on July 24, 2017. Following Council endorsement, letters were sent to the owners of 175 identified multiple suites in East Clayton to ensure a plan is in place to have these properites achieve compliance with Bylaws and to alleviate associated parking concerns.

Subsequent to the letter being sent, a petition (titled "Stop the displacement of 300+ families in Clayton") signed by 2,823 individuals was received. Staff also received communication from a number of individuals supporting the removal/enforcement of suites.

At the October 2, 2017 Regular Council meeting, Council instructed Staff to pause any further action and referred the matter back to Staff for additional review.

DISCUSSION

Given concerns raised to date staff are recommending that the current enforcement plan be suspended pending the development of a comprehensive Multiple Suites Compliance Program for the entire city. It is anticipated that the creation of such a new program to address the variety of issues surrounding multiple suites, will take about one year to develop as it will involve a full review of the current situation, existing multiple suites practices, public consultation, and issues associated with legal multiple suites.

To provide guidance to staff in developing a Multiple Suites Compliance Program, four guiding principles are recommended.

- **Principle 1 - *All Multiple Suites will be Legalized or Eliminated over the Medium or Long Term***
 - This principle allows for the development of a program with a clear long term goal. This principle also forms the basis for communication to residents regarding the process to legalize suites through mechanisms which adhere to the BC Building Code and City zoning bylaws.

- **Principle 2 - *Compliance of Illegal Suites will be Required***
 - This principle will communicate that a Council endorsed enforcement plan will be initiated after reasonable efforts to legalize or eliminate illegal suites are implemented by owners and renters are given time to find safe and legal dwellings.

- **Principle 3 - Multiple Suite Fees will continue to be Collected**
 - This principle will communicate that Multiple Suite Fees are required to support the additional costs placed on the infrastructure and neighbourhoods (e.g., roads, water, sewers etc.) by all multiple suites (legal and illegal ones that are transitioning).
- **Principle 4 - No New Multiple Suites will be Tolerated**
 - This principle will communicate that the development of new multiple suites will not be allowed and immediate action will be taken.

Once developed the program will be forwarded to Council for approval.

Staff recommend that the program have three areas of focus:

1. Legalization - of existing non-compliant suites
 - a. Process Developed
 - b. Rezoning Considerations
 - c. Code Compliance
 - d. Estimated Costs
2. Elimination -of those suites which cannot be legalized
 - a. Relocation Plan Monitoring
 - b. Enforcement Process
3. Prevention - of the development of further non-compliant suites
 - a. Construction Phase
 - b. Post Occupancy

Communication Plan

To allow for clear communication to residents, a detailed communications plan will be developed as part of the Multiple Suites Compliance Program. The objective of the communication plan will be to ensure citizen understanding and enhanced confidence that the City processes are fair, equitable and citizen-centred. The following key messages will form the basis of an ongoing communications plan:

1. Regulatory Bylaws reduce risks to public safety and maintain the livability of our neighbourhoods.
2. Multiple suites place unplanned for additional burdens on the infrastructure in neighbourhoods (e.g., roads, water, sewers etc.)
3. Multiple suites lead to increased traffic congestion and contribute to discord in neighbourhoods between conforming and non-conforming residents.
4. The City of Surrey is developing a Multiple Suites Compliance Program to guide owners to the steps required to legalize multiple suites or eliminate multiple suites.

5. The City of Surrey will provide reasonable notification to owners and assistance to renters relocating as a result of the de-commissioning of non-conforming suites.
6. The City of Surrey is fair when enforcing its bylaws and balances the needs of all members of the community.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The development of a comprehensive Multiple Suite Compliance plan supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter, specifically supporting the following Desired Outcomes:

Inclusion - Housing

DO12 - Everyone in Surrey has a place to call home; and

Built Environment and Neighbourhoods – Neighbourhoods and Urban Design

DO1 - Surrey is comprised of distinct, diverse and compact neighbourhoods and Town Centres, with an engaging public realm.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Direct staff to suspend previously endorsed enforcement action on illegal multiple suites until further direction is received from Council;
3. Direct staff to develop a comprehensive Multiple Suite Compliance Program; and
4. Endorse guiding principles for the governance and development of a program to manage secondary and multiple suites; and



Terry Waterhouse
Director, Public Safety

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