



320 – 5th Avenue SE
Calgary, AB T2G 0E5
Tel: 403.263.1550
Fax: 403.263.4681
www.ywcaofcalgary.com

Charitable Reg. #: 108227927 RR0001

November 26, 2014

Dear Mayor Nenshi and Members of City Council

Re: Support for the Legalization of Secondary Suites

We urge you to support the legalization of secondary suites.

Each day in our work with women in our community who are vulnerable, we encounter many people who could benefit from the approval and regulation of safe secondary suites.

More than 200 women and children slept under a YWCA of Calgary roof last night in one of the emergency shelter or housing programs meant to support a woman in crisis due to family violence or homelessness.

Our challenge – and the painful reality for women we support – is that their crisis is often protracted by the lack of safe, appropriate and affordable housing in community to which they can move on. The average length of stay in our shelter and housing programs has increased by more than 20 per cent in the past year.

With secondary suites, we can create additional units by making better use of existing housing stock and adding density in communities already equipped with infrastructure and services. While this will not be a boon in terms of real numbers, any additional housing capacity which can be brought into the market in short order is both necessary and welcome.

Suites are an affordable rental option and also enable greater numbers of Calgarians to attain homeownership by assisting with income and offsetting mortgage costs. The legalization of suites can also offer greater protection to both owners and tenants by ensuring guidelines and inspections are in place so that units are safe. Further, for women who have experienced violence or for women who may be living alone, the addition of another person in the building can contribute to a greater sense of security.

We urge council to end this debate and address the critical needs of people who simply need a roof over their heads. Approving suites would demonstrate that council is indeed ready to make a meaningful commitment to address Calgary's housing crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Tomney', written in a cursive style.

Sue Tomney
CEO
YWCA of Calgary