UNDER EVAN WOOLLEY, COMMUNITIES ARE “SECONDARY”
Myths debunked – secondary suites

My opponent uses dubious rationale to suggest that "secondary suites" should be approved across Ward 8. I don't agree. Here are some secondary suite myths, debunked.

MYTH #1 – In 2013, Ward 8 residents voted to support a secondary suites policy.

That is blatantly false. There was no ballot question on secondary suites, and certainly no mandate to create a blanket-approval process for Calgary communities, despite what my opponent in Ward 8 is suggesting.

MYTH #2 - Calgary’s secondary suites policy has fractured neighbourhoods.

My door knocking experience has confirmed that many Ward 8 communities want to keep their single-family zoning. Where there is no immediate planning rationale supporting densification - such as an employment centre, a hospital, a college or university - there is little or no need for a community-wide blanket rezoning.
Neighbourhoods are fractured when planning is imposed on them without consensus.

**MYTH #3 - most of Ward 8 must be rezoned in order to have secondary suites.**

Much of Ward 8 is already zoned for multi-dwelling accommodations. For example, most of the Beltline is already apartment densities. It is only in a relatively small pockets of Ward 8 where single dwelling homes remain (e.g. only 12% exists in Rutland Park).

**MYTH #4 - everyone else is doing it, so why shouldn't we?**

In point of fact, an Edmonton community recently garnered national headlines by using a new restrictive covenant to affirm single detached home ownership. Even with an interventionist City Council, communities may still have the final say on how they wish to live by using tools such as restrictive covenants.

**MYTH #5 – Suites empower homeowners and improve affordability.**

We no longer have a housing crisis in Calgary. A successful secondary suite application may add some speculative land value to property, but that’s it.

**MYTH #6 - Secondary suites have little or no impact on the**
look and feel of neighbourhoods.
The City standard for parking-per-dwelling is one stall. We still live in a car-centric city, particularly in single-family communities, where secondary suites are proposed. It is inevitable that additional traffic and parking will result. Outdoor amenity space will be required for each secondary suite. The character of the redesignated community will change. This is not a decision about housing density; it is about choice of lifestyle and the feel of the community.

MYTH #7 – We only have to rezone to solve and properly regulate secondary suites.
Clearly established rules and regulations exist under the Alberta Building Code that require significant capital outlay by a homeowner before a secondary suite can be occupied. A simple rezoning does not solve the illegal suite problem if owners are not prepared to spend the dollars for a physical conversion required by the ABC. In today's highly competitive rental market, we are much less likely to see homeowners picking up the conversion tab, even where rezoning applications are free.

MYTH #8 – City council has the final say on zoning for secondary suites.
Yes and no. Many communities have legal controls (restrictive covenants) registered on title that limit the number of
dwellings on a lot. If a suite has a separate kitchen, it is a "dwelling unit" by the City's own rules. The legal covenants still apply even in the face of a Council rezoning.

**MYTH #9 - It’s no myth that council spends at least one full day monthly on ‘free’ secondary suite rezonings.**

Council needs to spend its time on strategic business and not on secondary suites. The current Council has spent 7 years debating a "blanket rezoning" for secondary suites. There are ways to tighten this up. For one thing, it's time to amend the policy that allows free rezoning applications. By waiving the application fee, the floodgates opened to between 25 and 35 new applications a month. The applications have not abated, despite four years of no-fees. Council spends a day a month, at least, on approvals/disapprovals. Council needs to be dealing with more pressing issues like the loss of 30% of the downtown office rental business.

Waiving the fee didn’t prompt an increase in applications from ‘regular’ Calgarians - council recently noted that eight or 10 applications came from one investment property owner alone. Evan Woolley and some of his colleagues have encouraged "spot zoning" that pits neighbour-against-neighbor. By moving to a community-based approach, we would avoid this type of conflict. Only those with a real need - family or parental circumstances being the obvious example - will meet the fee
and in the process likely have more community sympathy for their situation.

My opponent, Evan Woolley, says he puts neighbourhoods first. But under Clr Woolley’s watch, communities are clearly “secondary.”

YOUR COMMUNITY’S VOICE MATTERS. On October 16th, vote Chris Davis for Councillor, Ward 8.

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