



# 1. Better Ideas: Nenshi proposes common-sense policy on secondary suites

## Policy Overview

Today Naheed released his policy on secondary suites in Calgary – a policy that brings safe, legal affordable housing to Calgary while respecting the rights of people in existing communities.

Secondary suites are not the entire solution to our affordable housing crisis, but they are an important part of the puzzle. Naheed will be releasing a full policy on housing in due course, but this piece could be implemented today.

### **Nenshi proposes common-sense policy on secondary suites**

*Mclver-led motion is Councilitis at work: an attempt to hide from record, delay issue until after election*

Mayoral candidate and long-time housing advocate Naheed Nenshi today announced a policy for secondary suites that will immediately bring safe, legal affordable housing units to Calgary, while minimizing disruptions to existing neighbourhoods. This stands in stark contrast to the Notice of Motion being presented to City Council today by aldermen Ric Mclver, Jim Stevenson, and Gord Lowe – all ardent opponents of secondary suites in existing neighbourhoods in the past – which would tie up any decision on suites in administrative paralysis for at least eight months, if not longer.



Nenshi's proposal envisions secondary suites being allowed in all residential communities without need for a land-use rezoning, subject to the following simple conditions:

- All provincial building code rules must be met, notably the need for fire safety (e.g. fire walls between suites, smoke alarms that ring on all floors)
- One off-street parking spot must be provided for the suite, in addition to the spots required for the main dwelling. This rule would be waived for suites within 500 metres of an LRT or BRT station.
- The owner must occupy any home with a suite; both units cannot be rented simultaneously.

"It's unbelievable that this has been allowed to go on for so long," said Nenshi. "This city has been out of step with other cities, with public opinion, and with its own plan to end homelessness due directly to a lack of courage at City Council to address the issue.

"Alderman Mclver's motion would just extend this untenable situation even further. It's a clear indication that he and his colleagues suffer from "Councilitis" – an inflammation of analysis characterized by an inability to make tough decisions, even when they are the right thing to do. We don't need eight months to study the issue – we already know what works and we just need to do it."

There are an estimated 50,000 to 80,000 illegal suites in Calgary, whose tenants lack any safety protection or recourse. All major cities in Canada save Calgary have a secondary suite policy, with Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, and Toronto, amongst many others, having legalized them in all neighbourhoods.

