

[Autos](#) [Careers](#) [Classifieds](#) [Homes](#) [SUBMIT](#)

## Suite debate on table

By RENATO GANDIA, CALGARY SUN

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The debate on allowing secondary suites in all residential areas in Calgary is slated to rage at city hall next Wednesday.

Bureaucrats will report to the Land Use, Planning and Transportation committee with a recommendation of a blanket policy allowing basement suites in residential buildings.

They're also recommending discretionary use of secondary suites on detached structures, such as a garage within a residential property.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi is a staunch advocate for making secondary suites legal with three important caveats: The rental space adheres to safety codes, the owner renting it lives there and one off-street parking spot is provided.

Nenshi is on the record saying safety of the secondary suites is a must and can't be compromised.

Ald. Andre Chabot doesn't support a blanket policy on secondary suites — he'd rather the city put a cap on how many can be allowed in different areas.

"I have so many in my area," he said, adding the city hasn't properly studied the potential impacts to infrastructure should more basement suites be developed in a given area.

What's being proposed also doesn't warrant elimination of the illegal ones, he said.

Ald. Gian-Carlo Carra said he's willing to make an exception on a blanket policy because he has seen it work in other cities such as Edmonton, San Francisco, Seattle and Portland.

"Generally I'm allergic to one-fits-all, but this is a good case to make an exception," he said.

He said he agrees with the mayor on questioning why the city allows a frat house to exist with absolutely no control, but, when it comes to installing a stove in a basement, there are so many hoops to go through.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart has been surveying Calgarians on their opinion and more than half of responders disagreed on allowing secondary suites in all single-family house. Out of 844 responders to Colley-Urquhart's survey, 460 disagreed with Nenshi and 384 gave it a thumbs-up.

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