

**City of Victoria****Policy regarding Preservation of Garden Suites as Rentals**

**Authorized by Victoria City Council \_\_\_\_\_, 2017**

**1. Policy Reasoning**

One of the stated goals related to Housing and Homelessness in the City's Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2012, is to "Continue to maintain policies and regulations that increase rental housing choice such as residential secondary suites, garden suites and forms of shared accommodation" (s.13.31). Furthermore, the Victoria Housing Strategy 2016-2025 notes that renting has traditionally provided a more affordable housing option than ownership, and the Strategy identifies garden suites as a component of the rental market.

Garden suites were conceived as housing that is accessory to single family dwellings, their purpose being to improve affordability for homeowners by adding rental income, and to add to the overall supply of purpose-built rental housing, of which there is an acute shortage in Victoria. Purpose-built rental is an important component of the housing market as it is the most stable form of rental housing, becoming more affordable over time compared to ownership, and because ownership is now out of reach for many even moderate income earners. Currently, approximately 60% of Victoria residents are renters, while the rental vacancy rate is 0.5%. With the population forecast to increase to 100,000 by 2026 and with home ownership severely out of sync with wages, improved affordability for homeowners and an increased supply of purpose-built rental housing is critically needed both now and to support future growth.

**2. Applications for Subdivision or Stratification of Garden Suites**

The City wishes to protect the availability of garden suites as rentals, and intends that all garden suites remain rental properties. Council, therefore, discourages the public from making applications for the subdivision or stratification of garden suites. This includes:

- applications to subdivide garden suites from the rest of the property;
- applications for approval of bare land strata plans with respect to garden suites; and
- applications to convert garden suites to strata.