



Licensing Rental Properties and Regulation of Nuisance Calls for Emergency Services

Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services
January 14, 2020



Licensing Rental Properties

“That the Administration be directed to explore a licensing program for rental property businesses which includes provisions to regulate nuisance calls for emergency services, consult with key stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Saskatchewan Landlord Association, Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership and Renters of Saskatoon and Area, and report back including recommendations to City Council”.

Dwelling Units in Saskatoon

Housing Type	Rental Units
Rental Units in Townhouses, One and Two Unit Dwellings (approximate)	15,300
Rental Units in Multi-Unit Dwellings	21,635
Total Rental Units (approximate)	37,000

Multi-Unit Dwelling Sites	650
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Public Engagement

- Two phases of consultation

Key Stakeholders:

- Saskatoon Housing Corporation
- Saskatoon Housing Authority
- Saskatoon Homelessness Initiatives Partnership
- Office of Residential Tenancies
- Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission
- Renters of Saskatoon and Area
- Saskatchewan Landlords Association
- Pleasant Hill Community Association
- King George Community Associations.

Public Engagement

Phase 1 – Primary Outcomes

1. Achieve greater rates of compliance with Property Maintenance Standards;
2. Limit nuisance tenant behaviour and
3. Hold landlords accountable when high nuisance call out rates are experienced.

Public Engagement

Phase 2 – Desired Objectives

1. Landlord and tenant education;
2. Building Community Cohesion;
3. Utilization of the fee for service model;
(contracted services)
4. Pro-active and follow-up property inspections;
5. Licensing rental properties.

Current Approach

- Bylaw No. 7990, Fire and Protective Services Bylaw, 2001
- Bylaw No. 8175, the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw, 2003
- Provide standards and maintenance requirements for all residential properties

Current Approach

- Annual fire inspection for multiple-unit-dwellings
- Complaint based inspections for one-unit, two-unit and multiple unit dwellings
- Contracted service model to remedy some property maintenance contraventions

Calls for Emergency Services

- 5 multiple-unit dwellings had 4 or more calls per week to Police
- 20 multiple-unit dwellings had 2 or more calls per week to Police
- The Safe Communities Task Force: Saskatoon Police Service, Saskatoon Fire, Bylaw Compliance, Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Ministry of Social Services.

Municipal Scan

Licensing Programs

- Vancouver
- North Vancouver
- New Westminster
- Edmonton
- Calgary
- Waterloo
- Toronto
- London

Alternatives to Licensing Programs

- Halifax
- Markham
- Winnipeg
- Kitchener
- Guelph
- Regina

New Approaches Planned for 2020

1) Conduct a Public Education Campaign Regarding Residential Tenancies

- landlords and tenants rights and responsibilities;
- Important contact information;
- Informs the public about bylaws.

New Approaches Planned for 2020

2) Support Programming to Increase Property Maintenance and Safety Considerations

- Crime Free Multi-Housing Program
- Limited to multiple-unit dwellings but can be expanded
- Additional requests for staff may be required in the future
- Promotes community and safety

New Approaches Planned for 2020

3) Optimize Use of Contracted Services to Remedy Bylaw Contraventions

- Contractor hired to remedy certain bylaw contraventions
- Currently utilizes this method; improvements will enhance this approach
- Applies to rental and owner occupied
- Costs are borne by the property owner

New Approaches Planned for 2020

4) Clear up Back Log of Property Maintenance Complaints

- 2020/2021 budget included an additional 1.5 FTEs to address backlog of long outstanding property maintenance complaints;
- Further reporting in 2020 outlining ongoing staff resources

Option 1

Increase Capacity to Proactively Address Property Maintenance Issues

- Enforcement is currently complaint based
- Program of proactive follow-up inspections

Option 1

Advantages:

- Promotes follow up inspections
- Does not depend on residents to make a complaint; and
- Supports the timely identification and remedy of recurring contraventions.

Disadvantages:

- Will require additional staffing resources.

Option 2

Prepare Specifics for Licensing Rental Properties

- Provides a framework through which the rental dwellings can be regulated, inspected and enforced.
- Landlords would be required to obtain a license
- Program would be extensive.
- Approximately 650 multi-unit sites containing 21,635 individual dwellings
- Additional 15,330 rental units located in one-unit dwellings, two-unit dwellings and townhouses.

Option 2

- Significant financial implications
- minimum of two-years to implement
- Unlikely to be operated on a cost-recovery basis
- If this option is selected, additional engagement and reporting on bylaw amendments for regulations will be undertaken.

Option 2

Advantages

- Allows for licensing conditions to be applied to rental properties; and
- May include provisions such as a nuisance service fee.

Option 2

Disadvantages

- Require significant staff time; additional funding sources would need to be identified
- It would likely lead to increased costs to tenants;
- All rental properties require a license.
- Property owners with recurring complaints are less likely to apply;
- Revocation of a rental property license could displace vulnerable residents

Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that Administration be directed to investigate further and report back on the financial implications of implementing Option 1, : increase staffing to facilitate proactive property maintenance inspections, as outlined in this report.

Rationale

- The objective of a rental property licensing program is to address bylaw contraventions
- Remedying related property maintenance contraventions may also reduce the volume of non-emergency calls
- Option 1 may achieve the objectives in a more strategic and focused manner