

VARSITY CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

South Shaganappi Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan engagement process is currently in Phase 3 (Refine). The City mailed an information booklet the last week of May which contains maps that propose urban forms (the types of uses in buildings) and building scales (height) on pages 10-13. If you have not received it, there are copies available in front of the Varsity Community Centre. You can also view a digital version at www.calgary.ca/shaganappi. The deadline for comments is June 24, 2024 however, it may be possible to submit comments past this date so verify with the City. You can comment online or by mailing in the last page of the booklet.

We have had serious concerns throughout the LAP process that the existing context on individual streets and the overall density and diversity of land uses already present in Varsity is being disregarded.

The City states: "A local area plan sets the vision for the evolution of the area over the next 30 years. It provides direction on future development and investment that residents, landowners, builders / developers, City Planners and Council can commonly refer to when new development and investment ideas are proposed."

We believe an in-person street by street analysis is warranted to determine the most appropriate uses and heights in each area rather than just looking at a two dimensional map. Many of the areas identified would not be appropriate for redevelopment within a 30 year time frame. The focus should be on those areas that *are* appropriate for redevelopment such as Crowchild Square (already rezoned for 12 storeys) and the church by the Dalhousie LRT station. Although building height would not overshadow homes in this area, any redevelopment needs to take into account the limitations of the community roadway network.

The latest maps showing areas of future land uses, density, and heights are very flawed in our opinion. There needs to be greater attention to detail and to the impact of these proposals on individual homeowners and the community as a whole. We believe changing the land use from low density residential and increasing heights significantly in numerous areas identified for future redevelopment will be very disruptive and harmful to the community. The current version of the LAP will destabilize our community.

For example, let's take a look at Vienna Drive and Viceroy Drive. You have a contiguous area of single family housing as well as a low density seniors' townhouse complex in the area south of Crowchild Trail and north of Varsity Drive immediately west of Shaganappi Trail. These homes are well maintained and would not be suitable to wind up in a landfill anytime within the next 30 years. The City has proposed to change all of Vienna Drive and the houses on the north side of Viceroy Drive from the park to 48 Street to Neighbourhood Connector (areas with a range of different types of homes along higher activity streets with small-scale local-focused commercial only). These 2

streets are very clearly NOT “higher activity” streets – in fact, Vienna drive is a dead-end road which is essentially a cul-de-sac.

The height proposed is Low-Modified which allows for buildings up to 4 storeys including small-scale homes, apartments, stacked townhouses, or mixed-use buildings. Assuming these homes are redeveloped, what is the fate of the homes right across the street on Viceroy Drive? There will clearly be reduced quality of life from disrupting the streetscape and a negative impact on property values. Even if redevelopment doesn't take place for many years, there would be a disincentive to invest in these homes. Why would someone pay for an expensive renovation if they are worried the homes right across the street could be redeveloped into a 4 storey apartment building?

There are also major impacts on traffic volumes by increasing density in this area. There is only one entry/exit point on 48 Street so any increase in density needs to take this limitation into account. There are already back-ups for residents trying to access Varsity Drive.

Another example is Varsity Estates Grove where the east half of the street is proposed for redevelopment but not the west side. This is incredibly disruptive to a beautiful residential street. One of the unique features in the Varsity community is the rear pedestrian pathway system. Redevelopment will remove some of these beautiful pathways. Here are photos illustrating Varsity Estates Grove including the rear pathway.



Varsity is a highly desirable community that already embraces a wide diversity of housing, commercial, and industrial land uses. Of the dwelling units in Varsity, 55% are multi-family and 45% are single family homes. We have numerous apartment and townhouse buildings, regional and local commercial development, and the University Innovation Quarter within our community. In addition to existing and proposed density within Varsity, we have several high density residential and commercial developments just outside our boundaries including Northland Mall, University District, University City, Dalhousie Station, Uxborough Apartments, etc. Surely this should be taken into account when proposing additional density in a community.

A complete list of our comments will be posted on the website as soon as they are completed. We will be presenting these concerns to the City and would encourage you to submit your comments to the City with a copy to Councillor Sharp and the Varsity Community Association.

City-Wide Blanket Rezoning of Residential Lots

The public hearing regarding upzoning all residential lots in Calgary was held April 22 to May 14, 2024. There were over 13,000 pages of written submissions (88% opposed) and 736 citizens who spoke at the hearing (70% opposed). This new base land use district allows single family, semi-detached, townhouses, and rowhouses on every lot in the City without the requirement of a public hearing before Council. The zoning will allow up to 8-10 dwelling units on a 50 foot lot and more units on larger lots. The parking requirement is 0.5 stalls per unit with additional vehicles parking on the street.

Council also approved laneway or backyard suites as a permitted use in addition to a secondary suite on each parcel. These suites are usually built above a rear garage. There is no requirement for parking on-site for laneway suites and there is no appeal on permitted uses.

University Innovation Quarter (formerly University Research Park)

The University Innovation Quarter is a 76 acre site south of the Brentwood LRT station. A new Master Plan is being created for this site in anticipation of redevelopment. Go to uiqcalgary.com for more information and sign up for their updates.

For information regarding the Civic Affairs Committee, please contact JoAnne Atkins, Director of Civic Affairs, at joanneatkins@shaw.ca. I'm sorry I haven't been able to reply to all emails during the past few months.