

# **VARSITY CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**March 2025**

## **South Shaganappi Local Area Plan**

The South Shaganappi Local Area Plan was approved by Council on March 4, 2025. The SSLAP determines where future residential and commercial density can occur and repeals previous planning policies such as the Varsity Land Use Study. We were able to get a few amendments prior to approval but we remain concerned about inappropriate designations for several areas in Varsity. I will post the formal submission of the Varsity Community Association on our website. You can view the maps on the city's website.

## **Blanket Rezoning & New Setback Rules**

Blanket rezoning came into effect on August 6, 2024. All residential lots in Calgary were upzoned to R-CG which allows a wide range of building types including single detached, semi-detached, duplex, cottage clusters, rowhouses, and townhouses. Single and semi-detached housing has a maximum lot coverage of 45% and 10 metres in height, whereas rowhouses and townhouses have a maximum lot coverage of 60% and 11 metres in height. The average lot coverage in Varsity ranges from 25-35%. Rowhouses usually accommodate 8 dwelling units – 4 on the main level and 4 secondary suites. This much larger building footprint and height can overwhelm and overshadow neighbouring houses and create issues with on-street parking, waste disposal, and privacy. We have had several applications in Varsity for rowhouses.

One of the consequences of blanket rezoning is that the contextual setback rules were not brought forward into the new bylaw. Previously, the character of a streetscape was maintained by requiring a consistent front setback (& rear setback). The contextual front setback established the average front setback of the 2 adjacent homes and allowed the new house (or renovation) to extend up to 1.5 metres beyond that average distance. This allowed for a gradual creeping forward of homes on a street but prevented a drastic change in the character of the street.

The new rule is a flat 3.0 metre setback from the property line for all housing types. This creates a very negative impact for the neighbours. The average front setback in Varsity is 10-15.0 metres so if a new home or renovation extends 7-12 metres in front of the adjacent homes it destroys peripheral views, overshadows, destroys the tree canopy, and disrupts the streetscape. It's a big concern that this change was never

communicated at any of the open houses or on the city's website so residents and community associations were unaware this was being proposed. We along with other community associations will be requesting Council re-implement contextual setback requirements.

### **New Zoning Bylaw**

The City is creating a new Zoning Bylaw which will replace Bylaw 1P2007. One of the initiatives is to eliminate parking requirements for all residential development. It is called an Open Strategy which allows the builder to determine if they need any parking stalls and if so, how many. Although the bylaw is still in draft form, we have a number of concerns with respect to residential and parks proposals. For a complete description of the new zoning bylaw go to: <https://engage.calgary.ca/citybuilding/cbpphase4>. It is expected this will be deferred to 2026.

### **Calgary Plan to Replace the Municipal Development Plan**

The City is proposing to replace the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) with a new plan called the Calgary Plan. Fortunately, Council has deferred consideration of the new Calgary Plan to 2026.

### **Vecova**

The news of the pending closure of Vecova in 2025 is devastating to the disabled community and Varsity residents. Vecova was not successful in obtaining funding from the federal government to upgrade their aging facility. For more information see <https://calgaryherald.com/opinion/opinion-skies-not-so-blue-in-calgary-for-disability-community>. You can also visit their website at <https://vecova.ca/>. Vecova is a one-of-a-kind facility that provides a wide range of services to the community and to people with all ability levels. You can write your MP, MLA, and City Council to express your opinion on this issue and ask for support for Vecova.

### **Restrictive Covenants**

Restrictive Covenants are an agreement between neighbours that limit the type of development that can be built on their properties. Email me if you would like more information on this initiative.

### **Delays in Responding**

Due to an overwhelming number of issues, there may be delays in responding to email inquiries. If you do not hear back from me within a few days, please email again.

### **Playgrounds**

This has been on hold due to other pressing issues but I'm hoping to get the committee activated within the next few months.

For information regarding the Civic Affairs Committee, please contact JoAnne Atkins, Director of Civic Affairs, at [joanneatkins@shaw.ca](mailto:joanneatkins@shaw.ca).