

# **VARSAITY CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT**

## **July 2025 Newsletter**

### **Rowhouse Applications in Varsity**

We have had a few applications for rowhouses in Varsity at 4607 Valiant Drive (12 dwelling units), 4804 Voyageur Drive (8 units), and 4816 Voyageur Drive (8 units). If you wish to view the plans for these sites, go to <https://developmentmap.calgary.ca/> and click on the property in question. There is also an application to rezone 4607 Valiant Drive to H-GO. This is a land use that is similar to R-CG but allows for greater density and height. The Committee had a pre-application meeting with a developer who wants to rezone a parcel in a culdesac in Varsity Estates. We will keep you updated about this application.

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

Blanket rezoning came into effect on August 6, 2024. All residential lots in Calgary are now zoned R-CG which allows a wide range of building types including single detached, semi-detached, duplex, cottage clusters, rowhouses, and townhouses. On a 50-foot lot, rowhouses accommodate 8 dwelling units – 4 on the main level and 4 secondary suites. This larger building footprint and height can overwhelm and overshadow neighbouring houses and create issues with on-street parking, waste disposal, and privacy. Currently, rowhouses and townhouses are discretionary uses and can be appealed to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.

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.

## **Backyard Suites**

A backyard suite is a dwelling unit built in the back yard or above a garage. It is also known as a garden suite, carriage house, or laneway suite. Due to blanket rezoning, each property may now have both a secondary suite and a backyard suite in addition to the main dwelling unit. There is no parking requirement for a backyard suite. This is a discretionary use that can be appealed. There have been several development permits for this use in Varsity and a completed project can be seen at 4426 – 39 Street NW.

## **Additional City Planning Policy Changes**

The City is changing the Municipal Development Plan, the Calgary Transportation Plan, and the Land Use Bylaw in the near future. The new proposed Zoning Bylaw contains many new policies including an Open Parking Strategy which eliminates minimum parking requirements for all forms of residential development including apartment buildings. A number of discretionary uses will become permitted uses which are not appealable. Visit [www.calgary.ca/citybuilding](http://www.calgary.ca/citybuilding) for more information.

## **Civic Election**

The civic election will be held on Monday, October 20, 2025. As Councillor Sharp will be running for mayor, Ward 1 will not have an incumbent. We have scheduled a Ward 1 Councillor Election Forum for October 6, 2025 at the Varsity Community Centre.

## **Restrictive Covenants**

Restrictive Covenants are an agreement between neighbours that limit the type of development that can be built on their properties. More information can be obtained at [www.varsityrestrictivecovenant.com](http://www.varsityrestrictivecovenant.com).

## **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). Due to a large 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.