

## **ATTACHMENT 1 – SSLAP SUBMISSION – FEBRUARY 2025**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COMMUNITY OF VARSITY**

Varsity is a stable, diverse, dynamic, thriving community which already demonstrates many of the ideals expressed in the Municipal Development Plan and other planning policies. Varsity has a wide variety of housing types at all price points including attainable and affordable housing.

For example, Varsity has a wide variety of housing types at all price points including numerous apartment buildings ranging from 3 to 12 storeys, townhouses, duplexes, single family homes, secondary suites, attainable housing, and affordable housing. Forty-five percent of dwelling units in Varsity are single family homes compared to the city average of 55%. Furthermore, additional multi-family housing has already been approved or proposed on several sites in Varsity.

According to the 2021 census, Varsity has 38% renter households compared to the city average of 31%; 10% subsidized rental housing compared to the city average of 9%; and 28% of dwelling units are in 3-4 storey apartment buildings in comparison to an average of 16% in the rest of Calgary. For units in apartment buildings 5 storeys and taller, Varsity has 11% as compared to the city average of 8%. These statistics illustrate that our community has already achieved most of the densification and diversification goals of the City and we think this is important to acknowledge.

Our residents are easily able to age within the community and many who downsize choose bungalows, townhouses, or apartments to minimize stairs and we have several seniors' residences in the community serving all ages and abilities including memory care – Cathedral Manor (subsidized), The Manor Village Varsity Retirement Home, Horizon Village, Foothills Lutheran Manor (subsidized), and Chateaux on the Green. We also have Cambridge Manor Care Home immediately south of 32 Avenue in University District.

Our local businesses in 6 different shopping and professional centres are very well supported and successful with low turnover. Our 6 schools as well as before and after school care programs, preschools, summer camps, and daycares are all full, most with waiting lists. The Varsity Community Centre is extremely busy with activities and the facility is fully booked throughout the year.

Varsity residents have excellent access to amenities and transit including 2 LRT stations. We have Vecova and Christine Mickle School offering unique recreation and educational services. We are close to the University of Calgary, the Children's Hospital, Foothills Hospital, and University District.

Our parks, off leash areas, playgrounds, playing fields, outdoor skating rinks, toboggan hills, walking pathways, and bike paths are heavily used. Wide boulevards with large elm trees create a beautiful buffer between our collector roadways and sidewalks. The Silver Springs Golf Course provides additional open green space and is an important community amenity. In the winter it is used for cross country skiing and walking and the ponds are used for skating.

Bowmont Natural Environment Park, Dale Hodges Park, and the Bow River are on Varsity's southwest boundary. Varsity residents place a high value on these regional parks as well as the open, green spaces and extensive mature urban tree canopy throughout the community. Residents have worked hard over the past decades to create and preserve these exceptional parks. These green spaces enhance quality of life for residents of Varsity and users from outside the community. They provide natural cooling, improve air quality, and support water management. They are social places for people of all ages (& their dogs in some parks) to gather, meeting, play, and talk. They encourage organized or spontaneous physical activity in all seasons. They are spaces where children can play or learn to ride a bike or skate. The mental health benefits cannot be underestimated. Open spaces create a sense of well-being by providing calm places to stop and think without the city noise and activity. This helps reduce stress by providing a respite from the busyness of the city. Best of all, they provide all these benefits for free.

Why have we devoted so much space to this description of our parks and open spaces? We care because with an increase in population, these parks and open spaces become even more important and must be protected and maintained. Many residents have moved to this community specifically because of these incredible spaces and our mature tree canopy. It's an integral part of our identity.

With respect to walkability, the planning of Varsity Village and Varsity Estates was based on the Radburn Plan which adapted the ideas of the English Garden City, developing a street hierarchy that segregated through traffic from local traffic and automotive traffic from pedestrian traffic. The developers used as many cul-de-sacs as possible and forwent rear lanes in favour of pedestrian pathways that connected to parks behind the houses. The intent was to create a park-like setting for users of the rear walkways and this intent has been maintained throughout the years. These pathways provide a beautiful and enjoyable way to walk in the community and are enjoyed by many residents daily.

The purpose of a local area plan is to provide direction on future redevelopment over the next 30 years. The City states: "There is a stage in each community's life cycle when the choice to rebuild or redevelop homes and buildings becomes more and more frequent (generally as homes and buildings reach 50+ years)." The Engagement Booklet describes the Life Cycle of a Community, however, this Life Cycle is not the reality experienced in Varsity. One reason is that Varsity has developed over several decades and there has been a gradual, continuous turnover and updating of homes from long-time homeowners to new families. This is illustrated in the spreadsheet in Attachment A and in the chart in Attachment B (data obtained from the City's website). Attachment C, Population Change from the 2019 Census, shows that Varsity experience 1-5% growth from 2018 to 2019. Once the population of Varsity peaked after construction of new homes between 1968 and 1980, it has stayed stable from 1980 to the present. We have not experienced a population decline and our schools and businesses are not "struggling to stay open". It is the complete opposite of this scenario. The assumptions made by the City are not accurate for the Varsity community.

Residents appreciate how special Varsity is and develop deep roots within the community which includes a long-term commitment to maintain and renovate their homes. The "50 year" rule is definitely not the case in Varsity since the vast majority of homes are in

excellent condition and highly sought-after. They won't be ready for the landfill for many years to come.

Therefore, it is important to identify where redevelopment makes sense within the 30 year time frame of a local area plan. Forward planning needs to be thoughtful and pragmatic. There's no point identifying a quiet residential street with homes in excellent condition for future apartment buildings. This type of redevelopment is unlikely to happen in comparison to other sites within the community that are more suitable. However, being designated for higher density can precipitate a slow decline of the street.

Instead of increasing predictability, this type of designation actually increases uncertainty and destabilizes the affected streets. Realtors have advised that prospective purchasers will be more willing to spend money on a home on a street that is not designated as a future apartment building as it would be safer than investing in a home where the context may change significantly. Not only does this uncertainty reduce the desirability of a street and affect sale prices, it discourages investment in those homes. For existing home owners on an affected street, decisions to make renovations, improve landscaping, install solar panels, or even spend money on regular maintenance become fraught with anxiety and indecision. If there is risk of a negative impact on their home from nearby redevelopment or a deterioration of other homes on their street as neighbours hesitate to invest in their homes, property values and quality of life could be adversely affected.

The Local Area Plan should demonstrate a vision that respects the existing context with great attention to detail in each and every community.

### **Varsity Land Use Study**

The Varsity Land Use Study, a non-statutory plan, which was approved in 2007 has clear policies for the lands south of the Dalhousie LRT Station, excerpted as follows:

*“Policy 4 - The highest buildings should be located immediately adjacent to Crowchild Trail NW and shall be no higher than 12 storeys. The height of buildings should progressively step down in a southward direction from Crowchild Trail NW to a height limit of 8 and then 4 storeys (Refer to Plan 3).*

*Policy 5 - Developments immediately fronting Varsity Estates Drive NW and 53 Avenue NW should be no more than 4 storeys high. Buildings should be set back a minimum of 5 metres from the property line at these frontages.*

*Policy 6 - Development immediately fronting onto Valencia Road NW or the Park Space east of the study area should be no more than 3 storeys high. Buildings should be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the property line at these frontages.*

*Policy 7 - A shadowing study shall be provided when required by the Approving Authority. Planning applications should not be approved for proposals which, in the opinion of the Approving Authority, have an unreasonable shadowing impact on surrounding areas.*

*Policy 26 - Planning applications should not be approved where, in the opinion of the Approving Authority, proposals are likely to generate vehicle movements which cannot be satisfactorily accommodated by the road network."*

The DA Watt Traffic Impact Study is attached to the VLUS as "Appendix 2 – Transportation Study" and clearly indicates that the density and heights proposed in the SSLAP are excessive and will overwhelm the existing transportation network. There has been extensive research in Canada and the USA regarding the negative impact of air and noise pollution from high traffic volumes. In addition, traffic congestion can create safety issues especially for the thousands of children in Varsity attending the six schools in the community.

As the Local Area Plan replaces all existing planning policy documents in the plan area, we would like the policies of the Varsity Land Use Study to be incorporated into the Local Area Plan. We note in particular that a maximum height of 3 storeys and generous setbacks are indicated where there is an impact on low density residential housing and parks.

### **Infrastructure**

The City states that existing infrastructure and amenities can handle increased density. Specifically, the City states that: "Most mature communities, especially those built prior to 1980, are below their historical peak population, so most communities are already designed to handle more people than live here today. Due to the decline in population and higher efficiency houses being built, there is now infrastructure capacity. This includes roads, transit stops, water and wastewater management, etc. to handle more types of housing."

As noted previously, Varsity is not below its historical peak population but has instead maintained peak population levels. Increases in population will inevitably require significant investments to upgrade and modernize local infrastructure.

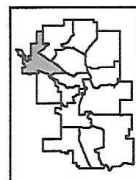
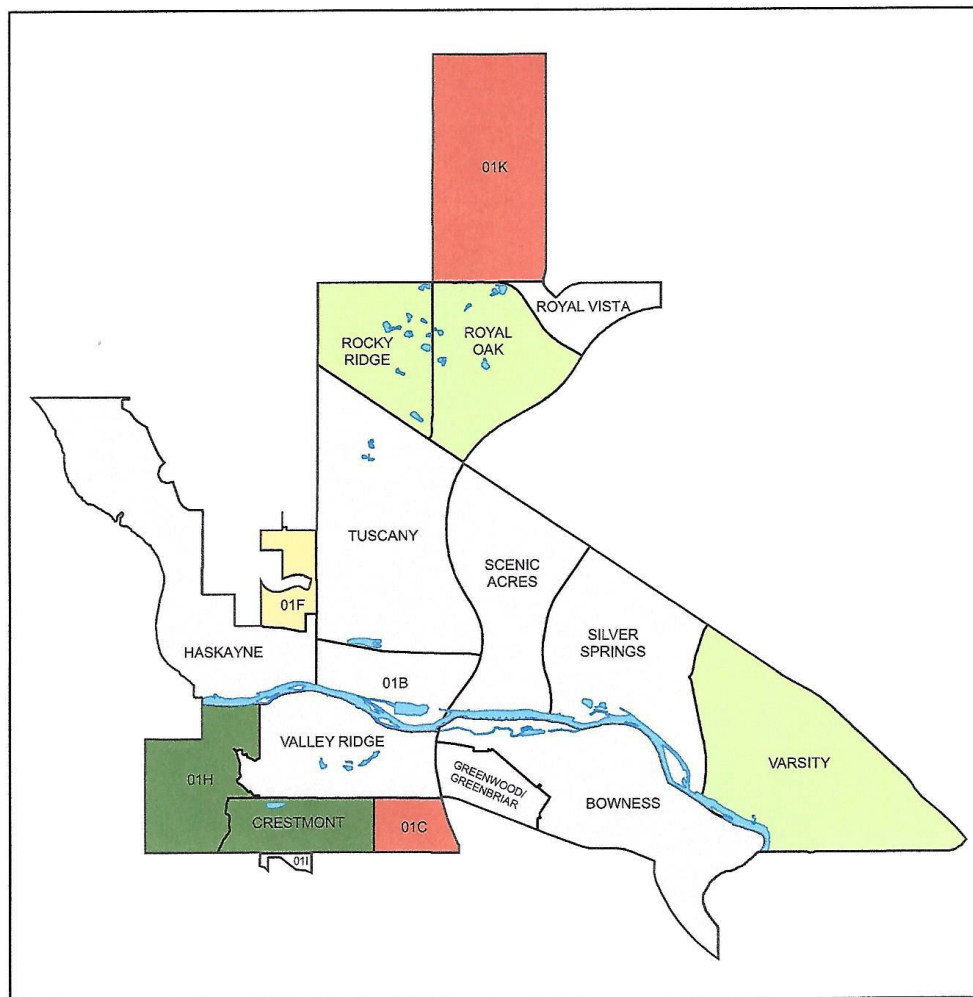
The DA Watt Traffic Study conducted in 2007 for the Varsity Land Use Study provides a detailed analysis of the impact of future redevelopment of the lands south of the Dalhousie LRT station. Since it would be extremely difficult to increase the capacity of the roads in the area, the maximum densities that can be accommodated in this area have been established and this should be respected. See excerpts from the VLUS in Attachment C.

The Traffic Study states: *"In conclusion, traffic generated by redevelopment of the Varsity Land Use study area to its maximum potential (as governed by the maximum F.A.R. within the guiding policies) can be supported by the surrounding road network with improvements along Varsity Estates Drive and 53 Street. As select intersection movements are at capacity, no additional land use over and above the maximum F.A.R, can be supported by the surrounding road network within the context of Transit Oriented Development."*

Higher density development can strain the ability of City infrastructure to handle the increased load. Therefore, careful evaluation will be required with each proposed redevelopment project. Traffic studies and shadow studies are essential to ensure roads can accommodate the traffic generated by increased density and to preserve the quality of life for homeowners and park users.

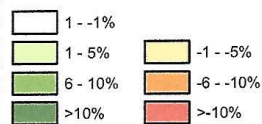
# ATTACHMENT 2 –SSLAP - VARSITY SUBMISSION – FEBRUARY 2025

## ATTACHMENT C – 2019 CENSUS – POPULATION CHANGE - PAGE 1



### Percentage Population Change

2018 - 2019



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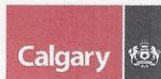
## ATTACHMENT 3 – SSLAP – VARSITY SUBMISSION – FEBRUARY 2025

### ATTACHMENT B – CHART VIEW OF HISTORICAL POPULATION OF VARSITY

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Historical Calgary Community Populations | Open Calgary

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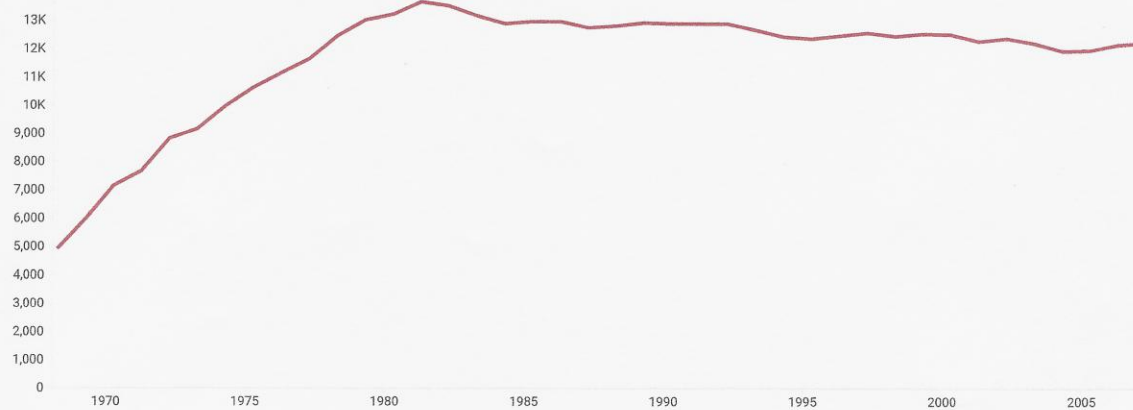
Demographics

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Chart View





## **ATTACHMENT 4 – PHOTOS OF VARSITY**

Townhouses East of 53 St/South of 53 Ave



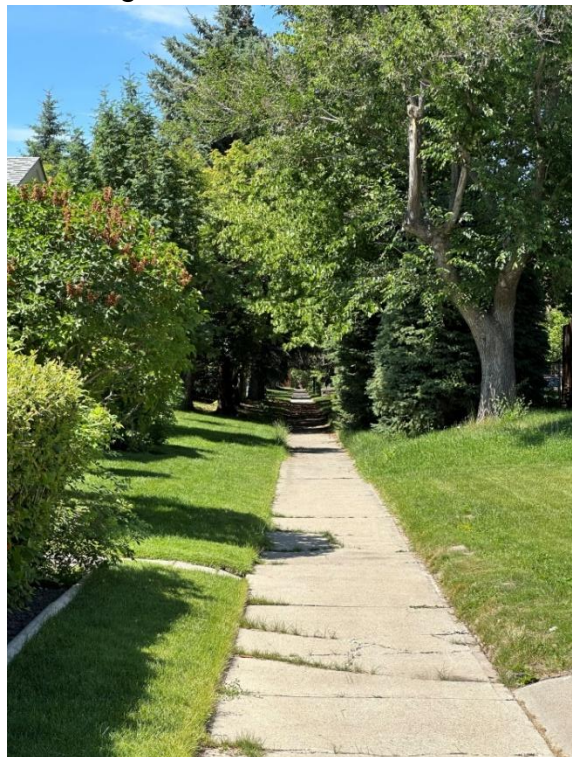
Valparaiso Place



Valencia Road



Walking Path Behind Valencia Rd & Pl

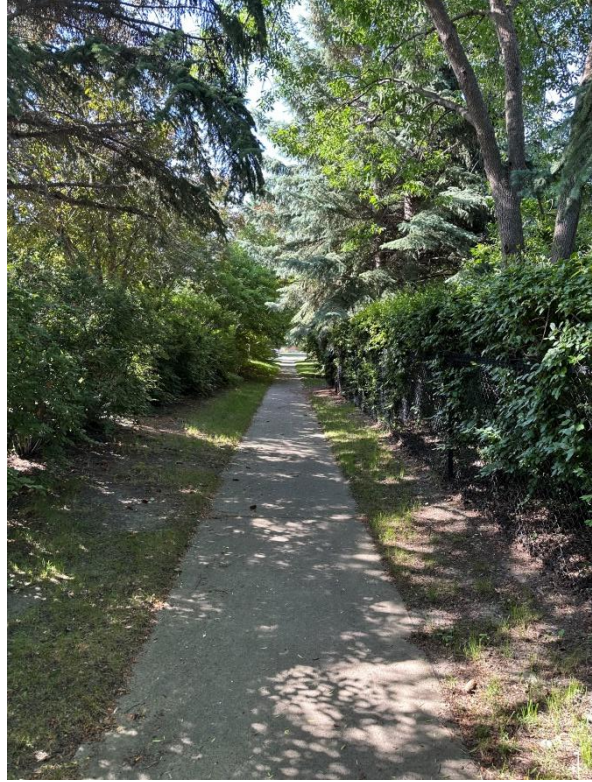




Varsity Estates Link



Pathway Between VE Link & VE Grove



Varsity Estates Link



Varsity Estates Link Streetscape

