

Varsity View Local Area Plan Meeting #15
Tuesday, June 21, 2011
Brunskill School Library
101 Wiggins Avenue South
7:00 pm

Attendees: Marianne Amos, Patricia Englund, Barb Giles, Don Harris, Susan Hatfield, Zoe Litman, Patricia Mathias, Brian & Donna Noonan, Brenda O'Connor, James Perkins, Robert & Laura Sider, Jack Rudolph, Evelyn Jones, Patricia Funk, Karen Sander, Pam Reilly-Bruce, Anne Hardy, Allan Woo, Mark Bobbin, Councillor Charlie Clark Dylan Czarnecki – Community Consultant, Mark Emmons & Courtney Johnson – Senior Planner, Robin Baxter – Summer Planning Intern, Shirlene Palmer – Recording Secretary

1. Welcome & Introductions

Meeting called to order at 7:05p.m.

Courtney Johnson introduced herself and Mark Emmons as co-facilitators of this LAP review meeting.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to:

- Review the LAP Process and where we go from here
- Look back at what the LAPC has accomplished to date
- As a group review the emerging directions/goals that were brought forth during Varsity View LAP.

Community Announcement

Pat Funk put the invitation forward to Varsity View residents to use the #25 Special City Transit Bus service. During the May 8, 2011 Jane's Walk experience it was agreed that it would be a Varsity View neighbourly undertaking to advise residents of this service and how they might take advantage of it.

The #25 Special service is available Monday-Friday and departs promptly at 9:15 am and 12:45 pm from the sidewalk stop alongside the driveway of 1223 Temperance (LutherCare). The route is down Temperance Street to Clarence Avenue, along Clarence to 12th Street, along 12th Street to Broadway Avenue & across the bridge, down 3rd Avenue to the terminal, from there to the final Midtown Plaza stop.

The objective is to get passengers to the terminal to ensure timely arrival for transfers! The timing is crucial so appointments times will be met.

Return times are 11:37 am and 2:37 pm at Midtown plaza stop. Regular bus fares apply.

Mark thanked Pat for the above information.

2. **Agenda & Ground Rules**

Through this Local Area Plan we have created Foundations for Success (or ground rules) to specify how meetings will be conducted. It ensures that group members feel comfortable in sharing their concerns, opinions and ideas with the group.

1. Listen to each other with respect
2. One person speaks at a time and no side conversations
3. Everyone has an equal voice
4. Let everyone speak
5. Stay focused
6. Speak loudly

3. **LAP Process Presentation – Mark Emmons**

The Local Area Plan (LAP) is the combined input of all stakeholders, whether residents or business owners, all have an active role in determining the future of their community. Together they set out objectives and policies that guide growth and development in their neighbourhood

LAP's are formed to create a comprehensive plan for long term improvements in a neighbourhood and to give stakeholders a vehicle to make decisions affecting their neighbourhood.

Saskatoon City Council resolved to undertake 12 LAP's to maintain quality, safety and visibility of area, guide and prioritize expenditure of public funds on community improvements and infrastructure, encourage renewal, rehabilitation or redevelopment of private and public properties, resolve situations where the policies of this Plan do not accurately reflect the individual needs of an area and provide the basis for amendments to the Development Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

Varsity View will be the 12th LAP to will be completed.

The basic steps to creating a LAP are:

- 1) **Neighbourhood Meeting** – Flyers and letters were sent out to as many stakeholders as possible inviting to meet to discuss upcoming LAP process. Anyone can be involved and everyone is a stakeholder in this.
- 2) **Forming a LAP Committee** – There is no special skill needed to be on the committee, only committed people with a keen interest in make a positive difference in their community. There are many ways to get involved, from attending meetings to getting information. Important to pull together to fulfill a common goal. Your participation is vital to this process; without your participation this process does not work.
- 3) **Condition of the Community** – The LAP will discuss the present condition of the community, including neighbourhood strengths and weaknesses and identification of

trends that may affect the neighbourhood as this helps paint a picture of the community and provide the foundation for the development of the LAP.

- 4) **Creating a Vision** - The LAP committee envisions a positive future for their community. The vision creates a common base from which the community can work to create realistic goals and strategies for successful long-term planning.
- 5) **Identifying Issues and Setting Goals** – Once information is gathered the LAP Committee acquires an understanding of neighbourhood issues, place values on the issues and set goals in order to move issues forward. This information forms the basis of the LAP.
- 6) **Writing the LAP** – This is done by the LAP Planner and reviewed by the LAP Committee.
- 7) **Adopting the LAP** – Once general consensus is reached in support of LAP, the report is presented to the Municipal Planning Commission and finally to City Council for adoption.
- 8) **Implementing the Strategies** – To successfully achieve community goals there needs to be participation by all stakeholders. Implementation takes anywhere from five to seven years.
- 9) **Monitoring, Evaluation & Updating the Plan** – City staff will deliver progress report to City Council and to the Community Association on an annual basis.

The following topics were discussed during the Varsity View meetings:

- Community Meeting September 24, 2009
- #1 LAP & Visioning November 25, 2009
- #2 Land Use & Zoning January 12, 2010
- #3 Parks February 10, 2010
- #4 Safety March 10, 2010
- #5 Parking April 14, 2010
- #6 College Quarter May 12, 2010
- #7 Traffic June 9, 2010
- #8 Review of first half October 20, 2010
- #9 Community Vision Toolkit November 17, 2010
- #10 Heritage & Culture December 15, 2010
- #11 Campus – community Relations January 19, 2010
- #12 Infill Development, Infrastructure & Public Works February 16, 2011
- #13 Smart Cities & College Drive Master Plan March 16, 2011
- #14 Infill Development May 18, 2011

Along with the following Safety Audits:

- June 4, 2010
 - Albert Park
 - Albert Rec Unit
 - Raoul Wallenberg Park

- June 15, 2010
 - President Murray Park
 - Brunskill School/Kinsmen's Children's Centre yard

4. LAP Review Activities

In our review of the LAPs to date, we go back and look through the conversations we had about the Varsity View neighbourhood. From that, we start to develop emerging directions or goals that will drive the body of the report.

Specific details will arise out of these conversations and will be detailed within each section of the report. This review is not intended to rehash every small item/detail or open up each topic for overhaul; that is what you did at each meeting.

A summary of our meeting notes, group exercises and the neighbourhood-wide survey were handed out. Our hope is to bring as many voices into the pages of the report as possible, so it is the most comprehensive and inclusive as possible.

Please keep in mind, your burning concerns may not be your neighbours. However, we need to reach a consensus on what is important today and for the future for Varsity View while we review these topics.

There will be many ways to resolve concerns and foster new initiatives in Varsity View. For this exercise, we want to focus on the goals rather than jumping to the solutions which will come later. This will help us streamline our report and focus efforts.

Three groups were made and asked to review summaries of what was heard at the meetings. Are the summaries correct? If not, what should be changed or added?

Group Exercise Comments:

1. Vision

Here's what we heard...

"Varsity View is a historic neighbourhood centrally located close to the river, the downtown, the University of Saskatchewan, and Royal University Hospital. Its historic roots stem from the adjacent University of Saskatchewan campus. The neighbourhood is characterized by an eclectic mix of character housing, a vibrant school which attracts families from all areas of the City, a high amount of rental accommodation, and a mature urban forest. The residents are diverse in terms of age, culture, education level and income. This adds to the overall vitality of the neighbourhood.

Varsity view is a safe neighbourhood with activity at all times of the day. It is a high energy, active neighbourhood which is amenable to cycling and walking. Its central location also accommodate transit usage.

Varsity View strives to maintain its diversity, heritage, and architecture. Varsity View will be a model sustainable community". –LAPC as of Jan. 2010

Group 1

- In last paragraph, first sentence should read, "Varsity View strives to maintain its diversity, heritage, urban forest and architecture." Adding "urban forest".

Group 2

- No comments

Group 3

- No comments

2. Land Use and Zoning

Here's what we heard...

- *Home ownership rates in the neighbourhood are low.*
- *Secondary suites (legal and not legal) are abundant and problems associated with them such as parking and maintenance.*
- *What is the general opinion/position of the LAPC towards any potential future expansion of existing facilities in the neighbourhood (such as Luther Tower, Brunskill School and Kinsmen Children's Centre, Sheptytsky Institute, Mohyla Institute, etc)? Please answer below.*

Group 1

- Expansion should be mindful of the community's high value future:
 - parking access
 - architectural design
 - height/sunshine restrictions
 - urban forest retention
 - sightlines
 - overall livability, quality of life for neighbours
- Home Ownership
 - ratio of home ownership to other housing should favour an increase of current levels (40%). Target to have 50-60%.

Group 2

- In regards to the third point - It would be necessary to assess these on a case by case basis, depending on the plans. There should be public consultation & meetings about any proposals.

Group 3

- Any future expansion should severely limit parking. Past history has made the parking situation very objectionable.
- Parking requirement should be met by underground or concealed parking.

3. Infill

Here's what we heard...

- *Varsity View is a desirable place to live due to its location and proximity to services thus increasing developmental pressures in the neighbourhood and surrounding area.*
- *The increasing amount of multi-unit dwellings being built as opposed to one-unit dwellings is a concern. Both semi-detached units and larger condo buildings (4 or more units).*

- *Infill does not always fit with the scale or character of the neighbourhood.*
- *Reinvestment/Rebuilding in the neighbourhood is good.*
- *Pedestrian environment and sidewalk access is affected negatively by building front street garages.*
- *Infill can lessen Saskatoon's footprint and urban sprawl which is good.*
- *The lack of official infill building guidelines is a concern for mature neighbourhoods like Varsity View.*
- *Varsity View has a number of different building styles and character areas within the neighbourhood.*
- *Existing trees should be preserved in new developments where possible.*

Group 1

- We encourage the City to raise the standards for infill development to levels that exceed present neighbourhood architectural/historical design.
- Every new development should be an asset to the community.
- The City should establish codes for the building of houses in historical communities which will be safeguarded by established review committee. These codes will ensure the preservation of the character of the community.
- Every new building will impact the community for generations.

Group 2

- Tax revenue homes at commercial rate
- Concern over number of rental properties, especially upkeep
- Concern about property values.

Group 3

- 7th point - change "Building guidelines" to "Design regulations"
- No garages in the front!
- Go through a process toward architectural regulations that is led by a community steering committee
- Architectural controls in the neighbourhood or regulations. (Non stylistic, principle based using best practices including landscape and site requirement).
- One goal of the design regulations should be that each new piece of construction (at any scale) should be looked at to improve on existing character, not just maintain existing character. Each development should be looked at as an opportunity to leverage a net gain to the quality of the neighbourhood.

4. Parks and Open Space

Here's what we heard...

- *In President Murray Park the management of tree health is very important. The mono-culture of trees is a concern if something were to happen to them.*
- *President Murray Park trees attract birds and are an attraction for bird watching society.*
- *Encourage more variety of amenities in President Murray Park, thus increasing the variety of uses in park, such as picnic tables, barbeque.*

- *Elms and other varieties of mature vegetation are very important.*
- *Control/elimination of noxious weeds.*
- *There is a park space deficiency in Varsity View which is further exacerbated by the College Quarter Plan.*
- *The Community Garden is excellent.*
- *Concerned with trees that were removed along Cumberland Avenue and have not been replaced.*
- *The new tree grove that will be planted as part of the proposed draft College Dr. Master Plan at McKinnon and College is positive.*

Group 1

- 1st point – add to end “otherwise the unique character of the park should be preserved.”
- 2nd point should read at end “attraction for neighbourhood residents, Saskatoon anature Society and other birders.”
- 3rd point – should be removed
- 4th point – add to end “important and should be preserved”
- 5th point – change “noxious” to “invasive” and add to end “ without the use of herbicides”
- We believe that President Murray Park is a unique asset to the community as it is now. We would like it to be preserved with its current amenities and the completion of projects that have already been started. The park is well used as is. We would like to see the unique environmental character of the park retained.
- The Varsity View Planning Committee would like to see the prompt replacement of trees that have been removed from city property.
- If there is the possibility of developing “pocket-parks” in the neighbourhood we would support the city’s efforts to do this.

Group 2

- The garbage cans at the community gardens are an eye sore.

Group 3

- The park situation is further exacerbated by the College Quarter Plan. The playing field is extensively used by students, Varsity View people and the city’s citizens.
- College Quarter Plan should include consideration of “educational facilities” in overall plan issues – as will Brunskill School will become the logical school to take in children from apartments in Quarter. Will this lead to bumping out children of parents working at University – loss of good University/city partnership & “harmony” – See for on #7 for more

5. Neighbourhood Safety

Here’s what we heard...

Safety Audits were conducted at:

1) Raoul Wallenberg Park

General Comments/Improvements Recommended by Participants:

- *Remove portable picnic tables (not needed)*

- *Have graffiti removed from private fence*
- *Redesign seating area. Have path go in front of seating area, not between trees and lane*

2) Albert Park

General Comments/Improvements Recommended by Participants:

- *Bike racks*
- *Wider gates entering the park to fit wider strollers (issue with all parks)*
- *Paddling pool in the summer*
- *Flat roof on the rec. center, could be potential for people to climb on*
- *More garbage cans in park (currently only 2)*
- *Signs for buildings and playgrounds*
- *Improve sightlines from North to South side of park*
- *Back alleys could use more lighting*

3) Albert Recreation Unit

General Comments/Improvements Recommended by Participants:

- *Trees on the corner of 12th & Clarence need trimming. Redo the asphalt in the North East corner. This is an entrapment area near the school*
- *Picnic table requires repairs*
- *Pathways and lights are needed in the parkway*
- *Curbs not cut at McKinnon and 11th*
- *The park is very nice and it appears well used*
- *Would not recommend crusher dust for the requested pathway*

4) President Murray Park (summary not complete of audit)

General Comments/Improvements Recommended by Participants:

- *Ensure lighting is appropriate & sufficient*
- *Improve seating/congregating areas to encourage passive activity*
- *Consider installing better signage as well as a community bulletin board*
- *Install additional garbage cans*

5) Brunskill School/Kinsmen Children's Centre Yard (KCC)

General Comments/Improvements Recommended by Participants:

- *Open stairwell and recessed areas at KCC can attract illegitimate activity*
- *People climbing onto the stairwell & at KCC*
- *Consider whether lighting is sufficient*

Group 1

- *No comments*

Group 2

- Cumberland Park – please removed picnic tables, it is often used for partying, especially when the bar closes.
- Albert Recreation Unit – remove Virginia Creep around tennis courts
- Close one of the streets going north/south toward U of S to cars/trucks – pedestrian/cyclists
- Need traffic calming on Clarence
- Turning right onto Elliott from Clarence towards the hospital is very dangerous – especially in winter
- Right merge lane off of Clarence to College

Group 3

- No comments

6. Traffic, Circulation, and Parking

Here's what we heard...

Pedestrian Safety

- *14th Street and Cumberland is problematic, pedestrian safety is a concern*
- *No right turn on red at 14th and Cumberland to increase pedestrian safety*

Parking

- *Illegal parking lots in backyards of homes. "Parking for Sale" should not be permitted*
- *Parking surrounding President Murray Park is unsafe for kids and others entering/exiting the park*
- *Parking around Brunskill School should not be permitted under the Residential Parking Permit Program for safety reasons*
- *Parking too close to intersections is a concern*
- *Parking on both sides of street creates narrow streets*
- *Luther Towers employee street parking is taking up needed parking space in Varsity View*
- *Encourage Luther Towers to enter the Eco-Pass Program for employees*

Walking/Cycling

- *Designation of biking/cycling routes that are cleared in the winter from snow*
- *Bike Paths on 14th Good – but need more connectivity through City - Consider no parking on the South Side of 14th Street to allow for better biking lane*
- *Connect parks with cycling and walking paths*
- *It would be nice if there was some type of online system where you could key in where you are and where you want to go and you would be given the shortest and safest route. Something like the 'Click & Go' for buses*

Transit

- *Bus Stop at Corner of Cumberland and Main is a concern, standing in puddles.*
- *Bus Stop at College and Clarence is also a concern*

Vehicle Traffic

- *Streets are narrow and parking on both sides furthers the narrowing of the street*
- *Vehicles cutting through parking lots along Cumberland businesses*

Group 1

- No comments

Group 2

- Add points under “Pedestrian Safety”
 - Along Clarence sidewalk too narrow
 - Traffic calming along Clarence necessary
- No more Luther Tower passes for staff, let the visitors have them.

Group 3

- 2nd point – remove – Why – There are vehicle and pedestrian lights.
- Add points under “Pedestrian Safety”
 - Suggest “flashing” pedestrian crossing lights
 - West side of Clarence from bridge to Temperance is very unsafe – sidewalk is worn away
- Add point under “Parking”
 - Safety issues i.e. children going to school; “free” parking when residents in area have to pay is unfair.
- President Murray Park – a suggestion was made at one of the meetings that there should be no parking on the park sides. This would leave it visually open and increase the safety.

7. Campus – Community Relations

Here’s what we heard...

- *Relationships between neighbourhood and U of S should be strengthened & fostered through information sharing, use of public spaces, and creating an area that serves home owners, the university and students needs.*
- *The City and U of S need to work cooperatively together while new development is occurring in and around Varsity View.*

College Quarter

- *Traffic calming will be needed on Cumberland, Wiggins, Clarence and 14th Street to accommodate this new development and the increase of people coming to visit the area.*
- *Need to define a boundary between Varsity View and the University areas.*
- *Increased short cutting through the neighbourhood will be a concern as a result of Quarter.*
- *Adequate parking onsite is needed for new development as Varsity View cannot absorb any more parking from the University.*

- *Schools should be notified of possible increases to student population due to family oriented developments being built.*
- *Community members would like to access the new spaces the University is adding for programming opportunities.*
- *Green-Way should be built with personal safety in mind for users.*

College Drive Master Plan

- *The closure of some roads and the improved landscaping will be very beneficial to College Drive.*
- *The Varsity View LAP Committee generally supports the initial draft master plan for College Drive.*
- *Ensure both sides of College Drive are treated the same so the corridor is cohesive.*
- *The closure of McKinnon Ave to vehicles would make it a lot safer for pedestrians and vehicles. The area on the north side of College between Hospital Road and University Bridge is hard to walk at certain times of the year, as it gets very slushy and wet.*
- *On Campus Drive going from Field House to the University, there is a destination path created by people. It would be nice if it was actually a formalized path.*

Group 1

- No comments

Group 2

- It is important that the city ensure they can handle the extra water – because of new developments (residences) – storm sewer management.

Group 3

- The field (Cumberland & College) is presently used each day, winter and summer, by students (especially international ones), Varsity View residents, Saskatoon residents, and many others. Why can't the City of Saskatoon try to convince the University to leave it as it is.

8. Heritage and Culture

Here's what we heard...

- *Albert Community Centre is a community asset with lots of programming, big piano public art piece.*
- *University of Saskatchewan has lots of fascinating architecture as well as University Hospital – who built them, who lived in them. The fact that it is a campus in itself is representation of a culture, living, school, festivals, events right next door to our neighbourhood.*
- *There are several different churches the neighbourhood could take advantage of for cultural/events.*
- *The community could prepare a history/map of the neighbourhood, there are lots of interesting past people/houses in the neighbourhood. Work with City Archivist, Jeff O'Brien.*

- *The community could create an annual festival unique to Varsity View to attract people (i.e. Nutana Annual Pumpkin festival in November)*
- *Jane's Walk – organize it and get people together.*
- *Put together an historical inventory of studies on buildings/housing in Varsity View – i.e. Provincial Study on structures prior to 1914, Wartime Houses catalogue University of Sask. Archives, original Temperance Colony map/area.*
- *Historical significance of the corner of College and Cumberland, Royal Bank is 50 years old, Alexander's building.*

Group 1

- No comments

Group 2

- No comments

Group 3

- No comments

9. Infrastructure

Here's what we heard...

- *Some alleys are very narrow due to the backyards/grass overgrowing and spilling out into the alley.*
- *An issue in the back alleys is the grader goes down and it causes more trouble than help as there is so little gravel it just pushes it to the side and then there is no drainage, may need new gravel.*
- *The sidewalk on the last block of Clarence Avenue on the west side just before College Drive is very narrow due to the grass growing over and then when there is snow piled up it is even more narrow. There is also a hedge and a little cement wall which makes it a real blind spot. Overall, it is a very dangerous area for pedestrians.*
- *The redevelopment on the riverbank now has a barrier that diverts pedestrians and cyclists out of the way, but many just climb over it which is dangerous.*

Group 1

- No comments

Group 2

- 4th point noted once the reason was explained I was happy with explanation.
- Alley south side of Main between Ewart & Cumberland is treated like a street – very dangerous.
- Take into account drainage from yards

Group 3

- No comments

Councilor Clark noted there is a new website called Community View (<http://www.communityview.ca/>) whose goal is to provide you with relevant, reliable, local information and evidence to inform you're planning, decision-making, and policy for Saskatoon and surrounding area.

It brings together data from different human service sectors and community based organizations, and the many resources, projects, initiatives and research that are contributing to the well-being of Saskatoon.

Mark asked the committee if there are any other issues that have not covered at the meetings that require further discussion.

Comments:

- Previously discussed the developments on College Drive and streetscaping did not see much of this on any of the papers reviewed.
- Noted we need to look into what is legal parking in yards. Can you rent out your garage, driveway, put a parking lot in your back yard and rent the spots out?

Mark noted they were not sure what was legal for residents to do on their land but they will check into this.

Mark also noted like many City standards and services, parking is complaint driven as the City does not have enough manpower to do a checklist on all residences so they need the help of residents to ask City to check if there are issues.

- Is there any way things like this could require permits that way they could be check?
- It was noted most of the rentals are to students who do not have cars so you know they are renting spots out. In many cases it may be because they don't know they should not do this so even if they receive correspondence from the City may deter them doing so.
- Also not much of the traffic flow through Varsity View is not actual residents but people travel to downtown so not sure what can be done.

Mark and Courtney thanked the committee for taking part in this activity.

5. How to Proceed

Mark noted when we move onto the writing phase, we have a few options we could use to continue the engagement of the Committee. We want the best use of everyone's time.

Option 1

- Entire first draft report written
- Entire draft report brought to City Administration to verify recommendations are able to be done. Suggestions brought forward by City Administration will be incorporated.
- Entire report reviewed with LAPC with final comments brought back to City Administration incorporated.

Pros

- LAPC only has to meet once which is being conscientious of everyone's time.
- LAPC will be given quite a few weeks to review

Cons

- Committee not engaged for awhile as it is a lengthy process of writing report and having City Administration review it.

Option 2

- Write entire draft report
- Bring entire draft report to LAPC to review document and incorporate best suggestions.
- Bring draft to City Administration

- Bring entire report back to LAPC after for final review as may need some updates after City Administration reviews.

Pros

- LAPC will have entire report so they can review which sections they wish to review in what order.
- Some sections are very closely related and are linked so it beneficial if they can be reviewed together.

Cons

- Committee still not engaged for awhile as it is a lengthy process of writing report but less than if City Administration not seeing prior to LAPC.
- LAPC must meet for at least two meetings, to discuss prior to City Administration and after.

Option 3

- As draft report is being written, smaller portions, maybe 2 or 3 sections to be review by the LAPC, comments will then be incorporated as they go along.
- Once all sections have been reviewed by LAPC then the entire report can be brought to City Administration
- After suggestions from City Administration have been incorporated the LAPC will then meet again to discuss the entire report with LAPC for one last time

Pros

- LAPC will remain engaged since they will receive a few sections at a time to review.

Cons

- LAPC will need to have a meeting after each of the multiple sections are review and updated as well as again at the end to review the entire report which is more time required from LAPC.
- Some sections are very closely related and are linked so unless these sections are sent out together may not be as beneficial.

Mark noted following any of these options there will be an open house for the entire report to be reviewed by the entire community.

Comments:

- If these drafts will be available on the City website could we not review them and send in comments through email of changes instead of meeting.
- Member noted it is always more beneficial to meet face to face to discuss suggestions with others with a vested interest.

Vote:

Option 1 - 0

Option 2 - 6

Option 3 - 10

It was agreed Option 3 will be followed and everyone will remain engaged.

6. Closing Remarks

Mark thanked everyone for attending tonight. The LAPC will be contacted once some sections of the report are ready for review.

6. Next Meeting: TBA

Meeting adjourned: 9:45 pm