

Varsity View Local Area Plan Meeting #1
Wednesday, November 25, 2009
Victoria School – Lunch Room
7:00 to 9:00 pm

Attendees: Laurence Thompson, Susan Hatfield, Craig Cowan, Carol Ann Patterson, Aaron Phoenix, Ewen Coxworth, Don Hamilton, Patty Englund, Brenda O'Connor, Kathy & Bruce Probert, Allan Woo, Marianne Amos, Patricia Mathias, Ken MacLeod, Don Harris, Councillor Charlie Clark, Henry Lau – Urban Design, Art Lord – Community Consultant, Paula Kotasek – Planner, Elisabeth Miller – Neighbourhood Safety Planner, Shirlene Palmer – Recording Secretary

1. Introductions and Agenda

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

Paula Kotasek introduced herself as the facilitator of tonight's meeting and welcomed everyone. She stated she had some difficulty in finding a venue for the meeting so if anyone knows of some possibilities let her know. Some suggestions were Bishop Murray School and the Field House.

No changes were made to the agenda.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is beginning the LAP. Tonight we will end up with a number of topics that will be covered as part of the LAP.

2. Review of Local Area Planning Process

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. We are at this first step tonight. 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; with out 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 role of the Local Area Plan Committee (LAPC) is to set topics for the work program, through discussion and exercises identify issues, strengths and weaknesses in the neighbourhood and reaches consensus on content of report – goals, information and recommendations. This is your community and you know it the best.

The role of the Local Area Plan Planner is to arrange speakers, provide communication to the LAPC, summarize discussion and data, draft the LAP, vets recommendations with Civic Departments and takes the report through approval process.

3. Reviewing Survey Results Summary

Parks and Recreation

In general, how do you rate the quality of parks in your neighbourhood on the following criteria:
(65 responses)

- Maintenance of grounds & facilities – mostly “good”, some “very good” and a little “bad”
- Appearance of landscaping & planting – mostly “good”, some “very good” and a little “bad”
- Programming in parks – mostly “N/A” (as there is not much programming), some “good” and “bad” and very little “very good” and “very bad”

Comments:

- Lighting poor
- Nice but few
- Few parks in area
- Murray Park loses trees every year – Why no replanting?
- Sidewalks need work, lack of bike paths

- Programming is mediocre
- More garbage bins in President Murray Park

Neighbourhood Safety

How safe would you feel walking alone during the day in Varsity View? (63 responses)

- In your neighbourhood – mostly “very safe” and little less “safe”
- In the parks – even between “very safe” and “safe” and a bit “unsafe”
- On or near busy streets – even between “very safe” and “safe” and little “unsafe”

How safe would you feel walking alone at night in Varsity View? (63 responses)

- In your neighbourhood – mostly “safe”, some “very safe” and “unsafe”
- In the parks – even between “safe” and “unsafe” and some “very safe” and “very unsafe”
- On or near busy streets – mostly “safe”, about half that amount for “unsafe” and some “very safe”

Comments:

- All comments pertained to pedestrian and cyclist issues. These are classified under the broad topic of “traffic”, not safety.

Questions:

- **How does these survey results compare to other neighbourhoods?**

Paula stated this is the first time this survey has been used; it is more specific than other surveys used in the past.

Elisabeth stated a city wide perception of safety survey was completed between 2000 and 2002.

In the past 12 months, have you experienced a break in or property damage (including graffiti vandalism) to your home, other buildings or you vehicles? (62 responses)

- Yes – 35.5%
- No – 64.5%

Land Use

What kind of dwelling do you live in? (63 responses)

- Single Family Home – 48
- 2, 3 or 4 plex – 8
- Apartment or Condominium – 4
- Basement Suite – 3

Questions:

- **How does this compare to other neighbourhoods?**

Paula stated Varsity View is low density. It is mostly single family homes with some multi dwellings along Clarence and other developments, including Luther Towers throughout.

Has there been any new commercial development in or near your neighbourhood in the last 2 years? (62 responses)

- Yes – 21%
- No – 79%

The development's overall attractiveness (31 responses) – mostly “good”, some “neither good nor bad” and “bad” and a little “very good” and “very bad”

Improvement to your neighbourhood as a place to live (31 responses) – even between “good” and “neither good nor bad” and a little “very good”, “bad” and “very bad”.

Has there been any new residential development in or near your neighbourhood in the last 2 years?

- Yes – 85%
- No – 15%

The development's overall attractiveness – lots of “good”, little less “neither good nor bad”, some “very good” and a bit of “bad” and “very bad”

Improvement to your neighbourhood as a place to live – lots of “good” about 10 less is “neither good nor bad”, some “very good” and a bit of “bad”

Questions:

- **Did you divide the neighbourhood into areas as some are nicer than others, or is this the full area?**

Paula stated the neighbourhood was not divided into areas the stats are from the entire neighbourhood.

Comments:

- The importance of discussing the increase in infill was noted to discuss at one of the LAPC meetings.

Traffic & Circulation

How would you rate the traffic flow in Varsity View during both the morning and evening “rush hours” on: (60 responses)

- Major street and thoroughfares – lots of “somewhat congested short delays”, a bit less “very congested and long delays” and “some delays” and a little “no delays”
- On neighbourhood streets – close to even “somewhat congested short delays”, “some delays” and “no delays”

How would you rate the traffic flow in Varsity View during non-peak hours on: (61 responses?)

- Major streets and thoroughfares - mostly “no delays”, even but a bit less “somewhat congested short delays” and “some delays”
- On neighbourhood streets – most “no delays” and a bit “somewhat congested short delays” and “some delays”

In general, how do you rate the streets in your neighbourhood on the... (62 responses)

- Safety of pedestrians – mostly “good”, rest even “very good”, “fair”, “poor” and a bit “very poor”
- Safety of bicyclists – mostly even “good”, “fair”, “poor”, some “very poor” and a few “very good”
- Amount of on-street parking – mostly even “good”, “fair”, “poor” and “very poor” and a bit “very good”
- Regulation of on-street parking – mostly even “good”, “fair”, “poor” and “very poor”
- Accessibility – mostly “good” and “fair”, rest even between “very good”, “poor” and “very poor”

Questions:

- **Does accessibility mean wheelchairs and strollers, etc.?**

Yes, wherever there is a challenge of physical access.

Heritage & Culture

How important are the.. (62 responses)

- Conservation of heritage properties – mostly “very” with some “somewhat” and a few “not very”
- Learning the history of Varsity View – mostly even between “very” and “somewhat” with a few “not very”
- It was noted there were no “not at all” responses for either

Municipal Services

Which issues are important for the neighbourhood to discuss: (60 responses)

- Transit Services – evenly between “very” and “somewhat” with a few “not very” and “not at all”
- Waste Collection & Recycling – mostly “very” with a bit of “somewhat”
- Roads & Sidewalks – mostly “very” with a bit of “somewhat”
- Water & Sewer – mostly “very” with some “somewhat” and a bit of “not very”

Other:

Other municipal issues to discuss:

- age of infrastructure
- vehicular traffic
- zoning regulations (infill regulations, suites)
- bicycle and pedestrian issues (accessibility, bike paths)
- waste & recycling
- conditions of lanes
- safety
- snow removal

- roadway maintenance
- trees
- University of Saskatchewan development
- off-lease dog parks

Some of the significant changes since in the areas (some lived in the neighbourhood for 6 months and others 30 years).

- increased property values
- infill development
- increased students and renters
- increased parking pressures
- new playground
- more recycling
- changed traffic patterns

Some events that have had most impact:

- growth at the university
- increased property values
- city growth
- parking permit program
- infill development
- changes in garbage pick up

Some things people enjoy:

- location and proximity to U of S, Broadway, 8th Street, downtown, the river
- services that are available in the neighbourhood
- greenspace and trees
- mix of used
- character of the neighbourhood
- the people
- diversity of residents and their homes.

Some things people least enjoy:

- parking
- age of infrastructure
- lack of snow removal
- speed and volume of traffic
- lack of property maintenance
- condition and lanes
- infill development
- issues with rental properties

The surveys show the order of importance of issues as follows:

- Land Use (zoning, infill regulations, suites)
- Traffic (vehicular, pedestrian & bicycle)
- University of Saskatchewan Development
- Parks, greenspaces and trees
- Infrastructure age and condition

- Snow removal
- Roadway conditions & maintenance
- Lane condition
- Property Maintenance
- Safety

Paula asked the participants what order they would like the meetings to be organized on the work plan. It was agreed the above order showed the order of importance and how the meetings should be planned.

Questions:

- **Do trees include tree maintenance as well? Who is responsible for this as every year some trees are cut down or trimmed because they are infringing on power lines?**

Paula stated Parks is responsible for planting and tree maintenance and Saskatoon Light and Power would be responsible for power lines.

Comments:

- It would be interesting to see survey results of another neighbourhood when done. If the results could be shared it would be appreciated.
- Noted foot and bicycle traffic is most likely higher than other neighbourhoods due to Royal University Hospital and the University.

Participants would like to make sure the following are also looked at:

- The possibility of collaboration with the schools to make sure there is enough greenspace available.
- An ideal neighbourhood would have a central meeting place to walk, with shops that over see the parks. This is something we might vision in the future.
- Make sure we look at the preservation of greenspace as with the limited parking and more people in houses now many are converting part of their yards into parking places. Maybe need to give them more than 2 passes. Are there any bylaws about this?
- Look at what can be done at end of Preston, end it there or carry on with road narrowed – two lanes of traffic stopped.
- Biking safety in neighbourhood – Wiggins in the morning is dangerous as lighting is not very good and with cars parked it makes it worse. As well as Main Street is too narrow for bikes along with parked cars and vehicles driving.

**Note Preston Avenue is not located in Varsity View, therefore will not be looked at during the LAP Process.

Questions:

- **What jurisdiction does University of Saskatchewan have when developing the College Corridor?**

Paula stated when it is in regards to housing, it is a function of the University. The rest of the College Corridor the City must approve it due to other uses that may be located in the area and infrastructure that will be required.

Comments:

- Even though the land is the university's, residents have come to think of it as the neighbourhoods to some extent and it will be sadly missed when it is gone.

Questions:

- **Do you have numbers on traffic increases on College and 8th Street?**

Yes, there are statistics.

Paula noted Henry Lau from the City of Saskatoon – Urban Design is currently working on the Streetscape Master Plan for College Drive.

Art Lord is part of the Community Development Branch that is currently involved in a Cultural Plan for Saskatoon. A consultant is currently doing an inventory of cultural and heritage sites such as Nutana Collegiate Art, Albert Community Centre, etc.

Civic staff responsible for both of these projects will attend a meeting to further discuss the projects

Comments:

- It seems the center of a lot of neighbourhoods is a community garden. Maybe this would be a good starting point for the neighbourhood to find a common center.

Art Lord stated that there is a committee that is meeting to develop a community garden behind Bishop Murray.

Questions:

- **Where does Albert Community Centre fit into the neighbourhood?**

Currently it is a city wide resource but it is currently going through a community process. Board would like to make it more neighbourhood/community resource. If anyone is interested in taking part in this process let Art Lord know as they are always looking for new faces and there are some immediate positions available.

Paula asked the participants if they would be interested in having a blog for more communication. The City of Saskatoon website is stricter on what can be put on it. This would be more of an information site.

The participants agreed this would be a great communication tool.

4. Develop a Work Plan for the Varsity View LAP

Paula and Melissa will take information from this meeting as well as the survey and create a Work Plan for the next meeting.

It was agreed the regular LAP will take place the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 13th, the location will be announced later.

5. Creating a Vision for Varsity View

Varsity View Local Area Plan, LAPC Meeting Notes
Meeting No. 1 November 25, 2009

Visioning Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to create one common vision for the Local Area Plan that describes your community.

Melissa asked everyone to write down some statements about what they like about living in Varsity View and what they see in the future.

The group was broken into two groups and asked to discuss and write down the common themes that could be used for a visioning statement.

Varsity View has been...

Varsity View is...

Varsity View will become...

Paula and Melissa will compile these lists and present a draft copy at the next meeting.

6. Closing Remarks

Paula thanked everyone for coming out and she would see them all in the new year.

Meeting adjourned: 9:00pm
