

# VARSITY VIEW



## Varsity View Local Area Plan *Final Summary Report*



March 31, 2014 • Neighbourhood Planning Section, Planning & Development, Community Services Department

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**Please note:** This Summary Report is comprised of excerpts from the *Varsity View Local Area Plan Final Report*. Refer to the *Final Report* to review the full content of each section.

# Acknowledgements

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**Thank you to the Varsity View Local Area Plan Committee for your dedication and to everyone who contributed to this report, your efforts have been very much appreciated!**

# Executive Summary

Local Area Planning is a community-based approach to developing comprehensive neighbourhood plans. It enables residents, business owners, property owners, community groups, and other stakeholders direct input into determining the future of their community. It is a highly adaptable process that allows stakeholders to discuss issues important to the neighbourhood. The Local Area Plan (LAP) program is administered by the Neighbourhood Planning Section, Planning and Development Division. Once completed, an LAP establishes the vision and sets goals to guide the growth and development of a neighbourhood. It also identifies specific recommendations for improvements in a neighbourhood. LAPs are long-term plans that take many years to be fully implemented.

Varsity View is the final neighbourhood among 12 originally approved to undergo an LAP by City Council in 1997. The Varsity View LAP process began with a neighbourhood survey and general public meeting to identify issues in the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood stakeholders were asked to participate on an LAP Committee (LAPC), and a series of topic-specific meetings were held. A draft report was created and reviewed by the LAPC, circulated to City of Saskatoon Administration for comment, then returned to the LAPC for final review. The final report was submitted to the Municipal Planning Commission and Planning & Operations Committee for consideration, before being presented to City Council for adoption on April 14, 2014.

The Varsity View LAP contains a total of 31 recommendations related to the following topics: Land Use, Infill & Redevelopment, Parks & Open Space, Municipal Services, Traffic & Circulation, Active Transportation, Heritage & Culture, Campus-Community Relations, and Neighbourhood Safety.

## **Summary of Key Varsity View LAP Goals**

- **Address Neighbourhood Parking Concerns**

Due to the proximity of the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) campus and Royal University Hospital (RUH), Varsity View has been negatively impacted by non-residents driving through and parking in the neighbourhood. Numerous changes have been proposed to increase the effectiveness of the Varsity View Residential Parking Permit Program.

- **Improve Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity**

The U of S campus and RUH are major destinations to the north and, despite the grid design of the neighbourhood, there are a lack of safe north-south connections for pedestrians and cyclists. Developing this network will also support healthy and environmentally friendly activity.

- **Support and Contribute to the Development of College Quarter**

Located on the east side of Cumberland Avenue, across from Varsity View, the development of College Quarter will continue to impact the neighbourhood. Residents of Varsity View have appreciated opportunities to contribute to the College Quarter plan and look forward to continued involvement in the future. It is anticipated that as College Quarter develops, there will be increased interest from property owners to redevelop the Varsity View side of Cumberland Avenue, north of 14<sup>th</sup> Street. The LAP Committee recognizes and supports the potential transition of this corridor, while also having a long-term objective of maintaining the stable single-family residential land uses in the core of the neighbourhood. The group provided comments on land use/density, design, parking, and interface areas that act as guidelines for future Cumberland Avenue developments and are intended to stabilize the single-family dwelling environment on both sides of adjacent Bottomley Avenue to the west of Cumberland Avenue.

- **Recognize the Historical Significance of the Neighbourhood**

Residents of Varsity View have an appreciation for the many historic homes and buildings in the neighbourhood, along with the notable current and former residents who have lived in the area. It is important to ensure this rich history is not lost.

- **Support Opportunities For Community-Building**

Opportunities to better utilize neighbourhood facilities and amenities to develop additional community cohesion have been identified.

# Message From The Community

The Local Area Plan (LAP) for Varsity View comes at an important time in the life of our community. Recent growth in the City has led to opportunities and challenges that will affect the neighbourhood for years to come.

The process of completing the LAP has included many opportunities for the residents to study diverse aspects of our neighbourhood. Well advertised meetings with focused agendas covered a wide variety of topics and along with workshops, site visits and surveys have allowed ample citizen participation. Many recent and long-time residents have demonstrated their commitment and concern for their chosen corner of the city. They have examined their neighbourhood with a fine-toothed comb. It has been a positive process that has also offered insight into the many aspects of city planning and management. The depth of the process has led to thoughtful recommendations.

We have found that our community is diverse in background and income and is shaped by our proximity to the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and the Royal University Hospital (RUH). These two largest employers in Saskatoon make our community a desirable central place to live, including replacement of houses with new construction. They also draw huge numbers of commuters daily, on foot and bicycle, and in buses and cars. This stresses traffic flow and parking on our community. Our community boundaries – College Drive, Clarence and Cumberland Avenues, and Eighth Street – are some of the major traffic routes of the city. Some of that traffic flow also spills through our community. But our proximity to the U of S campus also offers opportunities for our community to interact with its rich cultural and sports resources.

It was no surprise, then, that the challenges of traffic, parking and infill development dominated many of our discussions. Our consensus has been that these problems must be resolved. Proposed solutions to these issues have been creative and bold.

The opportunities for the future include creating a more active, healthy living environment, managing the growth that comes from being a desirable neighbourhood, and opportunities for heritage and social events. Enhanced utilization of the Albert Community Centre will strengthen our ties and sense of community. Facilitating active transportation for our residents as well as those citizens moving through our neighbourhood will be useful for those who work or study north of College Drive. Zoning adjustments will maintain the look of our community while allowing transitions and improvements in housing stock. We also see opportunities for our neighbourhood to enrich our relationship with the U of S, RUH, religious organizations, university residences, our neighbours to the west in Nutana, and our orientation to the Broadway business district.

The recommendations in this report will lead to a better, more sustainable quality of life in our community. We trust that the recommendations will be embraced by our community and fulfilled by City Administration and City Council, so that future generations will continue to find our neighbourhood an attractive and enjoyable place to live for many years to come.

*Written by Cathy Watts, James Perkins, and Laurence Thompson  
on behalf of the  
**Varsity View Local Area Plan Committee***

# Summary of Recommendations

## 1.0 Land Use

- 1.1 **PROPOSED VARSITY VIEW LAND USE POLICY MAP:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, initiate the necessary procedure to amend the Varsity View Land Use Policy Map in the Official Community Plan No. 8769 with the proposed land use designations in Map 1.2, titled “*Varsity View Proposed Land Use Policy Map*”.
- 1.2 **HOW TO LEGALIZE AN EXISTING SUITE BROCHURE:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, distribute the ‘How to Legalize an Existing Suite’ brochure to property owners in the Varsity View neighbourhood.

## 2.0 Infill & Redevelopment

- 2.1 **ONE AND TWO-UNIT INFILL HOUSING:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, consider reducing the “70% of average site width” requirement for new construction of one and two-unit dwellings in the R2 Zoning District to 65%, in an effort to better facilitate infill development.

## 3.0 Parks & Open Space

- 3.1 **COLLEGE QUARTER RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE:** That representatives from the University of Saskatchewan, Business Opportunities Section, schedule a meeting with the Community Services Department, Community Development Division and Recreation & Sport Division, and Varsity View Community Association to identify future opportunities for active and passive recreational open space in the College Quarter that would welcome non-students to also utilize the area.
- 3.2 **VARSITY VIEW URBAN ORCHARD:** That the Community Services Department, Parks Division, and Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, schedule a meeting with representatives from the University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program, Varsity View Community Association, and Varsity View Bishop Murray Community Garden Committee to discuss the feasibility of developing an urban orchard to be located within the University Drive median south of College Drive.

## 4.0 Municipal Services

- 4.1 **ASSESSMENT OF LANE CONDITIONS:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Public Works Division, conduct an assessment of lane conditions in Varsity View and determine appropriate measures to address issues including, but not limited to, drainage, clutter, and lane width.

**4.2 REVIEW OF SNOW AND ICE PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IN WINTER:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Public Works Division, review the Snow and Ice Program to consider including designated cycling routes in the priority system for snow removal, and to consider adding well-utilized, paved, non-lit pathways through parks and public spaces to the Snow and Ice Program’s snow clearing list to encourage active transportation throughout the winter months.

**5.0 Traffic & Circulation**

**5.1 CHANGES TO THE VARSITY VIEW RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, consider the feasibility of implementing the proposed changes outlined in Table 5.2 – “Proposed Changes to Varsity View Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program”.

<b>Table 5.2 – Proposed Changes to Varsity View Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program0</b>	
<b>(a)</b>	<b>RPP Zone Surrounding President Murray Park and Brunskill School:</b> <i>That the Transportation &amp; Utilities Department, Transportation Division, include the blocks surrounding President Murray Park and Brunskill School in the one and two hour regulated parking area.</i>
<b>(b)</b>	<b>No Parking Signage at President Murray Park and 14<sup>th</sup> Street &amp; Wiggins Avenue Intersection:</b> <i>That the Transportation &amp; Utilities Department, Transportation Division, install additional no parking signage at the corners of President Murray Park and along 14<sup>th</sup> Street at Wiggins Avenue to identify the minimum distance from the intersections that vehicles are permitted to park.</i>
<b>(c)</b>	<b>Cumberland Avenue Two Hour Parking:</b> <i>That the Transportation &amp; Utilities Department, Transportation Division, extend the two hour parking zone on the east side of Cumberland Avenue farther south to 14<sup>th</sup> Street.</i>
<b>(d)</b>	<b>Varsity View RPP Program and University Campus Parking Fines:</b> <i>That the Transportation &amp; Utilities Department, Transportation Division, consider working in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, Parking &amp; Transportation Services Division, to ensure the fine structure for parking violations in the neighbourhood and on campus are comparable, as well as acting as an effective deterrent and encouraging appropriate parking.</i>
<b>(e)</b>	<b>Parking Enforcement Report to Community Association:</b> <i>That the Transportation &amp; Utilities Department, Transportation Division, report back to the Varsity View Community Association in 2015 to give an update on parking violation statistics and changes made to the Varsity View RPP Program.</i>

- 5.2 IMPACT OF CHANGES TO THE VARSITY VIEW RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM:** That the Varsity View Community Association survey residents outside of the Varsity View Residential Parking Permit (RPP) zone to explain changes to the RPP Program that will occur and gain feedback on whether they would like to be included in the RPP zone and discuss feedback received with the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division.
- 5.3 LUTHERCARE COMMUNITIES PARKING MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, assist LutherCare Communities in conducting an assessment of the parking program at their facility on Osler Street, by providing information about parking management best practices. The assessment should consider options to encourage increased staff participation in the Saskatoon Transit Eco-Pass program, along with a review of procedures related to allocating on-street parking permit passes to visitors and staff.
- 5.4 ROYAL UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL TRANSIT RIDERSHIP:** That Saskatoon Transit schedule a meeting with representatives from the Royal University Hospital to review staffing schedules and transit schedules, with the goals to increase transit ridership rates and decrease demand for parking.
- 5.5 ‘PARKING FOR RENT’ NOTIFICATION:** That Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, mail out information to remind property owners that the rental of parking on a residential property is illegal; and that Zoning Compliance Bylaw Inspectors further investigate the parking lots on the 300 & 400 blocks of Cumberland Avenue and Bottomley Avenue to ensure compliance with the bylaw.
- 5.6 BUS STOP MAINTENANCE:** That Saskatoon Transit and the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, address bus stop maintenance concerns on Cumberland Avenue near Main Street (both directions) and on Clarence Avenue near College Drive (southbound).

## **6.0 Active Transportation**

- 6.1 MUNROE AVENUE SIDEWALK:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, complete the sidewalk on the east side of Munroe Avenue from College Drive to 8<sup>th</sup> Street by installing panels between: Temperance Street and Aird Street (1 block), Colony Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street (1 block), 14<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street (3 blocks), and 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street (3 blocks) through *Capital Budget #0948 – IS – Sidewalk/Path Retrofit* with highest priority assigned to the northernmost portions.
- 6.2 AUDIBLE PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC SIGNAL FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, consider installing an audible pedestrian traffic signal suitable for use in a residential neighbourhood to assist the visually impaired at the corner of Temperance Street and Wiggins Avenue.

- 6.3 14<sup>TH</sup> STREET CYCLING ROUTE IMPROVEMENT:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, assess the 14<sup>th</sup> Street shared use on-street cycling route and consider opportunities to improve cyclist safety.
- 6.4 PARKING PROTECTED CYCLING LANES:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, and the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, consider creating a north-south and an east-west parking protected cycling lane in and near Varsity View. Suggested routes to consider are Wiggins Avenue (north-south) and 14<sup>th</sup> Street (east-west), although the proposed Active Transportation Plan is expected to evaluate all potential cycling corridors across the city and identify the routes of greatest benefit to cyclists.
- 6.5 ADDITIONAL CYCLING ROUTES:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, and the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, during the creation and implementation of the city-wide Active Transportation Plan consider adding cycling routes in and near Varsity View that link the neighbourhood amenities together, such as parks, the river, the University of Saskatchewan campus, College Drive and Clarence Avenue, as well as consider opportunities to establish commuter cycling routes that pass through the neighbourhood and connect primary destinations.
- 6.6 COLLEGE DRIVE CYCLING:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, and Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, Urban Design Team, ensure any future changes to the College Drive transportation network also identify opportunities to safely accommodate cyclists and align with the key strategies that will be outlined in the city-wide Active Transportation Plan.
- 6.7 INTEGRATE 'ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION' PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division; Corporate Performance Department, Environmental & Corporate Initiatives Division; and Saskatoon Transit, develop a comprehensive alternative transportation public campaign and user-friendly promotional materials.

## 7.0 Heritage & Culture

- 7.1 HERITAGE PRIORITY REVIEW:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, Heritage & Design Coordinator, schedule a meeting with the Varsity View Community Association to discuss the neighbourhood's heritage priorities and identify options for funding to commemorate built heritage or apply for Municipal Heritage Property Designation.
- 7.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE MAPPING:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, provide a Summer 2014 work placement opportunity to a student enrolled in the University of Saskatchewan's Cultural Heritage

Mapping class, offered by the Interdisciplinary Center for Culture and Creativity. The student will receive input from the Community Services Department, Community Development Division; City Archivist; and Varsity View Community Association in the development of an inventory documenting the cultural resources of Varsity View, such as notable people, places, and programs available within the neighbourhood.

- 7.3 ANNUAL COMMUNITY DAY:** That the Community Services Department, Community Development Division, schedule a meeting with the Varsity View Community Association to discuss the possibility of hosting an annual event in the neighbourhood that would showcase artists working within Varsity View and bring together residents from the neighbourhood.
- 7.4 ALBERT COMMUNITY CENTRE:** That the Community Services Department, Community Development Division, schedule a meeting with the Albert Community Centre Management Committee and the Varsity View Community Association to discuss local recreational/programming needs and how those needs align with the Albert Community Centre and the implementation of the Culture Plan.

## 8.0 Campus-Community Relations

- 8.1 CAMPUS-COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:** That the Varsity View Community Association and University of Saskatchewan, Business Opportunities Section establish a regular meeting schedule between the Varsity View Community Association and appropriate University of Saskatchewan sections. The agenda items for Varsity View Community Association-University of Saskatchewan meetings would be determined on an ongoing basis by the community and campus representatives, but could include discussions of opportunities for future collaborations on community relations topics (such as cross-promotion, place-making, cultural events, other local cultural ventures, etc.) or focus upon campus development topics (such as long-term planning, logistics, safety, parking, facilitating growth, etc.).

## 9.0 Neighbourhood Safety

- 9.1 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE BYLAW:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, submit information regarding the City of Saskatoon Property Maintenance Bylaw to the Varsity View Community Association and request that it be published in a future edition of the Community Association newsletter.
- 9.2 ADDITIONAL GARBAGE RECEPTACLES:** That the Community Services Department, Parks Division, and Corporate Performance Department, Environmental & Corporate Initiatives Division, conduct an assessment of all parks in Varsity View

and the Albert Recreation Unit to determine if any additional garbage receptacles should be installed, as well as consider the installation of recycling receptacles and solar compactors, if appropriate.

- 9.3 MAINTENANCE OF UNDERGROWTH, BUSHES, AND TREES:** That the Community Services Department, Parks Division, trim and/or remove overgrown, unhealthy or volunteer growth of trees, bushes, and shrubs around the picnic area and the tennis courts in Albert Park, surrounding the benches in the north-west corner of Raoul Wallenberg Park, and around the benches and the fence in Albert Recreation Unit in order to increase visibility into and through the site.
- 9.4 ALBERT RECREATION UNIT PLAYGROUND UPGRADE:** That the Community Services Department, Community Development Division and Parks Division, and Corporate Services Department, Civic Facilities & Fleet Division, re-paint the metal play structure on the north end of the Albert Recreation Unit and assess the feasibility of upgrading the play structure.
- 9.5 NO PARKING ZONES AT PATHWAY ENTRANCES TO PRESIDENT MURRAY PARK:** That the Transportation & Utilities Department, Transportation Division, increase the “No Parking” zones at the north and south access points of President Murray Park on Aird Street and Colony Street to 50 metres (25 metres in both directions from centre of pathway). This will reduce obstructed sightlines at the access points into the park on Munroe Avenue.
- 9.6 BRUNSKILL SCHOOL AND KINSMEN CHILDREN’S CENTRE SAFETY CONCERNS:** That the Community Services Department, Planning & Development Division, write a letter to Brunskill School, Brunskill School Community Council, and the Kinsmen Children’s Centre administration outlining safety concerns that were identified in the safety audit, along with suggestions that are aimed at addressing the concerns.

# Overview of Local Area Planning

## What is Local Area Planning?

Local Area Planning is a community-based approach to developing comprehensive neighbourhood plans. It enables residents, business owners, property owners, community groups and other stakeholders direct input into determining the future of their community. During the development of a Local Area Plan (LAP), participants work with each other to create a vision, identify issues, develop goals, and outline strategies to ensure the long-term success of their neighbourhood. Once completed, an LAP sets out objectives and policies that guide the growth and development of a neighbourhood or selected area.

The scope of an LAP depends on the issues and opportunities identified by the stakeholders involved. Strategies generally focus on the following themes:

- Neighbourhood Identity
- Neighbourhood Heritage and Culture
- Industrial, Commercial and Residential Land Uses
- Economic Development
- Housing and Infill Development
- Municipal Services and Infrastructure
- Transportation and Parking
- Streetscapes
- Parks, Open Space and Recreation
- Neighbourhood Safety
- Neighbourhood Sustainability

## Why Local Area Planning?

A core strategy of the City of Saskatoon's Strategic Plan is to "enable active, community-based participation in issue and problem identification and resolution"<sup>1</sup>. A commitment to fulfill this core strategy was originally demonstrated as far back as 1978 with *The Core Neighbourhood Study*, which was later updated and expanded during the *1991 Core Neighbourhood Study Review*.

In 1996, the City initiated Plan Saskatoon, which included a city-wide public participation process focused on updating the Development Plan (Official Community Plan) and Zoning Bylaw; Saskatoon's two main public policy tools used to manage growth and development. The Local Area Planning Program was created following expressed support by citizens during the Plan Saskatoon process for more active citizen involvement in long-term planning and development decisions affecting their community. Citizens also called for measures to enhance Saskatoon's central and intermediate neighbourhoods.

Saskatoon City Council approved twelve neighbourhoods to undergo an LAP. As determined by the City of Saskatoon's Official Community Plan, LAPs are applied to specific areas of the City to:

- Maintain the quality, safety and viability of the area;
- Guide and prioritize the expenditure of public funds on community improvements and infrastructure;
- Encourage the renewal, rehabilitation or redevelopment of private and public properties;
- Resolve situations where the policies of the Official Community Plan do not accurately reflect the individual needs of an area; and
- Provide the basis for amendments to the City of Saskatoon's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw<sup>2</sup>.

## What are the Steps to Create a Local Area Plan?

Significant value is placed on active public participation in the Local Area Planning process. It has been determined that the more involved the public, the more sustainable and implementable the plan will be at both the community and municipal government level. The Local Area Planning process tries to build capacity among stakeholders so that they can collaboratively create a vision and goals for the neighbourhood, and make informed decisions that affect their neighbourhood.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Saskatoon (2004). *Planning for the Future – Strategic Plan*. pg. 8.

<sup>2</sup> City of Saskatoon, *Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8769*, Section 18.1.

Generally, the steps to create an LAP are:

- 1) **Neighbourhood Meeting and Forming a Local Area Plan Committee (LAPC)** – All residents, property owners, business owners, community groups and other stakeholders are invited to a meeting to discuss the Local Area Planning process. At that time, participants are asked to serve on an LAPC.
- 2) **Creating a Vision** – The LAPC 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.
- 3) **Discussing the Condition of the Community** – The LAPC discusses the condition of the community to help paint a picture of the community.
- 4) **Identifying Issues, Setting Goals and Outlining Strategies** – Information is gathered through surveys, research, presentations and participant observations about the neighbourhood. Based on these findings, the LAPC acquires an understanding of issues and the practicality of addressing them in the LAP, and sets goals and outlines strategies to ensure the long-term success of their neighbourhood. This information forms the basis of the LAP.
- 5) **Writing the LAP** – The Local Area Planner writes the LAP. City Administration and the LAPC review and endorse the LAP.
- 6) **Adopting the LAP** – Once general consensus is reached in support of the LAP, the report is presented to the Municipal Planning Commission and finally to City Council for adoption.
- 7) **Implementing the Strategies** – In order to achieve neighbourhood goals there needs to be participation by all stakeholders in implementing the plan.
- 8) **Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating the Plan** – All stakeholders have an opportunity to monitor improvements in their neighbourhood. City staff delivers an annual progress report to City Council and the Community Association or as required until all recommendations have been fulfilled.

# Varsity View Local Area Plan

## Study Area & Process

### The Study Area



The Varsity View neighbourhood is the twelfth of fifteen neighbourhoods approved by City Council to receive a Local Area Plan (LAP). LAPs help guide neighbourhood into the future through the development of a comprehensive plan.

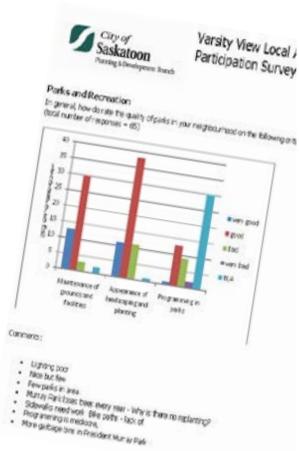
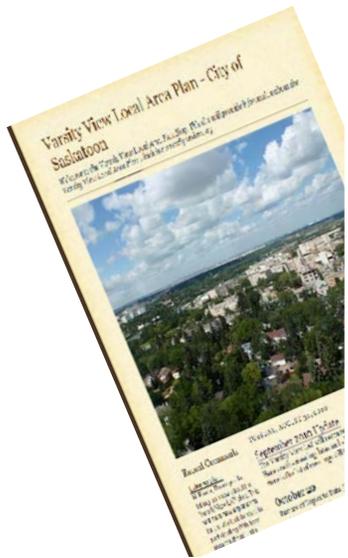
The neighbourhood boundaries are as follows:

- Cumberland Avenue;
- 8<sup>th</sup> Street;
- Clarence Avenue; and
- College Drive.

Varsity View is a character neighbourhood mainly comprised of low-density residential homes, with

the exception of the LutherCare Communities site and multiple-unit dwellings along Clarence Avenue. There are commercial land uses along the southern boundary on 8<sup>th</sup> Street East and a small strip on the corner of College Drive and Cumberland Avenue, as well as at the corner of Wiggins Avenue and Temperance Street. Varsity View has both a high school and an elementary school in the neighbourhood. Further details can be found in the Varsity View Yesterday and Today sections of this report.

# Neighbourhood Participation & Process



## Communications

**Neighbourhood Survey** || The Varsity View Local Area Plan is the result of a large participatory planning process, commencing in September 2009. A preliminary survey was sent to the neighbourhood to gain resident's perspectives on topics ranging from land use, parks and recreation, to parking and traffic. There were 49 neighbourhood surveys completed by stakeholders in the community.



## The Local Area Planning Committee

**136 LAPC Participants** || At the core of the engagement was the Varsity View Community Association, which acted as representatives for the neighbourhood, dedicating their time to participate in regular meeting throughout the Local Area Planning process. The Varsity View Local Area Planning Committee (LAPC) represents a range of interests including: residents, business owners, institutions, property owners, and the Varsity View Community Association.



## Collaboration

Each LAP meeting was specific to a topic of particular interest to the Varsity View community.

**24 Guest Speakers** || To assist with the planning process, guest speakers were invited to speak and included representatives from the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Health Region, and BlackRock Developments, as well as civic staff presenting on various topics, such as land use, community development, neighbourhood safety, parks, community institutions, municipal services, transportation, parking, heritage and culture.



**5 Safety Audits** || The community participated in five Safety Audits throughout the neighbourhood. These Safety Audits were focused on public spaces in the neighbourhood that were identified by members of the LAPC as having potential safety concerns.

**3 Land Use and Infill Development Meetings** || Varsity View is undergoing increased redevelopment due to its desirable location, which led to discussion related to land use and infill development at many LAPC meetings. There were three meetings specific to these topics. This included an infill development workshop, where participants identified unique character areas within the neighbourhood, commented on hypothetical land use proposals, and developed goals for future infill projects.

*“Every new building should be seen as an asset to the community.” – LAPC member*

# Varsity View Vision & Guiding Principles

## Varsity View Vision

At the onset of the Local Area Plan process, the Varsity View Local Area Planning Committee (LAPC) worked together to create the following vision for their community:

*“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 accommodates transit usage.*

*Varsity View strives to maintain its diversity, heritage, and architecture. Varsity View will be a model sustainable community.”*

## Varsity View Guiding Principles

The following general statements were made by members of the Varsity View LAPC when asked about the neighbourhood:

- Heritage and history of Varsity View includes ties to the University of Saskatchewan and Royal University Hospital.
- Varsity View contains many older heritage homes.
- Varsity View has changed.
- The residents who live in Varsity View are diverse in terms of age, culture, and income.
- The housing stock is diverse.
- Varsity View is a safe place to live.
- Residents of Varsity View are physically active.
- The urban forest is a great asset of the neighbourhood.
- Varsity View is a desirable place to live.

- People use varying modes of transportation in Varsity View.
- The neighbourhood has a great location.
- Varsity View is affected by the University of Saskatchewan and Royal University Hospital.
- Varsity View can be characterized by diverse housing stock, university students, and a mature urban forest.
- Challenges include parking pressures, aging infrastructure, and expensive housing.
- Varsity View strives to maintain its heritage and diversity.
- Varsity View’s residents are multi-generational.

The following principles and general goals were identified by the Varsity View LAP Committee to guide the Local Area Plan process:

- Varsity View will be a model sustainable community.
- Citizens of Varsity View will be engaged.
- Varsity View will be renewed and have its renaissance.
- Varsity View will maintain its diversity, character, and architectural heritage.
- Varsity View will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.
- Varsity View will encourage diversity.

***“Varsity View will be a model sustainable community.” – Varsity View LAP Vision***

# Varsity View Yesterday

## Historical Overview



*Aerial view of Varsity View and the University of Saskatchewan (1927)*

The history of Varsity View began during Saskatoon's first economic boom. Limited development of the area began around 1912, when the first home in the area was built by a prominent businessman and real estate owner, Richard M. Bottomley. His land, known as Bottomley Addition, was bound by College Drive to the north, Osler Street to the south, Cumberland Avenue to the east, and Clarence Avenue to the west. Areas making up today's Varsity View were originally known as University Annex, Varsity Park, and College Park.

All of these areas exploited the proximity of the University of Saskatchewan by using it as a marketing tactic and including a reference to the University in the neighbourhood's name. Varsity View began as, and still is today, an ethnically diverse neighbourhood with many scholastic institutions.

The land that makes up Varsity View was annexed before 1913, but development along Elliott Street and College Drive did not begin until the 1920s, and the rest of the area was not substantially built until the 1950s. In later years, the four subdivisions in Varsity View were combined into two areas, Albert and Brunskill, most likely named after the two schools in the area. Today, Varsity View is bound by College Drive to the north, 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Cumberland Avenue to the east, and Clarence Avenue to the west.

The following section is merely an overview of the neighbourhood. More information about Varsity View can be found by researching the references provided, or by contacting the City Archivist, Saskatoon Heritage Society, and the Local History Room at the Saskatoon Public Library.

# Varsity View Today

## Overview



This section of the Local Area Plan provides a statistical overview of various demographic data and development information for Varsity View, while often making comparisons to city averages and other neighbourhoods where it is appropriate.

Varsity View has a large population of residents 75 years of age and older, due to the presence of a seniors' home and special care home. As a result of the senior population, combined with the student population attending the University of Saskatchewan, the Varsity View neighbourhood has a very low median household income when compared to the city average.

# Goals & Discussion Reports

Throughout the process of creating the Varsity View Local Area Plan, the Varsity View Local Area Planning Committee (LAPC) identified issues in the neighbourhood, developed goals, and outlined strategies in order to achieve their vision and ensure the long-term success of their neighbourhood.

The following topic-based working papers are based on the issues and opportunities identified by the Varsity View LAPC. They include:

- 1.0 Land Use
- 2.0 Infill & Redevelopment
- 3.0 Parks & Open Space
- 4.0 Municipal Services
- 5.0 Traffic & Circulation
- 6.0 Active Transportation
- 7.0 Heritage & Culture
- 8.0 Campus-Community Relations
- 9.0 Neighbourhood Safety
- 10.0 Implementation & Priorities

Each report includes an overview of the topic and its relation to the neighbourhood, followed by the goals that were determined by the Varsity View LAPC. This information provides the foundation for the content of each report. Recommendations to assist in achieving the identified goals for the neighbourhood are noted throughout.

**Please note:** This Summary Report is comprised of excerpts from the *Varsity View Local Area Plan Final Report*. Refer to the *Final Report* to review the full content of each section.

# 1.0 Land Use

## 1.1 Overview



Land use in Varsity View is characterized by a large area of stable low density residential land, with a long strip of multi-family residential land along Clarence Avenue and a small pocket of high density at Wiggins Avenue and Temperance Street. In the south, small single-storey commercial properties dominate 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In the north, College Drive is undergoing a redevelopment to mixed uses that are complementary to the adjacent University of Saskatchewan.

This section examines the corridors that bound the neighbourhood and include a focus on Cumberland Avenue, in particular. The plan proposes land use changes along this corridor that would be complementary to College Quarter and considers important aspects of any potential future Cumberland Avenue development, such as land use/density, design, parking, and interface areas.

## 2.0 Infill & Redevelopment

### 2.1 Overview



Infill plays a significant role in the ongoing growth and renewal of the city. If done well, infill can assist in reducing traffic congestion, increasing civic sustainability, and create more livable, complete communities.

In Varsity View, the design quality of infill and redevelopment in the area is a major concern for residents. As a historic neighbourhood, residents feel reinvestment can be positive, but can also change the unique fabric and character of the neighbourhood if not done sensitively.

During the creation of the LAP, participants considered the structures that line the streets of Varsity View and were able to identify subtle changes in design, prompting the group to realize their neighbourhood is comprised of many unique character areas.

# 3.0 Parks & Open Space

## 3.1 Overview



The accessibility of local parks and open space has a significant impact on the quality of life of residents in our neighbourhoods.

The Varsity View LAPC noted that local residents place a high value on both active and passive recreational opportunities for all ages. Preservation of existing park space and the urban forest is extremely important to residents in Varsity View.

The development of College Quarter presents new recreation opportunities. The University of Saskatchewan has engaged Varsity View residents in discussions on this topic. By addressing some of the local recreation needs, College Quarter could successfully establish itself as a popular destination for both students and non-students.

# 4.0 Municipal Services

## 4.1 Overview



This section deals with the above and below ground infrastructure in Varsity View. While issues related to this topic were rated to be of lower priority to the neighbourhood when compared to matters such as land use and traffic, the Varsity View LAPC did identify concerns that require attention.

Much of the discussion on this topic focused upon identifying opportunities to further encourage and support active transportation year-round. The LAPC is requesting a review of the city-wide Snow and Ice Program to consider placing higher priority for snow removal along cycling routes and to clear snow on all well-utilized, paved park pathways. Currently, only paved park pathways with lighting receive snow clearing.

# 5.0 Traffic & Circulation

## 5.1 Overview



Varsity View’s proximity to major destinations, the city centre, Royal University Hospital, and University of Saskatchewan, all contribute to the busy pedestrian and vehicular traffic environment in and throughout the area. As a result, the Varsity View LAPC has identified on-street parking pressures, increasing vehicle traffic on Clarence Avenue and Cumberland Avenue, and pedestrian safety as concerns. The committee would like to balance the needs of residents and traffic without feeling isolated by major road networks as the city grows.

In particular, this section includes several recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Varsity View Residential Parking Permit Program, as well as encouraging additional Saskatoon Transit ridership.

# 6.0 Active Transportation

## 6.1 Overview



The Varsity View LAPC would like to promote active transportation in and around their neighbourhood. The promotion of alternative transportation in the area can have environmental, health, and economic benefits for residents throughout the neighbourhood and help to mitigate traffic congestion and parking pressures.

With Varsity View's central location and riverbank linkage, the neighbourhood is a great place to walk and cycle in Saskatoon. The community feels that as the University of Saskatchewan and city continue to grow, added investments in walking and cycling are highly desirable and needed for the future.

# 7.0 Heritage & Culture

## 7.1 Overview



*(Photograph A-30 by Leonard A. Hillyard courtesy Saskatoon Public Library – Local History Room)*

Heritage and culture are interrelated aspects of a society that define our past, present and future. Recognizing and preserving heritage and culture helps a community appreciate the contributions of past citizens, while guiding people forward in life. At the neighbourhood level, heritage elements are often found in buildings or monuments, while culture may include local art or festivals.

Varsity View has been home to many prominent people in the arts, politics and academic professions. As the neighbourhood changes, so does the historical landscape. Older homes are being replaced by new homes, and many long-time residents are no longer around to share the history of the neighbourhood with current residents. The Varsity View neighbourhood wishes to celebrate its legacy within Saskatoon and encourage future cultural events and exchanges that preserve the stories and history of its past while embracing its future.

# 8.0 Campus-Community Relationship

## 8.1 Overview



The relationship between a university campus and adjacent neighbourhoods is important. In Saskatoon, the Varsity View neighbourhood is located to the south of the main campus of the University of Saskatchewan and directly west of the developing College Quarter. As a result, the residential neighbourhood is comprised of many students choosing to live near campus, university professors, and others working full-time on campus either at the University, Royal University Hospital, or Innovation Place research park.

In many cities, formal university-community or “town & gown” partnerships have become more commonplace, as a means to address shared opportunities or issues in such a way that provides benefits to all.

# 9.0 Neighbourhood Safety

## 9.1 Overview



A positive perception of safety within a community allows citizens to live, work, shop, and play free of the fear, rational or not, of becoming a victim of crime. Varsity View is a safe community, with low crime rates and residents have a positive perception of safety.

The Varsity View Community Association plays an important role in promoting a safe neighbourhood. They do so by building a strong sense of community through a variety of organized sports and activities, community-driven initiatives, a neighbourhood garden, and an ongoing community newsletter.

The proximity to the University of Saskatchewan Campus and the Royal University Hospital increases the flow of traffic through Varsity View. Even though there are a high number of unrecognizable individuals travelling by car, bike, or foot through the area, the traffic optimizes the potential for natural surveillance by increasing “eyes on the street”.

The proximity to the University of Saskatchewan campus and downtown creates a high demand for housing; especially rental housing. Varsity View has one of the highest rental-to-ownership ratios in Saskatoon. The Varsity View LAMP indicated that the high proportion of rental housing negatively impacts their perception of safety. There are concerns that the physical appearance of unmaintained rental properties is less than desirable and could attract criminal behaviour.

# 10.0 Implementation & Priorities

## 10.1 Overview

Local Area Plan (LAP) reports are long-term plans that may take several years to be fully implemented. An LAP sets out a vision and goals to guide growth and development of a neighbourhood. They also specify recommendations, with each intended to address a particular issue and improve the neighbourhood. Some recommendations may be implemented in the short-term, while others may take a longer period of time.

Since the late-1990s, the City of Saskatoon Planning & Development Division has been creating and implementing LAPs, with City Council endorsing the plans. Great strides have been made to improve these neighbourhoods by allocating resources for the implementation of the recommendations in the report, working with City Administration, with LAP communities, and facilitating collaborative action from government and non-government programs and service providers.

The Planning & Development Division works in partnership with each division to implement LAP recommendations. City Council has been very supportive of the LAP Program and continues to approve capital funds to implement needed improvements in the LAP neighbourhoods.

Local Area Planners are the liaisons between the community and City Administration to ensure the priorities laid out in each LAP are reflected in the funding of projects. The interdepartmental cooperation begins in the early stages of the LAP process, when key City Administrators are brought to the table of a Local Area Planning Committee (LAPC) to provide insight and expertise on certain issues. These same key City Administrators are often involved in approving certain commitments to implement recommendations from the LAP.

It is a goal of the Local Area Planning Program to report to the LAP neighbourhoods and to City Council on an annual basis to provide a status update on the implementation of recommendations from each LAP. Additional public meetings may also be needed to keep the community abreast of implementation activities or to gather input on implementation activities. Articles about Local Area Planning activities may also be published in Community Association newsletters. The Local Area Planning website at [www.saskatoon.ca/go/lap](http://www.saskatoon.ca/go/lap) posts Implementation Status Reports, which are created annually.

Continued community involvement in the implementation of LAPs is essential to successful outcomes, and, as such, it is imperative to extend a central role to local residents, Community Associations, Local Area Plan Committees, and other stakeholders. Community Associations and LAPCs have an important role in providing local perspective, advice, guidance and input on the implementation of recommendations, and commenting on development proposals in their neighbourhoods to ensure they are consistent with the goals of the LAP.

## **10.2 Priorities of the Varsity View Local Area Planning Committee**

The Varsity View LAPC was asked to identify their top priority recommendations. Being recognized as high priority does not necessarily mean a recommendation will be completed in the immediate future because there may be complex issues that affect the timing of implementation. This is an opportunity for the LAPC to identify the recommendations that are believed to have the greatest potential for a significant positive impact on the neighbourhood.

The Varsity View LAPC views the proposed active transportation improvements in this report as among the most important recommendations that will help address local traffic-related concerns, while encouraging healthy and environmentally friendly activity.

The following recommendations were identified by the LAPC as having the highest priority:

**4.2**    *Review of Snow and Ice Program to Encourage Active Transportation in Winter*

**5.4**    *Royal University Hospital Transit Ridership*

**6.3**    *14<sup>th</sup> Street Cycling Route Improvement*

**6.5**    *Additional Cycling Routes*

**6.6**    *College Drive Cycling*