

**Walter, Penny**

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**From:** City Council  
**Subject:** FW: Email - Communication - Fouad Tannous - Housing Accelerator Fund – Permitting Four Storeys Within the Transit Development Area – CK 750-1  
**Attachments:** Scrap the R4 and Parking restriction.pdf

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**From:** Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 25, 2024 9:30 PM  
**To:** City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>  
**Subject:** Email - Communication - Fouad Tannous - Housing Accelerator Fund – Permitting Four Storeys Within the Transit Development Area – CK 750-1

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED]

Submitted on Saturday, May 25, 2024 - 21:22

Submitted by [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Saturday, May 25, 2024

**To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**First Name:** Fouad

**Last Name:** Tannous

**Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name:** Foad Tannoos

**Phone Number :** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] Osler Street

**Ward:** Ward 6

**What do you wish to do ?:** Submit Comments

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
May 28th 2024 at 12pm

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** I would like to comment on 4 units per lot size item 7.6

**Comments:**

I would like my letter to be read to the city and I would like proof that it was read and acknowledged. I request that my name to be used is Fred Anthony.

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?:** No

Dear Cynthia Block, Mayor Clark, City Councilors, and Varsity View Residents:

I am a proud 31-year resident of Varsity View and I have seen this neighborhood since the early 1990's. It has become my favorite neighborhood even with all my travels around the globe. I have been to various cities in over fourteen different countries and over 50 different cities. This neighborhood has by far the most unique characteristics, the most walkable to amenities, the most peaceful, the safest, the prettiest, and the most livable. I was born in the Royal University Hospital, and studied at the University of Saskatchewan and I still am a resident of this neighborhood. I have brought friends from Europe, Asia, and Latin America and they all agree with me.

I am strongly opposed to the new zoning laws of the neighborhood for multiple reasons which will be covered in this letter. The reasons are as follows which will be explained later in this letter:

1. There is already a lot of congestion and noise in the neighborhood from the Luther Tower which brings forth litter throughout the year.
2. The multiunit houses are not selling.
3. The residences will not sell their cars to add additional units for residential use.
4. Most of the University of Saskatchewan and the future Saskatchewan Polytechnic students are from out of the city and all drive. They are also all exempt from the transit passes.
5. There has been multiple incidents, injuries, and collisions due to congestion in the neighborhood.
6. Reckless driving in the neighborhood continues to be a problem.
7. This will only enrich the property developers who will only build unaffordable housing and leave land unused (similar to reason number 2)
8. This plan will ultimately hurt the people who you are trying to help.

My first point and reason the city must scrap the plan for R4 Zoning in Varsity View, is that the Luther Tower is already causing lots of congestion and chaos. Throughout the year, garbage is left on my lawn from the employees who work at the tower. This past May long weekend, I picked up about 6-8 pieces of garbage on my lawn. They dump their cigarette butts all over the ground and leave them to blow in the wind and potentially cause fire. I saw a neighbor walking his dog around the neighborhood. He had two bags with him, one for his dog and the other for picking up trash around the neighborhood. He picked up multiple pieces of garbage around the Luther Tower. This small example proves that there will be

an increase in garbage and pollution around the neighborhood if there are more dense housing and apartments. The garbage has been an ongoing problem ever since I can remember living in Varsity View during my 31-year tenure.

Another thing the tower did is put extremely bright lights around the perimeter of the psychology ward. The light bleeds through my curtains and I usually wake up in the middle of the night. I fear that the buildings will implement multiple extremely bright lights on their buildings causing further light pollution and nuisance.

Last summer, during the heat wave the industrial sized air conditioning unit on the Luter Tower was running at increased capacity and causing a lot of noise pollution in the neighborhood. I assume, that the R4 units would all have AC units all running during the summertime which will cause even more noise pollution.

In addition, during the visitations to the Luther Tower, the guests constantly park in front of my driveway blocking my entry and exit. I fear if the city removes the off-street parking requirements, it will cause even more congestion with university students, hospital workers, and Luther Care home workers parking around the neighborhood.

The city will argue that the BRT will allow people to take the public transportation, but the central locations including Varsity View already have adequate public transportation. The BRT does not account for people visiting from out of Saskatoon, University students from out of town and hospital workers from out of town. The city is also not accounting for different shifts from those workers who come and go at various times.

Don't forget that the residence of varsity view have cars, boats, trailers, and RVs. The residents of varsity view venture to the lake, the cottage, Calgary, and Edmonton. We do shopping and transport various gear for skiing, mountain climbing and camping. You cannot access those sites by transit and need a car. Some residents have multiple cars for various needs. My neighbor owns a farm, my other neighbors take pride in their contractor work and gardening. They all have equipment which cannot be stored on the street. It is necessary for them to have space for their equipment and cars.

Therefore, please consider the Luther Tower as an example of the congestion throughout this neighborhood if the density is increased. This project will only increase the pollution, traffic, light, and noise pollution in the neighborhood.

My second point is that multi-unit houses are overpriced, substandard quality and are not selling. I think the city knows which unit I will draw my example from, it is the 4-unit town houses at the end of Osler street on the corner of Osler and Clarence. It is Newbury Condos that the City of Saskatoon mistakenly approved for the neighborhood. These townhouses have been sitting unsold since they were put up for sale in 2021. There were several open houses in the summer time, and not a single person walked in to view the townhouses. This indicates that buildings like these will completely waste precious land. These condominiums are still empty and have not been bought. I am sure the developer is losing money and is hurting financially because the City of Saskatoon blindly wanted to increase the density without proper consideration of the Saskatoon housing market. Now these condominiums are currently sitting empty and being used as an AirBnb which are taking housing away from the residents of the community.

Let this be a foreshadow to what will happen with the future plans. I am sure the City council does not want vacant houses in the neighborhood and want Varsity View to be a ghost town. I certainly would rather have houses be occupied by a resident to enjoy the beautiful neighborhood.

The residents of Varsity View will not sell their cars and in fact there will be more cars from the students, nurses, and Luther Care workers. As I mentioned previously, the residents of Varsity View all have varying jobs. I have met farmers, contractors, business owners, and various other professions who all need cars. Some of them also store trailers, equipment, and machinery on their properties. This all requires space on their property. Removing the parking restrictions of the property will effectively put more cars parked on the roads and cause more congestion.

In addition, most of the students are from rural areas in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. They all drove to Saskatoon for school. They all need a place to park. As previously mentioned, a lot of the visitors of the Luther Tower are from out of the City limits of Saskatoon and choose to drive to see their loved ones. They will all need parking. I know many students living in Varsity View who are from rural areas or even international students all with cars because they tend to work and drive home in the summers. Removing parking requirements will further cause congestion on the streets. The residents will not be able to do their work as mentioned above, some of them require vehicles for their work.

Currently at the University of Saskatchewan, the students from out of Saskatoon are exempt from using the bus pass. These students can opt out from using the bus pass. If they have a vehicle, they can simply (and do so) drive to where they

need to go somewhere. I was a student and friends with many students from outside of Saskatoon who did just that.

In the neighborhood of Varsity View, there is heavy traffic from the numerous services and businesses around the neighborhood. Reckless driving continues to be a problem. Motorists are still speeding through the neighborhood to avoid the congestion on Clearence and college. They speed through the section of University Drive and usually someone runs the stop sign daily nearly striking students, residents, and hospital workers in the process. I encourage the City of Saskatoon to monitor the traffic in the neighborhood. I have seen people run the stop sign on Mackinnon and Temprence numerous times. I have seen people run yield signs and speed through the neighborhood trying to avoid traffic on College Drive. There has already been a tragedy at the hands of the city, and I do not want another. Not to mention the countless other motor vehicle collisions in the neighborhood. Adding more density and more traffic will only increase the congestion and incidents at the hands of the city.

This plan will ultimately hurt the people you are trying to help because the land values will only increase and therefore will only drive the housing prices up. The developers would like that very much but it hurts the people who don't already own a house. By increasing the density of the land you are by turn increasing the values of the property further driving up the housing prices for young people. Take for example, the Newbury Condos. The developer bought the land for approximately \$400,000+ in 2020. They are pricing the units for approximately \$769,900. In today's housing builders market, the price per square foot for a *NORMAL* family house is \$250/square foot. The square footage of one of the town houses is 1608ft squared. This cost the developer \$402,000 to built if it was a normal family house. Since this a brick facia, the total cost is approximately \$430,000. Since the total land is approximately \$100,000 per unit, this brings the total estimated cost to \$530,000. Since the developer is a business and needs to make a profit, they must sell it at a higher price. Currently, there are no persons willing to pay \$770,000 for a quarter lot house without any yard, deck and living beside a noisy street. There are certainly no young people that can afford such a condominium. The houses that typically sell, are the houses priced in the range of below \$600,000 that are single unit dwellings and *ONLY* if they have a yard, a fence, a deck, and various other features. These high density, high luxury houses are not selling. These new listings as of May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, have been on Realtor.ca for 135 days. I know they were listed before that. They have been on the market since 2021. There are also many newly built, single-family houses for sale in this neighborhood that are simply not selling. People cannot afford such houses.

The city says that they will bring affordable houses. You have gotten a glimpse of the economics of house building and the bare minimum for a developer to build to make profit for a single unit on a four unit house is to price the apartment above \$550,000 and these are numbers based on 2020 land prices and we in the room all know that land prices have increased dramatically.

In addition, when talking with realtors, property developers, and home builders they were all saying and I quote: "that this development is already approved by the city, they simply need to sign on it." Another property developer was saying: "they already approved it for the entire city." This means that the only people who are keen on it are realtors and property developers so that they can build more and expensive units on the properties of Varsity View. This proposal has not been approved yet because we are clearly having this discussion about it.

The City of Victoria built affordable housing units who's intention was to allow first time homebuyers to buy those properties, own them, and live in them. Instead what ended up happening is a real-estate development and holding company bought all the properties and were renting out the units which were not the intention of the City of Victoria. The City of Victoria was unaware. The only time when the City of Victoria found out, is when a tenant of the town houses, called the City of Victoria because of a utility problem. The City worker, realized that the utility bill was not under the tenant's name (intended owner's name). The City of Victoria worker probed and found out that the tenant was not indeed the owner, and a property developer owned all those condominiums where the intention of them was to be owner occupied. There is an ongoing investigation and lawsuit on this matter. I warn the city of Saskatoon, that if they are not careful this will end up happening in Varsity View and it will completely ruin the neighborhood, similar to what was done with the Newbury Condos.

Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/affordable-home-housing-lawsuits-1.7131524> : Source 2 : <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/affordable-homes-vivid-lawsuits-china-1.7138560>

My suggestion is that the city should first improve the transit system based on the infrastructure we already have and not completely rezone the city. Currently, I can walk faster from downtown to Varsity View than the bus can transport me from downtown to my neighbourhood. The city has plenty of ways in which to improve the transit without completely rezoning the neighbourhoods. Why don't the city already have a BRT, see if there is demand, and then maybe plan something new. This should have been implemented a long time ago. Starting in

small steps will avoid costly mistakes (such as the Newbury Condos) and generally improve the overall transit experience. This is what people wanted in the first place. We don't want horrible cookie-cutter, subpar quality housing. The transit system should be the first thing that needs to improve. During my travels there are many examples of good transit systems and there was no complete rezoning of cities. For example, Washington DC has a great transit system without completely rezoning the entire neighbourhoods. They take great advantage of both buses and subways. Waterloo Ontario is also a fantastic example of this because of its similar size to Saskatoon. They have great bike lanes, proper bus, and tram systems. In fact, it's even easier for the cars to get around because the bikes, pedestrians, and trams have their own route. In fact, the City of Waterloo implemented the tram recently. The City of Waterloo did not rezone entire neighbourhoods for large buildings. They used the infrastructure which they already had. I challenge the city to look at the examples of Waterloo and Washington DC for their ideas. Especially the City of Waterloo where they mostly added bikes lanes and improved the transit system first. The City of Waterloo rezoned some parts but only along busy streets and **not** where there are already residents living.

As a 31-year resident of Varsity View, I implore and strongly advise the City of Saskatoon against this R4 rezoning of Varsity View. We have been paying our taxes for many decades, we have taken pride in this community, and many have called it our own throughout the years and decades. Do not make the mistakes of the past in the future. I also suggest the City of Saskatoon to learn from other cities who have done similar things but did it with only slight modifications to the existing infrastructure.