

January 26, 2026

Deputy City Clerk, Standing Policy Committee on  
Planning, Development & Community Services

Dear Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council:

**Re: 2025 Annual Report - Saskatoon Development Appeals Board  
[File No. CK 430-30]**

In accordance with the *Development Appeals Board Policy and Procedures*, I submit the Development Appeals Board's 2025 Annual Report to City Council, summarizing the Board's work, trends in appeal activity, and ongoing efforts to strengthen adjudicative standards.

### **Role and Mandate of the Development Appeals Board**

The Saskatoon Development Appeals Board operates as an independent, quasi-judicial tribunal established under *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. Sections 219 and 221 of the Act provide the statutory right of appeal and prescribe the framework the Board must apply when determining appeals, including the requirement that decisions not grant special privilege, defeat the intent of the *Zoning Bylaw*, or injuriously affect neighbouring properties.

In fulfilling this mandate, the Board provides an essential forum for due process by offering members of the public an opportunity to have development decisions reviewed in a fair, impartial, and transparent manner. Appeals brought before the Board are often highly site-specific or fact-specific in nature, involving circumstances that do not fit neatly within the general application of zoning regulations. The Board's role is not to rewrite policy or substitute its preferences for those of Council, but to apply legislation and bylaws with careful judgment, ensuring consistency while recognizing the practical realities of individual properties and developments.

Through this function, the Board serves as an important safeguard within the development approval system, balancing regulatory intent with procedural fairness.

### **Board Membership and Succession**

The Development Appeals Board continues to benefit from a balance of experience, continuity, and renewal.

The Board acknowledges departing member **Len Kowalko** for his eight years of dedicated service and the institutional knowledge he brought to the Board's work.

**Nick Sackville** will continue to serve as Chair in 2026, entering his second year in the role. The Board also recognizes **Corwyn Shomachuk**, who served as Vice Chair throughout 2025 and provided steady leadership during a year of increased appeal activity.

As part of a deliberate approach to succession planning, **Evan Reekie**, now in his second year on the Board, has been appointed Vice Chair for 2026.

The Board is also pleased to welcome **Doug Daniels** as its newest member, bringing relevant experience in planning and policy to the Board.

### **Appeals Overview and Key Trends in 2025**

In 2025, the Development Appeals Board experienced a significant increase in appeal activity compared to the previous year. The Board received a total of 55 appeal applications in 2025, of which 39 appeals were heard and decided during the calendar year, compared to 21 appeals heard in 2024. The remaining appeals were either withdrawn, resolved prior to hearing, or scheduled to be heard in 2026.

#### **Appeals at a Glance**

- Total appeals received: 55
- Appeals heard and decided: 39
  - Development Permit Appeals: 24 granted, 2 denied
  - Sign Permit Appeals: 4 granted
  - Orders to Remedy Contravention Appeals: 4 rescinded, 5 upheld
- Appeals scheduled to be heard in 2026: 10
- Appeals escalated to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board: 2

While the Board does not attribute this increase to any single factor, several recurring themes were observed throughout the year:

- **Accessory buildings exceeding maximum permitted size**, where applicants sought relief from dimensional limits established in the Zoning Bylaw.
- **Appeals arising from recent changes to downtown parking regulations**, including the removal of surface parking as a permitted use, which resulted in a number of applications requesting variances or relief from established standards.
- A high proportion of appeals focused on **development standards rather than land use**, including landscaping requirements, and site-specific dimensional constraints.

These appeals were generally technical and fact-specific in nature, reinforcing the Board's role in applying statutory tests to real-world development conditions rather than reconsidering policy intent.

Decisions of the Development Appeals Board may be further appealed to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board (SMB). The Board monitors these appeals closely and

views them as important learning opportunities to strengthen the clarity, structure, and logical rigor of its written decisions. In 2025, **two appeals originating from decisions of the Saskatoon Development Appeals Board were heard by the SMB**. Outcomes and reasoning from those proceedings continue to inform the Board's approach to decision-writing and analytical discipline.

Throughout the year, the Board remained focused on applying the tests set out in Section 221 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* consistently and transparently, regardless of appeal volume or complexity.

### **Strengthening Board Standards and Professionalism**

Recognizing the increasing complexity and volume of appeals, the Board has continued to improve its governance practices and professional standards.

Effective January 1, 2025, the City implemented:

- A revised selection and interview process for new Board members through the City Agency Recruitment and Evaluation Committee (CARE).
- Mandatory training requirements for incoming members of the Development Appeals Board.

In addition, the Board developed and adopted a **Guide to Clear and Effective Tribunal Writing**, aimed at improving the clarity, consistency, and legal defensibility of its decisions. This guide supports transparent reasoning, assists parties in understanding how decisions are reached, and enhances the quality of the record in the event of further appeal.

Together, these initiatives reflect the Board's commitment to maintaining a high standard of adjudication and public accountability.

### **Appeal Fee Update**

Effective January 1, 2026, the appeal fee increased from \$50 to \$300. The Board acknowledges that this change may deter frivolous or speculative appeals and may influence overall appeal volumes following the upward trend observed in 2025.

At the same time, the Board remains committed to ensuring that all appeals brought before it are heard fairly and impartially. The appeal fee does not alter the Board's approach to due process, evidentiary review, or decision-making.

### **Acknowledgements**

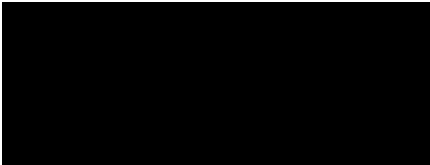
The Development Appeals Board wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the staff of the City Clerk's Office for their diligent administrative support. This includes the coordination of hearings, issuance of notices, preparation of appeal documentation, and

accurate record-keeping during proceedings. Their professionalism and attention to detail are essential to the effective operation of the Board.

### **Closing**

The Development Appeals Board remains committed to its statutory role as an independent tribunal, applying legislation and bylaws consistently while ensuring procedural fairness. As development activity and regulatory frameworks continue to evolve, the Board will maintain its focus on clarity, professionalism, and sound decision-making in service of the public interest.

Sincerely,



Nick Sackville  
Chair, Development Appeals Board