

Overview of Relevant Policy

This document provides a detailed overview of existing land use planning policies that are relevant to this development proposal and guide the Administration's analysis in formulating a recommendation on the application. Relevant policies are contained within the following:

- I. Bylaw No. 8769, The Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2009
- II. Growth Plan to Half a Million
- III. Varsity View Local Area Plan

This document contains excerpts directly from the above referenced plans.

I. Bylaw No. 8769, The Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2009

Bylaw No. 8769, The Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2009 (Plan) provides the policy framework to define, direct, and evaluate development in the City of Saskatoon, ensuring that development takes place in an orderly and rational manner, balancing the environmental, social, and economic needs of the community.

Fundamental Values

2.4 Growth Plan to Half a Million

This plan is intended to support the overall vision of the Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan), the recently adopted community planning initiative which sets the stage for a new growth model for Saskatoon. Progressive development proposals that align with the vision laid out in the Growth Plan are encouraged and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where necessary, and where the quality of such proposal warrants it, facilitative amendments to this Plan and/or the Zoning Bylaw should be considered.

City Form and Structure

3.2.2 (a) Compact City Form

The development of a compact and efficient urban form shall be encouraged by setting overall density guidelines for new residential development areas, facilitating infill development in existing residential, commercial and industrial areas, and gradually increasing the overall density of the city.

3.2.2 (d) Concentrate Activities

Wherever possible, significant commercial, multiple-unit residential and community facilities shall be situated in or along designated nodes and corridors in order to maximize the use of existing community infrastructure and encourage the use of public transit.

3.2.2 (I) Infill Development

A balance of both greenfield and infill development supports the fundamental values of this Plan, contributing to the development of an environmentally and economically sustainable city. To achieve this vision, locations and types of infill development have been identified on the Official Community Plan – Planned Growth Map. The types and location of infill shall consist of the following:

(ii) Corridor Growth – Corridor growth areas are identified along the rapid transit corridors as high-priority locations for redevelopment/development into medium- and high density residential, mixed-use, and transit-oriented areas designed to support an attractive and high-frequency transit service. Corridor growth areas are intended to accommodate a mixture of residential, commercial, and institutional uses that are oriented towards the street at a pedestrian scale with active building frontages. The density and intensity of corridor development should gradually transition to the lower density and intensity of surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Where appropriate, proposals for mixed-use, transit-oriented development along the entire length of the rapid transit corridors are encouraged.

Infill Housing Development

5.2.2 (c) Impact Analysis

Infill housing proposals which involve an amendment to the Official Community Plan or Zoning Bylaw, an application for discretionary use, an application for subdivision, or a Development Appeal, shall be evaluated according to the following:

- (i) Conformance with Plan – the nature of the proposal and its conformance with all relevant sections of this Plan, as well as any established area sector plans, area concept plans, local area plans or local area design plans;
- (ii) Demand – the need for the form of housing proposed and the supply of land currently available in the general area capable of meeting that need;
- (iii) Transportation – the capability of the existing roadway and public transit systems to service the proposal, and the adequacy of the proposed supply of on-site parking;
- (iv) Services – the capability of existing community infrastructure including water and sewer services, parks, schools, and other utilities and community facilities;
- (v) Scale and Compatibility – the compatibility of the proposal with the height, scale, and design of buildings in the surrounding neighbourhood, the continuity with the nearby residential streetscape and lotting patterns, and the overall compatibility with land uses in the general area;

- (vi) On-site Amenities – the adequacy of proposed landscaping and screening, and preservation of existing vegetation;
- (vii) Heritage – any resource, or group of resources, natural or cultural, tangible or intangible, that a community recognizes for its value as a witness to history or memory;
- (viii) Housing Choice – the need to provide a range of housing opportunities throughout the city; and
- (ix) Compact City Form – the on-going need to promote a compact and efficient city form.

II. Growth Plan to Half a Million

2.2 Future Land Use Patterns without the Growth Plan

Existing permitted land uses and transportation networks are barriers to transforming major corridors into vibrant parts of the community (Figure 10).

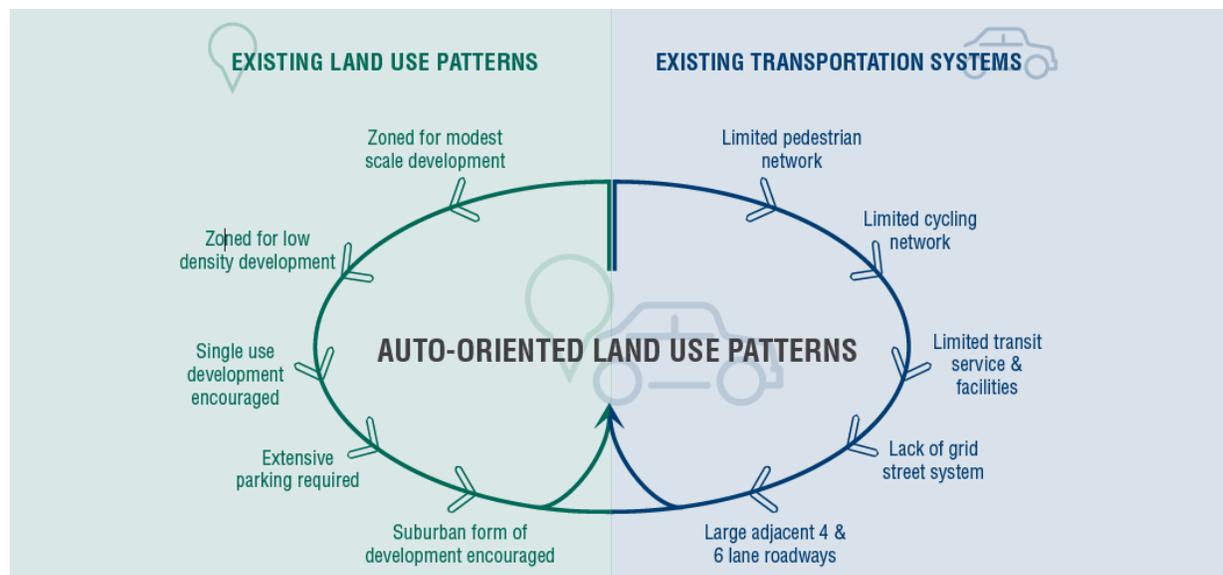


Figure 10 - Barriers to Transforming Major Corridors

Permitted land uses are generally centred on commercial development, with limited opportunity and choices for a mix of residential and office space. Modest scale and density of development, where a large amount of free parking is required, typically leads to a suburban pattern of land use designed for automobiles. In fact, the design of streets serving auto-oriented land use patterns encourages people to drive. On the other hand, limited pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities restrict choices for sustainable modes of transportation. Together, these systemic land use and transportation relationships perpetuate the suburban character of Saskatoon streets.

Without purposeful planning to transform Saskatoon's major corridors, the city will continue to face:

- **Limited choices for existing and future residents.** Corridor Growth will provide new housing options on Saskatoon's major corridors within close proximity to walkable, mixed use commercial areas.
- **Limited access to employment and amenities.** Transformation of major corridors into mixed use, higher density activity areas will provide a variety of new employment nodes focused around attractive transit and other community amenities.
- **Limited transportation choices to areas along auto-oriented major roads.** Changes to the type and form of development will encourage walking and cycling and support greater investment in attractive transit services.
- **Land uses on major corridors that do not support attractive transit services.** Higher density forms of development (e.g. 4 to 6 storey) or more intensive destinations (e.g. redeveloped Suburban Centres) will reinforce the provision of attractive transit services.
- **Major roads that continue to be barriers to communities surrounding them.** Corridor Growth will connect neighbourhoods by improving pedestrian spaces, bringing development closer to the street, and facilitating connectivity across major corridors.
- **Growing outward with limited options for growing upward.** Corridor Growth will maximize investment in existing city services and infrastructure, while minimizing long-term liability associated with the service and infrastructure expansion required for outward growth.
- **Higher density land uses in challenging locations.** It is imperative that higher density development be located along major corridors to integrate with future rapid transit and support other community services and amenities. Without Corridor Growth, there may be pressure to accommodate higher density land forms in more random locations. This would compromise the success of future rapid transit and mixed-use areas and affect the stability of residential neighbourhoods.

2.3 Aspirations for Corridor Growth

The Growth Plan explores opportunities for developing complete communities along major corridors, supported by attractive transit services. These communities will be designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Support and encourage a variety of building types, densities, and forms
- Create public spaces that are inviting, active, and memorable for residents and visitors alike
- Improve access to employment opportunities, commercial businesses and services
- Improve mobility options along major corridors and around the city
- Enhance connectivity between and within neighbourhoods

- Support the efficient provision of infrastructure

III. Varsity View Local Area Plan

1.2 Land Use Goals

The Varsity View Local Area Planning Committee (LAPC) created a number of goals intended to guide land use in the Varsity View neighbourhood. They are as follows:

1. To preserve lower density residential areas in the heart of the neighbourhood.
2. To foster long term stability and enhancement of the neighbourhood through increased home ownership.
3. To encourage sensitive land redevelopment along major and upcoming traffic corridors east/west and north/south.
4. To establish a sensitive transition and approach to design and scale between different policy districts, such as traffic corridors and low density residential areas.
5. That redevelopment should enhance neighbourhood amenities, greenspaces, and public areas. Varsity View welcomes redevelopment in appropriate locations with the expectation of a net gain for residents.
6. That Varsity View recognizes the need to increase density of neighbourhoods in Saskatoon through thoughtful, considered development.
7. That development occurring along the borders of Varsity View promotes pedestrian connectivity and urban design integration with the University and adjacent neighbourhoods.

1.4.4 Growing Forward Project

The City is in the process of implementing the Growing Forward project, which will result in the development of the Growth Plan to Half a Million, outlining a city-wide servicing strategy for transit, water and sewer, land use, and roadways as Saskatoon grows towards a population of 500,000 residents. Implementation includes conducting a number of studies, including: Nodes, Corridors, and Infill Study; Infill Development Strategy; Rapid Transit Study; River Crossing Study; and Employment Area Study.

The Nodes, Corridors, and Infill Study aims to assess major transportation corridors and adjacent land uses across the city, with the goal to achieve more efficient use of land, while facilitating a more transit-oriented environment. Identifying appropriate locations for increased residential density through infill development and redevelopment of existing sites can allow for an increased level of transit service, more economical provision of infrastructure, improvement in amenities, and more viable commercial uses along and adjacent to these transportation corridors. By increasing the number of people living along corridors, such as 8th Street and College Drive, rapid transit to major destinations and higher-service “feeder” transit routes become more viable since more users live within a shorter distance of major routes. It is hoped that targeted and appropriate densification in Saskatoon will help to preserve the core of existing residential neighbourhoods and allow stable areas to remain at generally lower densities, while the neighbourhood wide density may increase over time as a result of new development along and near significant transportation corridors.

For the city, increased residential density helps to ensure neighbourhoods remain viable by ensuring sufficient school enrolment, providing a market base for area businesses and providing a suitable population to support neighbourhood facilities and activities, such as parks and recreation programs. The Varsity View LAPC recognizes that established neighbourhoods near the downtown with key corridors, such as Varsity View, will play a role in the City's goals and implementation of the Growing Forward project.

1.5.1 Policy considerations for the relationship between higher intensity zoned developments and stable single-family residential

Varsity View is surrounded on all four sides by 'corridor streets' that will face growth pressure as the City identifies intensification opportunities within its existing municipal boundaries.

The Varsity View LAPC recognizes their neighbourhood's obligation to share in the broader City of Saskatoon goals to re-intensify the neighbourhoods located in the centre of the city. The LAPC believes it is critical to focus that growth primarily around the perimeter of the neighbourhood with the intent of reinforcing a stable single-family housing environment at the centre of the neighbourhood.

With this in mind, the Varsity View LAPC believes that the transition between medium and high density districts to lower density districts should not compromise, but rather reinforce through key considerations, a stable single-family environment. Developments on these perimeter areas should, as a general principle, utilize a mix of commercial and low to medium density residential purposes. In developments on the perimeter of the neighbourhood that are purely residential, medium density would typically be appropriate. It would be desirable to offer commercial services at-grade towards the outlying streets, with residences at-grade in the rear of the property and upper floors of the development. The design of the back lane side of buildings is viewed as important and it was noted that building designs often focus only on the front façade, while ignoring what faces the rear of the property. The LAPC supports the idea of buildings having "faces" on both the main street and back lane sides. Developers are encouraged to incorporate design features to help the back side of buildings feel as though it could be the façade facing the front street.

While a majority of these transition considerations are consistent, there are some distinct considerations between each of the higher and medium density districts.

College Drive – Bordering many historic homes in the Varsity View neighbourhood, further development along College Drive requires careful consideration. Developments along College Drive need to be mindful of scale as they provide commercial opportunities at-grade, with residences above and facing the lane way. A modest height limit and a more sensitive interface at the back of the property is required to preserve the nature of treasured homes along the south laneways of College Drive that face Elliott Street.

2.2 Infill and Redevelopment Goals

The Varsity View LAPC created a number of goals intended to guide infill and redevelopment in the Varsity View neighbourhood. They are as follows:

1. That comprehensive infill and redevelopment design policies, guidelines, and regulations for Saskatoon be developed, which will be fundamental to the success of future redevelopment in Varsity View.
2. That infill and redevelopment guidelines incorporate all forms of land use districts, scales and building classifications.
3. That Varsity View is recognized as having a variety of identifiable character areas within the neighbourhood that parallel other mature Saskatoon neighbourhoods.
4. That Varsity View infill and redevelopment fits harmoniously with the built character of the surrounding neighbourhood.
5. That Varsity View infill and redevelopment reinforces the prevailing pattern on the block with respect to the relationship between buildings and between buildings and the streetscape.
6. That Varsity View infill and redevelopment be 'neighbourly' and respectful to adjacent properties.
7. That Varsity View infill and redevelopment be of a design quality that positively contributes to the neighbourhood.