

VARSAITY CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 4, 2022

New Land Use District H-GO

City Council held a public hearing on October 4 & 5 regarding a new proposed land use District called Housing - Grade Oriented District (H-GO). They were also considering changes to the rules in the R-CG (Residential – Grade Oriented Infill District). These districts allow for row housing to accommodate 8 or more units on an average 50 foot lot. Previously, developers would apply for a DC or Direct Control zoning in order to rezone land for this type of use.

As this type of zoning can have a significant impact on neighbours, it is important for this zoning to be applied thoughtfully. It allows for 60% lot coverage compared to R-1 and R-2 zoning which allows 45% lot coverage and so can overwhelm nearby houses. Currently, this type of zoning has been restricted to corner lots, however, the new rules will allow mid-block rezoning as well. The increased lot coverage reduces the amount of soft landscaping which can have a negative impact on the urban tree canopy.

A reduction in parking is proposed from 1 on-site parking stall per unit to 0.375 stalls/unit. There is a concern that this could create on-street parking problems. There are also concerns with waste management as each unit requires a black, blue, and green bin. For 8 units this comes to 24 bins that must be stored on site. 60% lot coverage also reduces the amount of amenity space for residents of the building.

Citizens were critical that City Administration did not follow their engagement policies as they only consulted with the development industry and not with the public in creating the new district.

The public hearing lasted two days and in the end the new H-GO district was approved with one amendment to increase the parking requirement to 0.5 stalls per unit.

Arsonist Identified

At the time of this writing on October 6, police had identified the person suspected of arson in Varsity on May 18 and June 4.

Quoting from the Calgary Herald: “Calgary police have charged Dominik Wesley Bird, 24, with two counts of arson with disregard for human life and one count of illegal use of a credit card. A warrant has been issued for Bird, who police are seeking help locating. Anyone with information about the arsons is asked by Calgary police to call the non-

emergency line at 403-266-1234, or anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or calgarycrimestoppers.org.”

John Laurie Boulevard

The City of Calgary is planning to install lights at the intersection of John Laurie Blvd. and Charleswood Drive. They recently held open houses to get feedback about modifications to other intersections along John Laurie Blvd. For more information visit <https://www.calgary.ca/roads/john-laurie-blvd-nw-safety-improvements.html>.

Local Area Plan

Varsity will be part of the South Shaganappi Local Area Plan. Meetings have not yet started but we will keep you posted regarding this important project.

University Innovation Quarter (formerly University Research Park)

The site known as University Research Park was transferred from the Province of Alberta to the University of Calgary in 2020. It has since been renamed as University Innovation Quarter. The 76 acre site is located north of the U of C main campus with Crowchild Trail to the east, 37 Street to the west, 32 Avenue to the south, and 40 Avenue to the north. The University of Calgary Properties Group (UCPG) will be taking on the management and redevelopment of the site. U of C has entered into a 130-year head lease agreement with the University Innovation Quarter Trust to operate, manage, and develop UIQ lands to support an innovation ecosystem.

As the developer, UCPG will serve as Trustee for the UIQ Trust. There are currently 12 buildings with 1.24 million square feet of office or lab space. The university tends to establish an innovation and research cluster and believes these lands have significant capacity for growth, change, and densification. U of C states that UCPG will be reaching out to existing tenants and key stakeholders to understand the site conditions and determine how the site can be transformed into a dynamic and thriving hub to fuel the U of C's innovation agenda. The UCPG will be holding open houses to discuss the project over the next few months.

Review of Varsity Playgrounds

The Committee will be starting a review of all playgrounds in Varsity in the next few months. We will be exploring funding for upgrades to our playgrounds in 2023 as well as establishing a new playground at the site of the new fire hall and residential and commercial building at 32 Avenue and 37 Street N.W. Please email if you have

concerns about any playground in the community, particularly with respect to safety issues.

New Committee Members Welcome

The Civic Affairs Committee meets as required to review applications for development permits and land use redesignations as well as other planning, transportation, and parks issues, however, most reviews are conducted by email. If you would be interested in joining the Civic Affairs Committee, please contact JoAnne Atkins, Director of Civic Affairs, at joanneatkins@shaw.ca or 403-247-5225.