

# 5.0 Traffic & Circulation

## 5.1 Overview



Varsity View's proximity to major destinations, the city centre, 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 Local Area Committee has identified on-street parking pressures, increasing vehicle traffic on Clarence and Cumberland Avenue, and pedestrian safety as concerns. Residents would also like improvements made for pedestrians and cyclists.

This section deals with traffic and circulation in the Varsity View community. Comments are also made regarding traffic and circulation issues in adjacent neighbourhoods where those impact Varsity View.

## 5.2 Traffic and Circulation Goals



The Varsity View LAPC created a number of goals intended to improve traffic and circulation in the Varsity View neighbourhood. They are as follows:

1. Improve safety for pedestrians, particularly in park and school zones.
2. Promote walkability and cycling within the neighbourhood through infrastructure improvements and programs.
3. Investigate options to lessen parking pressures and residents concerns in Varsity View.
4. Recognize the significance of College Drive through future public investments.
5. Ensure connectivity between the future University College Quarter Plan and Varsity View as it develops.





### 5.3.1 Traffic Classifications and Characteristics

Table 5.1 shows the average daily traffic volumes on some of the roadways in Varsity View. Overall, roadways generally had a decrease in volumes. Increases occurred on College Drive and Clarence Avenue.

**Table 5.1 Average Daily Traffic Volume in Varsity View<sup>1</sup>**

Roadway		Vehicles Per Day (Year)	Increase or Decrease of Traffic Volumes
College Drive	Clarence Street to University Drive	30767 (2006)	4.4% increase from 2000
	Munroe Avenue to Wiggins	33046 (2006)	11.7% increase from 2000
	Bottomley Avenue to Cumberland Avenue	29509 (2006)	10.8% increase from 2000
Clarence Avenue	15 <sup>th</sup> Street to Colony	14041 (2006)	33.5% increase from 2000
	11 <sup>th</sup> Street to 12 <sup>th</sup> Street	10753 (2009)	4.3% decrease from 2000
	8 <sup>th</sup> Street to 9 <sup>th</sup> Street	12305 (2006)	2.3% increase from 2001
	12 <sup>th</sup> Street to 13 <sup>th</sup> Street	10453 (2009)	4.1% decrease from 2000
	College Drive to University Drive	11491 (2006)	2.6 % increase from 2000
Cumberland Avenue	College Drive to Elliot Street	8070 (2006)	8.8% increase from 2000
	8 <sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street	7238 (2007)	14.6% decrease from 2000
	11 <sup>th</sup> Street to 12 <sup>th</sup> Street	7793 (2007)	4.5% increase from 2004
	12 <sup>th</sup> Street to 14 <sup>th</sup> Street	7811 (2007)	6% decrease from 2004
8 <sup>th</sup> Street	Ewart Avenue to Cumberland Avenue	31665 (2007)	0.6% decrease from 2000
12 <sup>th</sup> Street	Cumberland Avenue to Ewart Avenue	3319 (2007)	11% decrease from 2004
	Clarence Avenue to McKinnon	4610 (2009)	4.1% decrease from 2000
Wiggins Avenue	12 <sup>th</sup> Street to 13 <sup>th</sup> Street	4325 (2009)	14% decrease from 2000
	College Drive to Elliot Street	2867 (2007)	47.5% decrease from 2000
University Bridge		39104 (2009)	4.5% decrease from 2000
University Hospital Entrance at Wiggins		6056 (2006)	30.1% decrease since 2000

<sup>1</sup> City of Saskatoon (2009). *Traffic Characteristics Report, 2009*.

### 5.3.2 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Cumberland Avenue Intersection



14<sup>th</sup> Street East is a local roadway in the middle of Varsity View. It is also a cycling linkage through the neighbourhood from the east directly to the Broadway commercial district. The intersection of Cumberland Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street is well used by pedestrian and cyclists moving north to the University of Saskatchewan and East along 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

Currently, the intersection of Cumberland Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street is controlled by a Traffic Light. The Varsity View LAPC feels although there is traffic control, pedestrian safety is still a concern. They also feel as the College Quarter Plan develops pedestrians/cyclists crossings at this intersection will increase. The LAPC suggest a 'no right hand turn on red' sign be installed at this location along with other warranted pedestrian friendly crossing measures.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

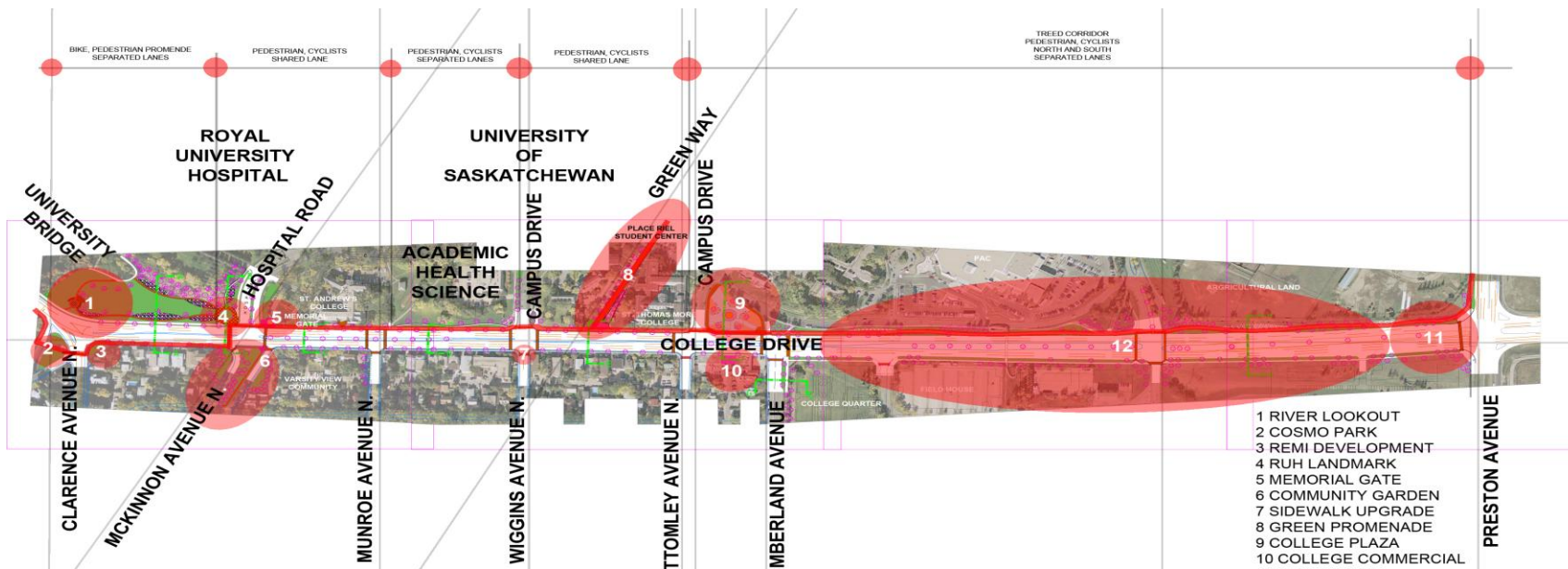
- 5.1 Cumberland Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street Crossing:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch, determine appropriate measures to enhance the pedestrian/cycling crossings at the intersection of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Cumberland Avenue with the goal to improve pedestrian/cycling safety.*

### 5.4 College Drive Master Plan

College Drive is currently classified as a major arterial roadway with daily traffic volumes of 21,000-33,000. As the City continues to grow, College Drive is becoming increasingly important as a major commuter route serving large employment areas, the University of Saskatchewan and the Downtown. In the future, development of the East Sector (70,000 population) and Willowgrove, Evergreen, and Rosewood neighbourhoods (31,000 population) will add additional traffic volumes onto College Drive.

College Drive is also a significant due to its location adjacent to the University of Saskatchewan and the Royal University Hospital. It is a hub for student life and activity, as well as providing local services for patrons visiting the Hospital. The nearby Broadway business district has typically served the area, however as land redevelopment occurs with projects such as the College Quarter and J.B. Black Estates, College Drive will become a more attractive business area.

On March 16, 2011, the draft College Drive Master Plan (below) was presented to the Varsity View LAPC. The Master Plan calls for a number of public realm improvements on College Drive such as a river look out, a community garden at University Drive, and improved pedestrian infrastructure. The Cosmo Park improvement (triangle at the corner of Spadina and University Bridge) is currently under construction.



At the present time, The College Drive Master Plan is on hold as Infrastructure Services and Saskatoon Transit wish to assess current and future uses on this street prior to any public realm investments.

The Varsity View LAPC is in support of this draft plan. They look forward to opportunities to provide input into the final design and future improvements along College Drive.

## 5.5 On-Street Parking



Members of the Varsity View Committee have identified on-street parking demand and its transient nature as a major concern within the neighbourhood. Varsity View's proximity to large regional services such as the University of Saskatchewan and the Royal University Hospital increase on-street parking pressures in the area. Many students and staff from the Hospital, choose to park their cars on-street within the Varsity View neighbourhood and walk to their nearby destination as it is free of charge. Varsity View also has a high number of rental homes that often accommodate multiple students adding to the on street parking congestion.

### **5.6.1 Varsity View Residential Parking Permit Program**

The Residential Parking Permit Program (RPP) Program was implemented in Varsity View in 2003. The RPP designates certain streets as limited residential parking zones and allows qualifying residents who live within the parking zone to buy a permit in order to park longer than posted terms. The provisions of the RPP are stated in City Council Policy C07-014 Residential Parking

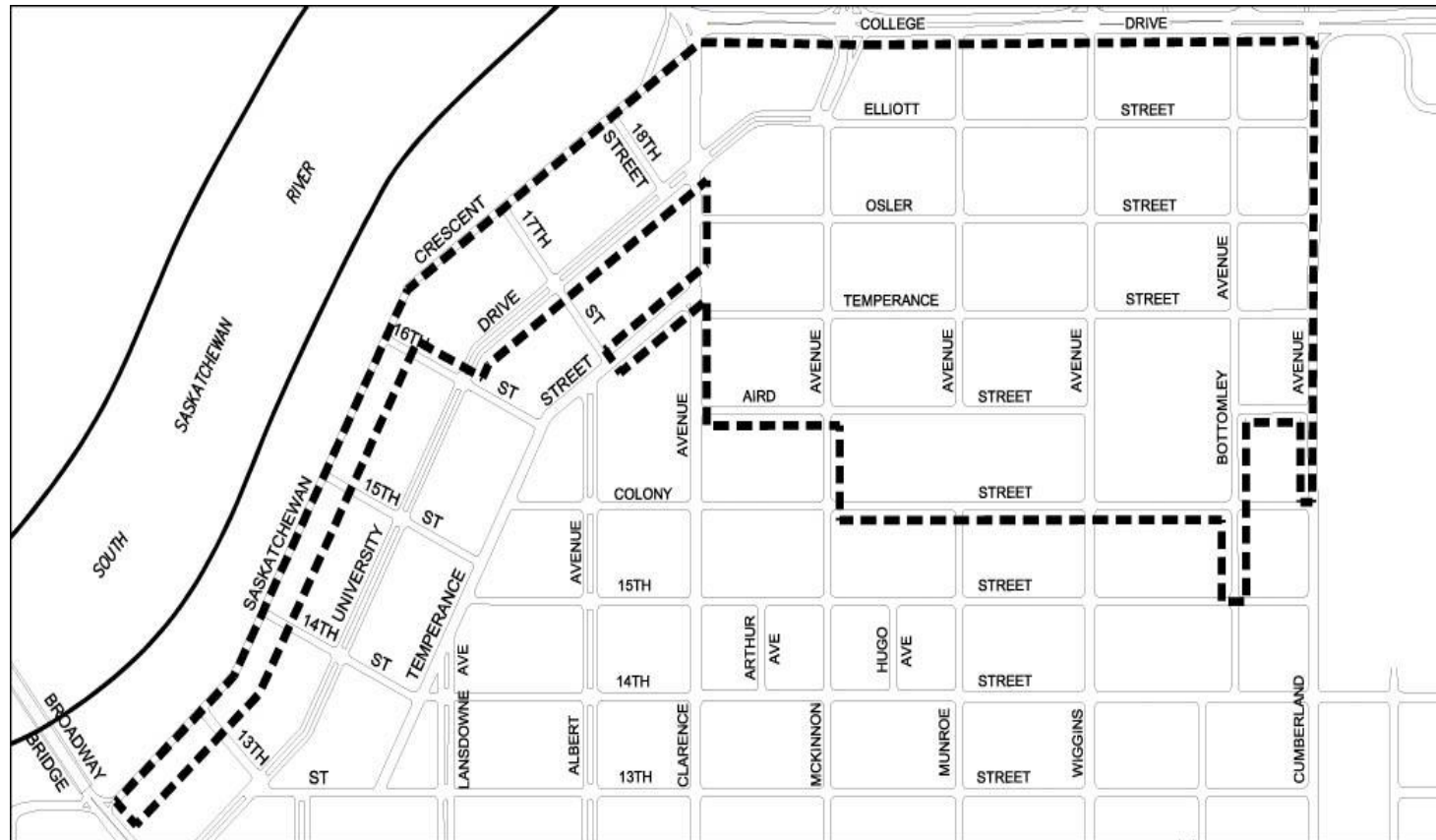
Permit Program. The zone imposes a two hour time limit on the area indicated on Map 5.2.

Although a parking program is desirable for Varsity View, there are concerns with the effectiveness of the current RPP and its overall benefits to residents. Concerns include:

1. The Zone does not currently account for the 98 parking spaces adjacent to President Murray Park;
2. Residents pay for parking while non-residents park for free;
3. Constant turn-over of vehicles due to the 2 hour time limit, increases traffic flows & parking;
4. More wear and tear on existing infrastructure due to consistent turn-over of cars;
5. Luther Towers issues staff parking permits;



6. No maximum number of permits for single family homes, thus homes with multiple students living in them, may all qualify.



**Map 5.2 Varsity View Residential Parking Permit Zone**

### **5.6.2 Parking Benefit District Program**

Varsity View and City Park residents have both expressed concerns with the effectiveness of the Residential Parking Permit Program (RPP) and its overall benefit to residents. Many neighbourhoods in the United States have also questioned the benefit of residential parking permit programs



as it does not lessen the overall on street parking congestion and rather adds to the volume of traffic flow in and out of the area<sup>2</sup>. In response, many Cities have converted their RPP to a Parking Benefit District.

A Parking Benefit District is a modification of a RPP. Rather than simply prohibiting non-residents from parking in Varsity View beyond the 2 hour time limit, non-residents pay to park by purchasing a commuter pass from the City of Saskatoon. As residents leave for the day, space becomes available for commuters to park on the street. The number of non-resident (commuter) permits issued is based on the number of spaces that are usually available during the day.

There are five potential benefits to a Parking Benefit District that do not currently exist in a traditional RPP program:

1. **Revenue Source** – The current Varsity View RRP operates on a cost recovery basis. A Parking Benefit District will generate an estimated revenue of 252,004.50 (2000% increase over the RPP). See Table 5.2 below for details.
2. **Operating Costs are less than in RPP** – There is less wear and tear on infrastructure in the area, since parking turnovers are substantially lower. Additionally, less staffing resources are required to patrol and chalk the zone for parking violations.
3. **Residents more satisfied** - Resident's acceptance of parking spill over in the area will be heightened when there is financial compensation to the City from commuters.
4. **Safer and Consistent Environment** – Commuters (non-residents) paying for a parking space will have a greater sense of ownership over the space/street since it is assigned to them. As well, less illegal and irresponsible parking will occur in the area since those parking there will know how to appropriately park in the zone.
5. **Preserve Character Homes & Pedestrian Environment** – As parking will be more available for residents in the area, this may result in less pressure to build front street garages and parking in the front yard.



<sup>2</sup> Shoup, Donald. *The High Cost of Free Parking*. 2005.

It is estimated there are approximately 1670 available parking spaces within the Varsity View RPP zone. As of 2009, 438 residential and 338 visitor permits were sold, for a total of 776.

Currently, the Varsity View RPP is operated on a cost recovery basis, with approximately 92% of revenue collected from parking violations. 73% of operating costs are staffing resources. In a Parking Benefit District, staffing resources would be significantly decreased as violations typically decrease. Table 5.2 outlines the current revenue from the RPP (2009) and projected revenue of a Parking Benefit Zone. Estimates assume an equal number of residential and commuter passes sold, residential passes sold at \$15/month and commuter passes sold at \$45/month. It also assumes a decrease in staffing costs due to decreased violations. Revenue collected would go to the City of Saskatoon parking reserve. Estimates below are based on a full conversion within the zone.

**Table 5.2 Example of Potential Revenue:**

	2009 RPP Budget	Parking Benefit District Estimates (Annual)
Revenue	\$116,363	<b>Commuter \$236,520</b> <b>Resident \$78,840</b> <b>Violations \$15,000</b>
Expenses	\$104,474	\$78,355.5 (75% of 2009)
<b>Parking Reserve</b>	<b>\$11,889</b>	<b>\$252,004.50</b>

Cities such as Boulder, CO and Santa Cruz, CA have implemented Parking Benefit Districts. Typically, RPP zones are phased out one block at a time as residents request it and commuter passes are sold until the zone is completely converted. Benefit zones are often implemented in neighbourhoods adjacent to University campuses.

For Varsity View neighbourhood, there could be an opportunity to develop a Parking Benefit District over time. However, a paid parking system in Varsity View may result in those wishing to park for free to relocate further South in the neighbourhood. Further research and community feedback will be required to look at any alternatives to the current RPP Zone in the neighbourhood.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**5.2 On Street Parking Recommendation:** **(Further Administrative/Community review is required to formulate a recommendation)**

## 5.6 President Murray Park - On- Street Parking

Varsity View Committee members have identified on street parking surrounding President Murray Park as a concern for two reasons. One, it is a safety concern that parking surrounding the park makes it difficult for motorists to see kids entering and exiting the park. Two, the park is not included in the current residential parking permit zone. As there are no residential homes on the park, the zone was not included in the zone and parking has remained unregulated. As such, commuters take advantage of the all day free parking and the park is frequently surrounded by parked cars.

The Varsity View LAPC feels the President Murray Park should either become a no parking zone or should be included in the residential parking permit area. **(Feedback from LAPC required on which is preferred)**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**5.3 Parking surrounding President Murray Park:** *That Infrastructure Services, Transportation Branch, address the parking concerns surrounding President Murray Park with the goal to enhance park user's safety.*

## 5.7 Luther Towers Parking

Residents of Varsity View are concerned with the number of parking spaces the Luther Care Communities home occupies in the neighbourhood. Luther Towers is situated on one full block within Varsity View. Due to a lack of parking available on site, Luther Towers was assigned parking adjacent to their building on Olser Street, Temperance Street, and McKinnon Avenue, when Varsity View was converted to a residential parking permit program area in 2003.

Luther Care Communities (LCC) pays the City for each space they occupy annually through the Varsity View RPP. However, LCC manages their own parking and issues their own permit passes. LCC permits are only recognized by the City on Olser and Temperance Street, and McKinnon Avenue. Owners will receive parking violations if they park anywhere else in the RPP Zone.

The Varsity View LAPC raised this as a concern as LCC issues passes not only to residents and



visitors but also to their staff. Residents feel this is an unfair practice as other employers in the area do not have a similar agreement with the City of Saskatoon. As an alternative, the LAPC would like the City to encourage Luther Towers employees to join the Transit Eco-Pass program and reduce RPP permits for staff.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 5.4 Luther Towers Eco-Pass for Staff:** *That Saskatoon Transit, present information regarding the Transit Eco-Pass program to Luther Care Communities encouraging them to utilize the program.*
- 5.5 Discuss Parking Management Practices of LCC:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch, meet with the Luther Care Communities, and the Varsity View Community Association, to discuss the concerns of local residents and their current management practices for parking permits under the Varsity View RPP.*

#### **5.8 Residential ‘Parking for Sale’**



encouraged to call the City Bylaw Enforcement group.

It is not atypical to see parking for sale or ‘parking lots’ in front or rear yards of homes in Varsity View. Members of the Varsity View LAPC are concerned with residential homes selling parking. They feel it increases traffic flow and contributes to poor aesthetics in the neighbourhood. The LAPC has noted residential parking lots are more abundant on the 300 and 400 blocks of Cumberland and Bottomley Avenue. In some cases, parking may be associated with single family homes renting to more than one person or may have a secondary suite. In this case, it is not a requirement by the City to provide off-street parking. However, a landlord may choose to do so for the benefit of their tenants.

Currently, under the City of Saskatoon Zoning Bylaw No. 8770, the sale of parking is not permitted from residential homes. The LAPC would like the City to enforce this bylaw by notifying property owners that selling parking from a residential home is not permitted. Compliance with the Bylaw is complaint driven by residents. If residents have concerns with parking for sale on residential properties they are



## **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 5.6 No 'Parking for Sale' Notification:** *That Community Services Department, Planning & Development Branch, mail out information to property owners regarding the sale of parking on a residential property and that Bylaw Enforcement officers further investigate the 'parking lots on the 300 & 400 blocks of Cumberland and Bottomley to ensure compliance with City Bylaws.*

## **5.9 Promoting Walkability**

### **Clarence Avenue**

The Varsity View LAPC indicated the sidewalk on the Westside of Clarence Avenue is in poor condition. It is currently overlayed with asphalt. Under Capital Budget #1532 – IS-Sidewalk Preservation, the City plans to replace/repair it. Locations are prioritized based on sidewalk usage. The LAPC would like the identified sidewalk added to this list for repair in the future. The LAPC also felt the current sidewalk was too narrow for pedestrians and transit riders and would like it widened when it is improved.

### **Cumberland Avenue**

The sidewalk on the East side of Cumberland Avenue is very well used as it is a direct route to the University. Currently, the sidewalk is paved from College Dr. to Colony Street and turns into a well worn 'goat' dirt path (that is unpaved) from Colony to 14<sup>th</sup> Street West. Over the next 15-25 years, Cumberland Street is slated to become a commercial destination and pedestrian/cycling oriented environment under the University College Quarter Plan. This plan recommends this sidewalk be a multi use pathway for both cyclist and pedestrians. The LAPC would like this sidewalk completed from College Drive to 14<sup>th</sup> Street and suggest this sidewalk may be better suited to a multi user pathway as it is well used by pedestrians and cyclists.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 5.7 Sidewalk Repair on Westside of Clarence:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Strategic Services Branch, add the Westside of Clarence Avenue North (400 block) to the Upgrade Capital Budget #1532 – IS Sidewalk Preservation list.*

- 5.8 Sidewalk/Multi Use Path on Eastside of Cumberland:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch, install a sidewalk on the East side of Cumberland from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to Colony Street through Capital Budget #0948 – IS – Sidewalk/Path Retrofit.*

## 5.10 Alternative Transportation Options



As a mature neighbourhood, Varsity View's centralized location within the city makes it ideal for alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling. Varsity View also has great access to the Meewasin river trail system linking residents throughout the City.

### 5.11.1 Cycling

Cycling is increasingly popular, both as a recreational activity and as an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation. The City of Saskatoon recognizes that cycling is important to many residents and is working towards making Saskatoon a bicycle-friendly city.

In 2002, a comprehensive bicycle plan was created with the following guiding principles:

- Every street is a cycling street;
- Every bicycle trip improves the quality of life for all; and
- Bicycles can be used safely and without fear of injury.

In 2010, the Saskatoon Bicycle Plan received \$2 million, through the Federal Government's new program Building Canada Fund (*Capital Budget #1137 – IS Bicycle Facilities*) to expand and enhance current bicycle facilities throughout the city. Investments included enhancements, such as the creation of new downtown bike lockers and on-street painting for bike lanes.

Members of the Varsity View LAPC feel the shared use on road cycling route on 14<sup>th</sup> Street is currently well used by cyclist but safety is a concern with parked cars adjacent to the route. This shared use on road cycling route on 14<sup>th</sup> Street which runs from Saskatchewan Crescent to Cumberland Avenue. The route then turns into a paved off road multi-use trail along the University agricultural lands. The LAPC would like the City to consider implementing no parking on the South side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street so cyclists feel safer using this linkage.

As Varsity View currently only has one dedicated cycling route, the LAPC would like additional cycling routes established in and near the neighbourhood. Particularly routes to connect their parks and larger destinations like College Drive and University. Suggested expansion could include the East side of Cumberland Avenue which currently has no sidewalk. Additionally, Clarence Avenue, as it is a direct route to Saskatoon's

most Southern neighbourhoods. They also suggest the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Multi Use Trail be linked to the future College Quarter “GreenWay” that is proposed as part of the University of Saskatchewan’s long term growth plan.

The City of Saskatoon has established a Cycling Advisory Group. The City of Saskatoon Cycling Advisory Group (CAG) was created to provide the City with advice and feedback on plans for cycling in Saskatoon by members of the public. In 2011, The City also release the Cycling Guide. The Cycling Guide is a user friendly information sheet illustrating Saskatoon’s bike route and safe cycling practices.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 5.9 14<sup>th</sup> Street Cycling Route Improvement:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch, consider improvements to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street shared use on street route to ensure cyclist safety.*
- 5.10 New Cycling Routes:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch, consider adding routes in and near Varsity View that link the neighbourhood amenities together such as parks, the river, the University, College Drive and Clarence Avenue.*
- 5.11 College Drive Master Plan:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch and Planning and Development Branch, Urban Design Section, ensure cyclists will be accommodated on College Drive within the proposed College Drive Master Plan.*

#### **5.11.2 Public Programs**

Lastly, the Varsity View LAPC is excited about the City of Saskatoon’s commitment to improving cycling in the city and feel the City could better its efforts by implementing a user friendly system much like Saskatoon Transit’s ‘Click and Go’ online guide. A ‘click and go’ system allows a rider to trip plan by generating a cycling route based on their current location and destination. The LAPC felt by making cycling even more user friendly it would encourage more people to cycle in the City. Cities such as Boulder, CO have integrated their program with Transit in “GO Boulder”, to promote all forms of alternative transportation. They have also created an iphone application you can download for real time service information.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 5.12 Integrate 'Alternative Transportation' Public Campaigns:** *That the Infrastructure Services Department, Transportation Branch, and Saskatoon Transit and Utility Services, Environmental Services Branch, consider working together to develop a comprehensive alternative transportation public campaign and user friendly promotional materials, such as a 'click and go' program.*

### **5.11 Transit**



Saskatoon Transit provides service to Varsity View through a variety of bus routes. Students make up a large part of the ridership in the area. The universal transit pass for University of Saskatchewan students, the U-PASS, is mandatory for full and part time undergraduate students at the U of S. The U-PASS offers students huge savings for transportation and has encouraged many students to utilize Saskatoon Transit Services.

The Varsity View LAPC would like transit ridership to remain high in the area and has identified two current bus stops that are in poor condition. The stop at the corner of Cumberland and Main Street is currently sitting on a private lawn with little room to stand and is often flooded with water. The second is at the corner of College Dr. and Clarence Avenue. This bus stop is situated on a narrow sidewalk that is currently in disrepair. The LAPC would like Transit to work with Infrastructure Services to address the current maintenance issues with these bus stops.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 5.13 Bus Stops Maintenance:** *That Saskatoon Transit work with the Infrastructure Services Department Transportation Branch, to address maintenance concerns at Cumberland Avenue and Main Street and College Drive and Clarence Avenue.*