

Community Services Report to  
Executive Committee  
2025 May 13

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
EC2025-0306

## **Council Community Fund Application - Varsity Community Association**

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to request approval of the Council Community Fund application from the Varsity Community Association (VCA) to support the Outdoor Spaces Improvement Project (the Project).

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

In 2019, Council introduced a new fund dedicated to community-driven projects called the Council Community Fund. Background and Previous Council Direction is included in Attachment 1. The Terms of Reference were updated in 2024, with the revised version in Attachment 2.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Executive Committee recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Council Community Fund application for the Varsity Community Association's Outdoor Spaces Improvement Project as a one-time funding request in the amount of \$300,000; and
2. Direct Administration to report back to the Executive Committee within 12 months of project completion.

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

General Managers Les Tocher and Katie Black concur with the contents of this report.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Funding Request:** The VCA is seeking \$300,000 from the Council Community Fund to enhance and increase the current amenities of the Project.
- **Community Impact:** The Project will create an updated, multi-use, year-round space that is free and accessible to residents of Varsity and surrounding communities.
- **Sponsorship:** This application is sponsored by Councillor Sharp, the Ward Councillor for the area, and aligns with the Council Community Funds Terms of Reference.
- **Public Spaces:** This project highlights the importance of public spaces. According to the 2021 Census, Varsity has a higher population density than the Calgary average. As density increases, inclusive and accessible public spaces become essential to ensure all residents have adequate opportunities for recreation and social connection.

### **DISCUSSION**

VCA oversees a large, multi-use community centre and outdoor space, collectively known as Varsity Park. It offers a variety of sports and activities designed to promote civic engagement. These amenities have thrived thanks to strong volunteer participation in the garden, outdoor rink, and courts.

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Planned enhancements, including a sheltered gathering area, expanded family pleasure rink, outdoor classroom/amphitheater, naturalized gathering spaces, and promenade, will further support the physical, social, and psychological well-being of the entire community. The recent refurbishment of the tennis courts and the addition of pickleball lines illustrate how community amenities continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of residents.

The VCA is committed to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all. Its strategic priorities for 2021 to 2027, alongside the community-developed concept plan, reflect a clear and inclusive vision for the future.

#### **EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required        |

The VCA used a variety of public engagement methods to inform the project. These included user and member surveys, special events, and presentations at the Annual General Meetings in 2022 and 2023.

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Social**

The Project supports the ongoing provision of healthy activities, community connections, and improvement of the overall quality of life in Calgary. The existing amenities have been a well-used public investment, attracting residents from Varsity and neighbouring communities. The Project will expand the opportunities for Calgarians to interact and connect.

##### **Environmental**

The VCA has prioritized environmental sustainability throughout the planning process and will maintain this focus during construction. The plan includes removing unhealthy trees and replacing them with healthy ones, preserving and protecting existing trees, and adding new plantings to enhance the overall tree canopy. Additional greenery will be introduced through planter boxes along the promenade, around naturalized play areas, and near the outdoor rink, contributing to a more sustainable and vibrant community space.

##### **Economic**

The improvement of the outdoor spaces will allow the VCA to host programs and events, attracting and supporting local community businesses through future partnership and sponsorship opportunities. This will contribute to economic stability and promote community pride. The existing amenities have historically attracted grassroots sports groups, outdoor play enthusiasts, dedicated community gardeners, spectators of tennis, pickleball and basketball, creating a vibrant central gathering space within the community.

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### **Service and Financial Implications**

#### **Other: Council Community Fund**

The Project construction estimate of \$501,500 is outlined in the Council Community Fund Application (Attachment 3), along with confirmed and anticipated funding sources and the identified budget shortfall. This shortfall will be covered by the VCA's own funds and/or grant funds. The \$300,000 from the Council Community Fund will enable the completion of the Project. The balance of the Council Community Fund is \$1.625 million.

### **RISK**

If this application is unsuccessful, the VCA will need to seek alternative funding sources to complete the Project. Delays in securing funding would affect timelines, increase costs and prolong the gap in accessible free public spaces in Varsity and surrounding communities.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Council Community Fund Terms of Reference
3. Council Community Fund Application and Supporting Documents
4. Presentation

#### Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Katie Black	Community Services	Approve
Les Tochor	Corporate Planning and Financial Services	Approve
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Inform

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