

City of Grande Prairie Subdivision and Development Appeal Board

Appeal File Number: SDAB 2025-002D
Appeal By: Studio Homes 2021 Inc. (Studio Homes)
Appeal Against: Development Authority of the City of Grande Prairie
Hearing Date: November 13, 2025
Decision Date: November 17, 2025
Board Members: Chair & Presiding Officer: Linda Murphy
Members: Lynne Coulter and Alan Ingram

Also Present at the Hearing: Jessica Sanderson (SDAB Clerk), Charlene Loxam (SDAB Clerk), Valerie Norris-Kirk (Access and Privacy Coordinator, City of Grande Prairie), Alison Downing (Development Authority), Tanis Fletcher (Development Authority), John Nagra (Studio Homes), Zeel Patel (City Employee - Public Gallery) and Terri Sudnik (SDAB Board Member - Public Gallery).

Decision

Description of the Application:

1. The appeal before the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board was brought by Studio Homes.
2. On October 14, 2025 the Development Authority issued a Notice of Refusal to Studio Homes for a Semi-Detached Dwelling with Secondary Suite, Attached Garage and Deck at Lot: 59A, Block: 5, Plan: 1524594 (8405 101 Avenue).
3. A Variance Application was included to increase the driveway width from 3.8 metres to 5.7 metres.
4. The subject parcel is owned by Crystal Landing Corporation and is designated as RS Small Lot Residential under the City of Grane Prairie's Land Use Bylaw C-1260.

Procedural History:

5. The hearing commenced on November 13, 2025 and concluded on the same date.

Decision:

6. The appeal is denied and the decision of the Development Authority is upheld. Development Permit PL250359 is denied.

Submissions:

7. The Board received oral and/or written submissions from:
 - a. Alison Downing, Development Authority
 - b. John Nagra, Studio Homes
8. John Nagra submitted a letter from Ross Yaremko, President - Communities, Crystal Landing Corp expressing support for the appeal. The board accepted the letter for information.

Presentations from the Development Authority

9. The Development Authority presented written and oral submissions to the Board. In summary, the Development Authority submitted that the SDAB should deny the appeal and uphold the Development Authority's decision to refuse Development Permit PL250359: for a variance to increase driveway width for a semi-detached dwelling from 3.8 metres to 5.7 metres.
10. The Development Authority presented:
 - a. The Land Use Bylaw sets a maximum combined driveway width of 7.8 metres for both lots (3.8 metres per lot).
 - i. Applicant proposed a 11.3 metre combined driveway width.
 - ii. This represents a 48% variance.
 - iii. No site-specific conditions or planning rationale have been identified to support relaxing the bylaw to this extent.
 - b. The secondary suite would require three stalls but width allowed in the Land Use Bylaw is too narrow for two stalls in the driveway, thus making it unsuitable for secondary suites.
 - c. A restrictive covenant was disclosed on title at the time of purchase that confirms awareness and legal obligation from the owner and developer that the lot width limitation exists.
 - i. The same restriction applies to many lots in the subdivision and property owners have purchased with the expectation that these standards would be upheld.
 - d. Increasing driveway area results in more hard surfacing and less landscaping, which alters the appearance and intended character of the street.
 - e. The limitation on driveway width in the Land Use Bylaw allows greenspace, stormwater drainage and adequate parking spaces for on street parking between houses.

- f. In discussion with the Development Authority, the Appellant presented an alternative proposal that was also denied.
 - i. The proposal reduced the driveway to 4.3 metres, leaving gaps to either side and between the properties.
 - ii. This would leave the driveway narrower than the proposed garage door, and was deemed to not be practical for the property or street scape.
 - iii. The Development Authority doesn't support splitting the gaps between driveways. The larger gaps between properties accommodates design standards, snow storage, and parking spaces on the street.

Presentations from the Appellant

11. John Nagra submitted written, oral and a video submission to the board.

12. The appellant presented:

- a. His background and experience as a developer in the community.
- b. The street is currently congested with on-street parking.
 - i. Photos and videos were submitted to show current conditions of parking during the day.
 - ii. When working on previous project, they had to give notice to neighbours to not park in front of the development to allow their tradespeople and crew to park.
- c. His opinion that people want homes with two car garages and that streets are more appealing if cars can park in driveways.
- d. The restrictive covenants and subdivision were done in 2014, when things were different in the City, and they are now struggling to sell new product. Trying to build what people want.

Reasons for Decision

- 13. The Board notes that its jurisdiction is found in section 687(3) of the *Municipal Government Act*.
- 14. The Board considered the written and oral evidence submitted by the parties.
- 15. The Board heard the appellants concerns about on-street parking but did not find sufficient site-specific conditions or evidence to grant the variance.
- 16. The Board agrees with the Development Authority, that the requested driveway width would reduce space for landscaping, snow storage areas and on-street parking, impacting the neighbourhood and neighbouring properties.

17. The Board further agrees that the proposal conflicts with the registered covenant disclosed on the title at the time of purchase and that both the developer and many of the neighbouring properties are aware of the restrictions on lot and driveway widths.
18. The Board finds no planning merit to support a variance of this size, as the lots are not unique and a narrower driveway can be reasonably accommodated within the bylaw standards.
19. The Board further does not support the altered, lower variance proposed to the Development Authority and presented at the hearing, for the same reasons as above.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the appeal is denied, and the decision of the development authority is upheld. Development Permit PL250359 is denied.

“L. Murphy” (signed)

Chair (Linda Murphy)