

CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT APPEAL BOARD

Appeal File Number: SDAB 2026-002D
Appeal By: Satbir Baidwan
Appeal Against: The City of Grande Prairie, Development Authority
Hearing Date: May 20, 2026
Decision Date: May 27, 2026
Board Members: Linda Murphy, Chair
John Croken and Elmer Spilchen
SDAB Clerk: Charlene Loxam

Participants at the Hearing:

- Kim Pinnock (Director, Legislative & Executive Services, City of Grande Prairie - assisting with Audio-Visual)
- Kimberly Brock (Development Officer)
- Alison Downing (Development Officer)
- Satbir Baidwan (Appellant)
- Sahir Gill (Assisting Appellant)
- Amanbir Singh (Oral Submission in Favour of the Appeal)
- Manroop Singh (Oral Submission in Favour of the Appeal)
- Manjit H. Kaur (Oral Submission in Favour of the Appeal)

Description of the Appeal:

1. The Appeal before the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (the “SDAB” or “Board”) was brought by Satbir Baidwan.
2. On April 22, 2026, the Development Authority refused the Development Permit PL260071 for a parking lot with variance at 9410 92C Street, in Grande Prairie, Alberta.
3. A Variance Application was included to vary the requirement of hard surfacing to permit a gravel-surfaced parking area.
4. The subject parcel is owned by Gursikh Missionary Society and is designated as RG General Residential under the City of Grande Prairie’s Land Use Bylaw C-1260.

Procedural History:

5. The Hearing commenced at 10:02 a.m. on May 20, 2026, and concluded on the same date.

Decision:

6. The Appeal is hereby granted in accordance with Section 18.3 of the City of Grande Prairie Land Use Bylaw C-1260. The Decision of the Development Authority regarding Development Permit PL260071 is varied to permit a gravel-surfaced parking area, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Time Limitation
 - i. The variance is temporary only and shall expire 36 months (3 years) from the date this Decision is rendered.
 - ii. Prior to expiry of the temporary variance, the Applicant shall either:
 - A. complete hard surfacing of the parking area in accordance with Land Use Bylaw C-1260; or
 - B. obtain further approval from the Development Authority or Board.
 - b. Licence Agreement
 - i. The use of adjacent Public Utility Lots (PULs) for access requires a separate Licence Agreement with the City of Grande Prairie.
 - c. Dust Control
 - i. The Applicant shall implement and continuously maintain dust suppression measures, sufficient to prevent unreasonable dust migration onto adjacent properties or roadways.
 - d. Drainage
 - i. The parking area shall be maintained to prevent standing water, erosion, sediment migration, or adverse drainage impacts to adjacent lands or municipal infrastructure.
 - e. Maintenance
 - i. The parking area shall be maintained in a safe and orderly condition, free from excessive rutting, potholes, loose debris or any other condition that may adversely affect pedestrian or vehicular safety.
 - f. Emergency Access
 - i. The parking area and site access shall be maintained to permit unobstructed emergency vehicle access at all times.
 - g. Compliance
 - i. Upon expiry of this variance, the site shall be brought into full compliance with the Land Use Bylaw C-1260.

- h. Non-Compliance
 - i. Failure to comply with any conditions of this approval may result in enforcement action in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act* and applicable bylaw.
- i. Development Permit PL260071
 - i. The development shall otherwise proceed substantially in accordance with the plans and materials submitted in support of Development Permit PL260071, except as varied by this Decision.

Submissions:

- 7. The Board received oral and/or written submissions from:
 - a. Kimberly Brock
 - b. Satbir Baidwan
 - c. Sahir Gill
 - d. Amanbir Singh
 - e. Manroop Singh
 - f. Manjit H. Kaur

Summary of Hearing

Presentation from the Development Authority:

- 8. The Development Authority presented written and oral submissions to the Board. In summary, the Development Authority submitted that the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) should deny the Appeal and uphold the Development Authority's decision to refuse Development Permit PL260071.
- 9. The Development Authority presented:
 - a. Subject Property Location: 9410 - 92C Street, Grande Prairie, Alberta.
 - b. Zoned: RG - General Residential.
 - c. Proposed: Parking Lot with Variance.
 - d. Proposed parking lot is intended to provide accessory parking for the adjacent Religious Assembly Use operating at 9402 - 92C Street, Grande Prairie, Alberta.
 - e. Proposal included use of adjacent Public Utility Lots (PULs) for access which would require a separate Licence Agreement with the City of Grande Prairie (City).
 - f. The RG District does not permit a parking lot as a standalone use. The proposed parking area can only be considered in association with the adjacent Religious Assembly Use as accessory parking.

- g. The use of the adjacent PULs provides the necessary connection to the existing approved Religious Assembly site thereby enabling the accessory parking function of the proposed development within the RG District.
- h. Application proposed a gravel parking surface and included a Variance Request to Section 71.1 of the City's Land Use Bylaw (LUB) C-1260, which requires all parking areas, drive aisles, and driveways to be hard surfaced with either asphalt or concrete.
- i. Variance criteria under Section 19.11 of the LUB.
 - i. No site-specific constraints were identified that would prevent compliance with the paving requirements;
 - ii. No supporting rationale or technical information was provided to demonstrate potential impacts and how they would be addressed, such as:
 - A. Dust and debris mitigation
 - B. Rutting
 - C. Long-term maintenance;
 - iii. Reviewed intent of RG - General Residential District and determined gravel parking lot presents a reduced standard of development that does not maintain the intended character of the area.
- j. Note - portions of the site and adjacent PULs were previously gravelled and utilized for parking without the required approvals or authorization.
- k. Seventeen adjacent property owners within ten properties were notified and one response was received raising concerns related to traffic, congestion, blocked driveways, dust, and the intensity of the use within the neighbourhood.
- l. Neighbour support signature sheet was circulated within the surrounding area. The document sought support for the continued use of the gravel parking lot in association with underuse and a limited number of events and included references to congestion, road conditions, and emergency access considerations. It did not reference the requirement for paving under Section 71.1 of the City's LUB or the variance being sought through this Application. Responses provided reflect support for the continued use of a gravelled surface under the described conditions rather than consideration of compliance with the applicable development standards.
- m. Development Authority determined the requested variance could not be supported and the Development Permit was refused on April 22, 2026.

- n. Recommends the Board denies the Appeal and upholds the Development Authority's Decision.

Presentation from the Appellant:

10. Satbir Baidwan and Sahir Gill presented oral and written submissions/a PowerPoint presentation to the Board on behalf of the Gursikh Missionary Society and the Sikh Community of Grande Prairie and the Peace Region.
11. The Appellant presented:
 - a. Gursikh Missionary Society was established in 1984 as a non-profit organization, which represents the Sikh Community in the Peace Region.
 - b. Contribute to the social fabric of Grande Prairie through charity, volunteer work, youth and family activities and participation in multicultural events.
 - c. Support newcomers and immigrant families by providing settlement help, resources for language support and a space for community connection.
 - d. Gathering space in the times of need, offering support, food and assistance during emergencies or difficult circumstances.
 - e. Encourage interfaith understanding by welcoming schools, community groups, and neighbours to learn about the Sikh traditions and values.
 - f. Gursikh Missionary Society serves as a welcoming place of worship for Sikh families and individuals in the region.
 - g. Their community kitchen runs 7 days per week and offers free meals to anyone regardless of background, faith or income. They serve an average of 500-600 meals per week.
 - h. Variance for a gravel parking lot instead of paving it. Reason primarily financial hardship, minimal use and community support.
 - i. Background information and how they ended up here. The PUL is in between the original Gursikh Missionary Society Building and the parking lot.
 - j. They have used the parking lot and PUL as overflow parking the last few years. They decided to put gravel in the Fall of 2024 and never intended to put gravel on the City's PUL without their permission. It was a miscommunication on their part with the people who put the gravel. They failed to follow-up with the City on this and they apologize for that.
 - k. Result - Encroachment Notice received from the City in October 2025 and were requested to submit a Request for Variance to use the gravel parking lot.
 - l. Request for Variance was rejected.

- m. This being a Community Space, it supports a growing and diverse community in Grande Prairie and the surrounding area. Accessible community spaces are important for participation, inclusion, and community connection. Parking and accessibility directly impact families, seniors, and participation in cultural and community activities.
- n. Economic Hardship - paving costs are significant for a small charity, like the Gursikh Missionary Society and it will take money away from their essential programs. All funding comes from donations with limited capacity. Due to current economic scenario, they are already seeing a decrease in donations received. Requirement such as this would be disproportionate to their size and needs.
- o. The Gursikh Missionary Society agreed to pay \$1,000 per year to use the PUL between their building and the parking lot.
- p. Limited Use and Safety - the lot is used once a week. Sundays for around 3-4 hours and 3-4 times during the year for larger events and is temporary and controlled. Surrounding roads are narrow, especially in Winter. The gravel parking lot keeps cars off the street, improving safety, helps maintain access for residents and emergency vehicles. Due to extreme low usage, the impact of having gravel vs. paved is minimal.
- q. They maintain the lot year-round with active snow removal and regular grading. The gravel surface provides effective, natural drainage.
- r. When the Request for Variance was refused by the City, they approached all the immediate neighbours to ask if their gravel parking lot is an issue for them. The neighbours seemed to be supportive of their gravel lot. So, they obtained their signatures in a Letter of Support. Results of 35+ neighbours who signed the letter in their support. The Letter of Support forms part of their submissions in the Appeal Package.
- s. During their conversation with the neighbours, some of them mentioned that they used the parking lot on special occasions, like Christmas dinners. The Gursikh Missionary Society has never stopped the neighbours from using the parking.
- t. No significant complaints regarding the gravel lot operations.
- u. They do understand, in the recent year, the community has grown quite a bit and they are trying to be proactive. They actively engage with the neighbours and if there are any issues, they try to resolve it promptly. They also constantly remind all the patrons and visitors to be mindful of neighbours.
- v. Visual perspective of supporting neighbours who have signed the Letter of Support.

- w. On behalf of Gursikh Missionary Society and the entire community, they respectfully request the Board to allow them to use their gravel parking lot.

Questions from the Board:

12. The panel asked the following questions of the Appellant:

- a. Elmer: You had mentioned of cost being a barrier. Do you have an estimate or an idea of how much that cost?
 - i. Yes, prior to submitting the Appeal Request, they did try to obtain 2 to 3 quotes and they are looking around \$40,000 - \$60,000 and if they are understanding it correctly, the City wants them to pave the PUL as well. Which they were also told that if the City ever needs to access the utilities underneath, the costs will be the Society's to bear.
- b. John: Did you sign any agreement with the City, they call it the Save Harms Agreement whereas if anything happens that it's your responsibility?
 - i. No, Satbir is unaware of any agreement.
- c. Linda: Can you tell me how many parking spaces there would be in the gravel lot?
 - i. Yes, they do have when they submitted their original request, that should be a part of the Appeal Package (Binder), if he is not mistaken, it will be 22, somewhere around 22 cars.
- d. Linda: Your Society was responsible for the gravelling?
 - i. Yes
- e. Linda: You say that you grade it regularly and maintain that area?
 - i. Yes
- f. Linda: When you canvassed the neighbourhood, did you have anyone who objected?
 - i. No one objected it. They were very supportive. When they first began, they were a bit hesitant because they know at times people are in a rush and park and they try and be very proactive on that. There have been some incidents where they are running their Service and they get a message or an email from a neighbour stating that their driveway is partially blocked. They run their Service on a projector and immediately display the vehicle number and say hey, you need to move your vehicle as soon as possible.

- g. Linda: Okay. So when you have a complaint, you deal with it immediately?
 - i. As soon as possible. He did notice that there was one resident who complained about parking congestion, during the City's circulation to adjacents, he wishes they would've reached out to him or to them/Gursikh Missionary Society, as they would have looked into that.
- h. John: Have you seen any other church or temple with parking lots adjacent to them that are not paved?
 - i. Not sure if it is a church but it's named as Grande Prairie Community Hall on 108 Avenue and 93rd Street and he's uncertain if the City owns it or if it's a church because with all due respect Satbir does not want to name any religious organization because he does represent a religious organization, but he does have pictures of that property on his phone.
- i. Linda: Is that the one by the water towers?
 - i. Answer not captured.
 - ii. Mr. Baidwan mentioned missing one point and the Chair allowed him to proceed. They purchased the parking lot that they are using as an overflow parking lot, in 1998. Because the community was smaller at that time, it was not used very often. After Covid, they got a sudden increase in the community and the parking lot was used more frequently, more often. Before that, the City used that parking lot, their property, for dumping the snow and they never objected to that because they were not using it. So, because they are using it more frequently, whenever it would rain, people would park their cars and they would come with their shoes all mud and everything and they would come and say why don't you put gravel there, we cannot park there. If there are elderly people coming out of the car, or if they have kids, it was all muddy so basically, they were unable to use it whenever it rained or snowed. That's why they put the gravel.
- j. Linda: You had purchased that property?
 - i. Yes, in 1998.
- k. Elmer: Going back to the finance piece. For your Society, have you put in place any plans for future growth? You had mentioned that there were years with a lot of growth? Do you have any plans down the road to pave that?
 - i. Yes, they do have plans to do that. He would say that if they go back one year, the community in numbers was quite big. They would see more than three times what they would see people. At that time, they were actively looking for a new location or a bigger location; however, with the recent changes in immigration and other factors, that number very quickly

declined. Regarding a bigger facility, they don't want to end up in a situation where they go and get a new location but they end up without enough community support to run that location. Collection is already at a 30-40% decline in their average collection. They really want to move out to a bigger place but they also are cautious and want to ensure they have enough community support.

Presentations in Favour of the Appeal:

13. Amanbir Singh, self-represented as an affected party, presented an oral submission:
 - a. Personal views - Religious and Cultural space where the Gursikh Missionary Society has the full support of the community. It's where they celebrate their rituals and rites from birth to death, including marriage celebrations. For special occasions such as these, the overflow parking can be very helpful.
 - b. Mr. Singh asked the Board to vote in favour of this.

14. Manroop Singh, self-represented as an affected party, presented an oral submission:
 - a. Small road. Every Sunday, children ages 4-16 attend there to learn about their culture. With that small road, it is difficult to drop off their children. It is narrow and the parking spaces are low so they can't really park then come out because it is not a big parking spot.
 - b. Request that the Board allows them to park in the overflow parking lot so they can all drop off their kids as it is less dangerous. When he drops his kids off on the road, there is more traffic on the road. It is pretty hard to drop off the kids and pick them up on the road.
 - c. Allowing them to use the parking lot will be easier for the kids and families.

Questions from the Board:

15. The panel asked the following questions of Manroop Singh:
 - a. John: How many parking stalls do you have on the location of your temple?
 - i. Maybe 17-20
 - b. Linda: On any given day when you're having an event, is the main parking lot full and the overflow always used or does that happen rarely?
 - i. Satbir answered that is what they try to do. The main parking lot is used and he doesn't think on the weekdays they ever use the overflow parking lot because it opens at 6:00 a.m. and they close at 8:00 a.m. People come and go and at times there is no one except their High Priest. The

only time they use the overflow parking is the Sunday Service when people come in. They still come and go but there are a good number of people who come in that want to stay for the Final Service/Final Prayer, that's when they get more people and that's when that parking lot is used. By 2:30 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. ish, the cars are gone. They come back to their regular parking.

- c. Linda: Okay. Do you ever find that you're using the main parking lot, the overflow, and street parking?
 - i. Mr. Baidwan said yes, we do use. On Sundays that happens and they do have 3-4 major events that happens during the year. That's when both parking lots are full and then cars go on the street. The biggest event for them is Diwali. The Festival of Lights. The last two years and because of the nature of how people want to celebrate, everybody wants to come when it's dark. So, they come in and light the candles outside, in a designated area, and then they come in and take their food. It's a 3-hour window and last year they had 1600+ people coming in a 3-hour window. So, they reached out to the City, and another celebration of theirs is similar. They have others who join them from outside of Grande Prairie and come from all over. This is one of the biggest places for Sikh people. There is one in Fort St. John, but it's really small. So, people like to come here. Last April for Baisakhi, they reached out to the City and it worked really well. They were allotted at Keyera Place, 80 stalls. They hired private security and they were directing people to their designated parking stalls.

Presentations in Favour of the Appeal - continued:

- 16. Manjit H. Kaur, self-represented as an affected party, presented an oral submission:
 - a. One of many people who go to Gurdwara site every Sunday along with her mother and she is deeply in support of this Appeal. Not only because it affects her personally on that one day but she thinks it also affects the whole community on that one day or whenever there are special events like their management said.
 - b. The reason mainly is because there are many people who attend on Sundays and on special events and they end up parking on the streets which is inconvenient for people who live in that neighbourhood.

Presentations in Opposition of the Appeal:

- 17. There was no one present who wanted to speak in opposition of the Appeal.

Closing Statements:

18. Development Authority

- a. Noted that LUBs change over time. Many times they've had developments that were approved under a bylaw that perhaps didn't require paving to a property and today those properties would be considered legal non-conforming. Changes wouldn't have to be made to the property, for example - bringing the site into compliance with the parking or paving requirements until such time as they make changes to that property.
- b. Concerns specifically to the requested gravelled parking surface in this situation rather than the proposed accessory parking lot itself.
- c. They would generally support the accessory parking associated with a Religious Assembly where it's developed in compliance with the LUB.

19. Appellant

- a. Requests with all due respect, to please consider all the facts that they brought in.
- b. They are a small, non-profit organization that has been operating at the same location since 1984.
- c. They are aware of similar properties in the town that are allowed to do so.
- d. The only thing they did was put on gravel because they want to use it year-round.
- e. Please consider and allow them as it's really important for the community. Elderly people and kids that are coming which is also a safety issue for the community members.

Reasons for Decision

20. The Board notes that its jurisdiction is found in Section 687(3) of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c. M-26 (the "*Municipal Government Act*" or "*MGA*").
21. In determining this Appeal, the Board considered the *MGA*, the City of Grande Prairie Land Use Bylaw C-1260, the evidence presented at the Hearing, written and oral submissions, and the circumstances and merits of the Application.
22. The Board acknowledges that the City of Grande Prairie Land Use Bylaw C-1260, Section 71.1 requires all parking spaces, loading spaces, manoeuvring aisles and driveways to be hard surfaced.

23. The Board is satisfied that the variance authority provided under Section 19 of Land Use Bylaw C-1260 authorizes the granting of variances to development standards where the Board is satisfied that the variance:
 - a. will not unduly interfere with the amenities of the neighbourhood;
 - b. will not materially interfere with or affect the use, enjoyment, or value of neighbouring properties;
 - c. will not create unsafe conditions; and
 - d. represents the minimum deviation necessary in the circumstances.
24. The Board also notes that Section 18.3 of Land Use Bylaw C-1260 authorizes temporary development approvals.
25. The Board places significant weight on the temporary nature of the proposed variance and the evidence that the gravel parking area will be regularly maintained during the approval period.
26. The evidence before the Board demonstrated that:
 - a. the gravel parking area currently exists and functions as parking associated with the approved use;
 - b. the parking area can be maintained in a safe and functional condition during the temporary approval period;
 - c. potential impacts relating to dust, drainage, and site maintenance can be mitigated through conditions;
 - d. the temporary gravel surface will not materially alter the existing character of the surrounding area during the limited approval period; and
 - e. the variance represents the minimum deviation necessary in the circumstances.
27. The Board is satisfied that a temporary variance appropriately addresses the circumstances of this Appeal while maintaining the overall intent and purpose of the Land Use Bylaw.
28. The Board is satisfied that granting the temporary variance is consistent with the orderly development of land within the City.
29. Accordingly, the Appeal is allowed in accordance with Section 18.3 of the City of Grande Prairie Land Use Bylaw C-1260. The Board grants a temporary variance from Section 71.1 of Land Use Bylaw C-1260 to permit a temporary gravel surfaced parking lot on the subject property, subject to the conditions set out herein.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the Appeal is allowed in accordance with Section 18.3 of the City of Grande Prairie Land Use Bylaw C-1260. The Decision of the Development Authority regarding Development Permit PL260071 is varied to permit a gravel-surfaced parking area on a temporary basis for a limited time and is subject to the conditions set out in this Decision.

“L. Murphy” (signed)
Linda Murphy, Chair
Subdivision and Development Appeal Board

May 26, 2026
Date