

October 24, 2024

RE: Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Dear Residents,

Section 8.8 of the City of Summerside Code of Conduct states, “**Members of Council have a duty to be as open as possible about their decisions and actions. This means communicating appropriate information openly to the public about decision-making processes and issues being considered.**”

Following the vote on Monday night (October 21, 2024), I wish to share my decision-making process. However, before doing that, I want to be clear that my position from the outset placed me behind the eight ball. Coming fresh of a byelection, I had two weeks to dig deep into the issues that Council have been working through for nearly 18 months. While I benefited from attending every Council Meeting, Committee of the Whole Meeting, public Planning Board Meeting, and Special Council Meeting (in person or virtual) for the last 2.5 years, I attended those meetings as a member of the public.

SUMMARY (Added Oct 27, 2024)

I was voting NO on the morning of this vote. Then, when Evergreen Village reached out, and then I looked the plan in more detail, how it would help people who are struggling to find a home, or displaced from their home, and the death of someone who, if they had supportive housing, there was good chance they would still be alive . . .

This was a terribly hard vote. I could see both sides of the issues.

If a yes vote could provide housing, save a life, . . . and as I examined the details more, incentives in the plan for people to build:

- 15 Accessory Dwelling Units over 3 years
- 24 missing middle housing units over 3 years
- 100 transitional/affordable housing units over 3 years
- 20 lots re-developed into lots capable of support missing middle over three years
- 24 units designed for missing middle over three years

It really sounds like it will help. It certainly sounds like a starting point.

THE DECISION TO VOTE

I first had to determine if I was going to vote.

On one hand, I could have abstained. I hadn't had the opportunity to be directly involved in the process—asking questions of the WE6 team, working through the issues with Council and staff, or helping shape the proposal. Abstaining could have been a logical step; however, under the current rules, abstaining would have been counted as an automatic “Yes” vote. In my opinion, this rule does not reflect the true intent of abstaining, which should be a neutral, non-vote.

On the other hand, as a Council member, I also needed to ensure that I didn't have a conflict of interest. While I had no financial conflict, I did come off an election where I had supporters on both sides of this issue. I also made public statements regarding the EWHC in both written and verbal forms. I had to reflect carefully to ensure I wasn't biased. The *Municipal Government Act Handbook* (p. 47) defines bias as having a closed mind or holding preconceived notions that would prevent a member from fairly considering all factors. If a bias is present, it constitutes a conflict of interest.

To examine whether I was biased, I reviewed my public statements. My first letter to the city, dated May 12, 2024, expressed support for the EWHC. My second letter, dated June 21, 2024, called for the city to maintain consistency in “easing” between low- and high-density land uses, urging against placing a 10-storey building next to R1 properties. I also recommended adding sidewalks and active transportation pathways on Colin Ave and Walker Ave. Later, at the public meeting on September 26, I requested that the city reduce the building's height from 10 storeys as-of-right to 6 storeys and require Council approval for anything higher.

I explain these examples to illustrate my openness to re-evaluating my stance as new information emerged. My shift from supporting EWHC in May to opposing the high-density element in June shows that I approached the issue with an open mind, carefully considering all relevant factors. This demonstrates that I was fair in my assessment and did not hold any bias.

MY FOUR INITIAL CONCERNS

I had four primary concerns regarding the originally proposed Official Plan and Bylaw changes. I expressed these concerns directly to the city through letters, during my door-to-door meetings with residents, and at the public meeting on September 26. Below are my concerns and how they were addressed throughout this process:

MY CONCERN #1. THE 2021 DECISION

I struggled a great deal to reconcile the 2021 decision by Council, up to the day of the vote.

On Feb 3, 2021, the Planning Board voted unanimously against R1 to R2 on the land on the same dead-end Colin Ave. street. In the *Suitability of the site for the proposed development* section, staff stated: “The site is suitable for low density residential land use”

Further, in section, *Compatibility of the proposed development with surrounding land uses, including both existing and project uses*, staff comment, “The subject property abuts residential land uses, with R1 zoning along the east, west and north boundaries and R2 zoning along the south boundary. The rezoning from R1 to R2 would be compatible with the surrounding zoning as both R1 and R2 zoning are low density land uses.”

As the campaign progressed, I became more concerned about this issue when I read this statement from the *Municipal Government Act Handbook*: “Consistency with other decisions made in similar situations—Citizens expect that people in similar situations will be treated similarly” (p. 26).

It seemed so clear to me that the 2021 decision was in direct contrast to the CDA development and the high-density housing that it was bringing along with its creation—in short, how can this land be now deemed appropriate for a CDA if, in 2021, it was deemed only appropriate for low density? It really seemed like the rules were changing.

As I said, I struggled greatly to reconcile the 2021 decision.

However, after some careful deliberation, I understood the vote on the table on Oct 21 was not on whether the EWHC was going through Colin Ave., as Council had already made the decision the EWHC would transverse Colin Ave in 2008 when Council approved the East-West Housing Corridor (called the “East-West Connector Street Plan”). So, regardless of how my personal feelings about this lack of consistency with the 2021 decision reflect on the actions of today, the decision for the EWHC to pass through Colin was made long before I arrived, and as much as I don’t want to admit it, I was wrong to have spent so much time focused on this “consistency factor” when I went door to door when the actual actions of the city were consistent with that 2008 decision. In short, this vote was not about the EWHC Bylaw, or the EWHC Plan, as Council had already approved both. So, instead, during my campaign, I spent a lot of energy believing that the “rules had changed” without realizing the city was using the rulebook Council had approved in 2008. I’m deeply regretful for all the confusion this created.

MY CONCERN #2. HIGH DENSITY LOCATED IMMEDIATELY ABUTTING R1 PROPERTIES

I had an issue with high-density 10-storey developments abutting R1 properties. So much so that I sent a letter immediately to the city (June 21, 2024) when I learned about the details of the EWHC plan, stating the following:

“While I recognize the need for increased housing and support the East-West Housing Corridor, I believe we also need to recognize the city planners have been consistent with the practice of ‘easing’ between low to high-density land use, and the same standards should be followed in this case.

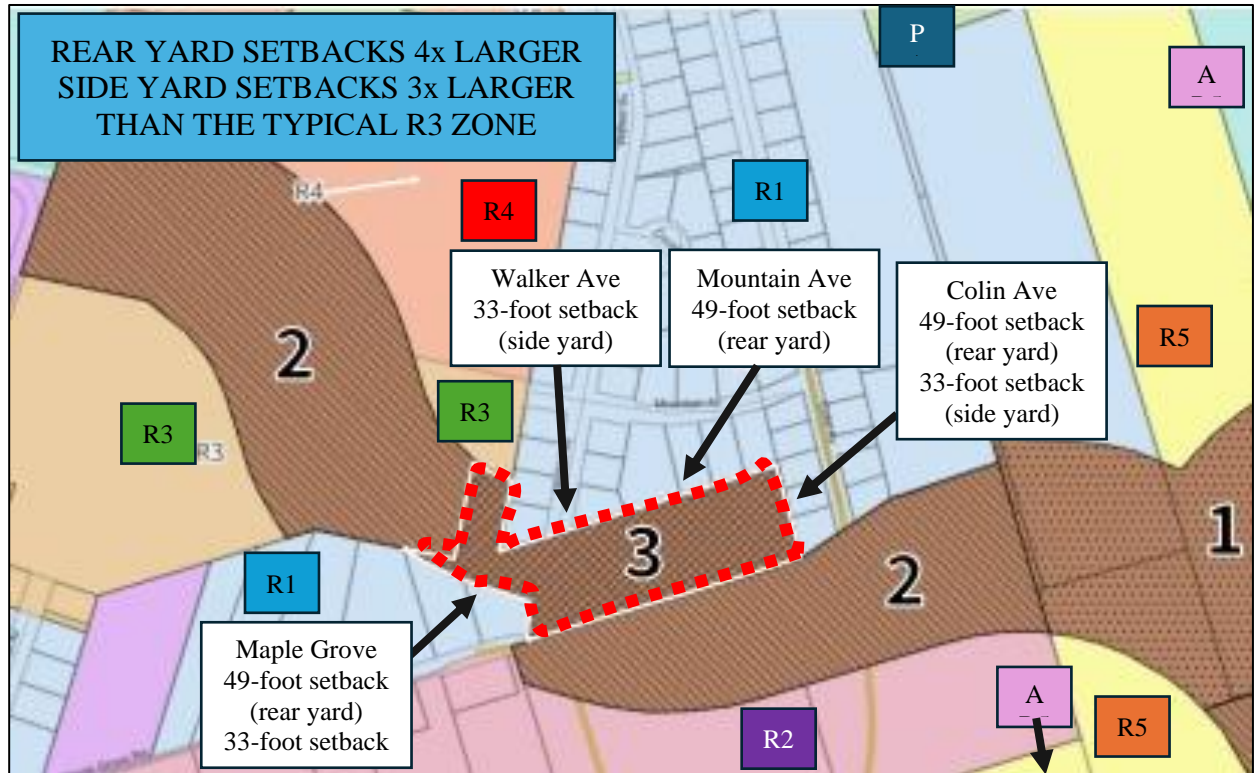
I am concerned about property owners in Blue Bell, whose property abuts this new EastWest Housing Corridor. The East-West Housing Corridor passes through Colin Ave and abuts properties on Walker, Mountain, and Colin. My concern is that people living in this area will now be abutting a zoning that will allow for a maximum of a 10-storey building in their backyard. I ask the city to gradually make the transition from R1 to high-density housing in this area.

Lastly, I would also recommend sidewalks and/or active transportation pathways on Colin Ave and Walker Ave to ensure the safety of the residents. This connector through Colin Ave will significantly increase traffic, and Ward 5 is already the ward with the highest number of reported pedestrian/cyclist collisions with motor vehicles in the city.”

The city listened to my concerns, along with those of many others, and removed the 10-storey apartment building planned to abut R1 properties. In its place, a new zoning classification, Zone 3, has been created on the EWHC.

This new zone represents the "easing" from low to high density that I advocated for in my letter. Specifically, only R3 uses will be permitted in this zone, with a focus on medium-density housing such as single-family homes, semi-detached and duplex dwellings, townhouses, row houses, and other compatible uses (as outlined in Section 171 of the *City of Summerside Zoning Bylaw SS-15*). Importantly, **the maximum building height in Zone 3 will be 34.4 feet—the same as the maximum height allowed for R1 single-family dwellings. This means that there will be no increase in building maximum height from R1 to Zone 3.**

In addition to addressing the height concerns, the city has significantly increased the setback based on community feedback. For R1 properties that border Zone 3, **side-yard setbacks will increase fourfold—from 8.2 feet to 33 feet—and backyard setbacks will triple—from 16.2 feet to 49 feet.** However, one property owner I spoke with will lose a small portion of their backyard, though we hope a fence could be added to mitigate this issue.



The new Zone 3, as shown above, includes the end of Walker Avenue, the north side of Mountain Street, the west side of Colin Street, and the south side of Maple Grove. Properties whose land abuts Zone 3 in the rear (Mountain, Colin, Walker, and Maple Grove) will now have a 4 times larger setback and properties whose land abuts Zone 3 in the side (Colin and Maple Grove) will now have a 3 times larger setback. Of note, this map shows a variety of already existing land uses in the area (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, Agriculture, and Parkland) prior to this vote.

I think there would have been merit in having a site visit to visually assess the setback distances, the ROW of the EWHC, and the areas of concern in between. This would have provided key information to property owners and may have alleviated some concerns. However, if the community is interested to see in-person the “space between” the setback and the ROW of the EWHC that can be arranged. Finally, again, all new buildings in Zone 3 will confirm to R3 uses and **will not exceed** the current maximum height permitted for all adjacent R1 properties.

MY CONCERN #3. LACK OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION PRIOR TO RELEASING PLAN

I believe public consultation is a vital component of all major decisions at the municipal level. It allows us to plan for the issues that will affect residents and benefit from a "many-heads-are-better-than-a-few" approach. My concerns arose when there was a lack of consultation with property owners before the city released the plan, especially for those property owners closest to the development—those who would feel the daily impact of decisions on traffic, pedestrian safety, and the fears around changes in their quality of life. This lack of control over changes

surrounding them is deeply unsettling for residents -- as one resident said, “a betrayal of the contract I made when I bought the land”.

Additionally, there were concerns about some property owners not being informed that the East-West Housing Corridor (EWHC) would access Colin Avenue. While the "East-West Connector Street Plan" was approved by Council on June 16, 2008, it had remained idle, leaving some newer residents unaware of the future plans when they purchased their homes. Converting a dead-end street into a corridor connection will certainly increase traffic and raise pedestrian safety concerns.

While initial public consultation prior to the plan being proposed was lacking, the city eventually engaged the community through open houses and public meetings in a way that hasn't been seen in recent memory. I recall Mayor Kutcher acknowledging at the public meeting on September 26 that public engagement should have happened sooner—a sentiment that drew cheers from the audience. Though it began without adequate consultation, I believe the process ultimately became more transparent and open.

One example was during the public meeting when a resident suggested it would seem to make more sense to connect the EWHC through Walker Ave. and not Colin Ave., as it would be a more direct route. At that point, City Staff explained that in the 2008 Study, the consultants included the less direct route with the intent to deter traffic from using Colin Ave. as a direct route – so, to have less “through traffic” on Colin.

The challenge with public consultation will always remain: does the public believe their input was truly considered? That answer is more for each person to consider. Without initial public consultation, I can understand residents not feeling comfortable with any amount of compromise. In my view, the city did make several compromises that reflect the voices of residents were not only heard but that resulted into changes:

1. Replacing 4-unit apartments with 4-unit townhouses;
2. Introducing a new Zone 3; and
3. Replacing the 10-storey apartments as-of-right to 6 storeys, with Council discretion for up to 10 storeys.

During my campaign, I also actively collected emails from those who wished to stay informed and consulted on local issues. Once elected, I sent a consultation email to 179 individuals, and 12 (6.7%) responded. An additional eight residents, not on the email list, also contributed, bringing the total responses to 20. Of these, 19 addressed the question, "Are you in favour of the amendments?" with 4 (21%) in favor, 11 (58%) against, and 4 (21%) neutral. The survey results and individual comments were shared with the Council on October 20. While it is impossible to use 19 responses as a representative sample of 16,000 residents, each comment provides valuable insight into the thoughts and wishes of residents. To view this survey, please visit www.kenward5.ca/Survey01.

Moving forward, I will continue advocating for traffic monitoring on Colin Avenue, potential traffic-calming measures to prevent speeding or dissuade “drive-through” traffic, and the

installation of an active transportation pathway/sidewalk if the traffic warrants. These traffic safety measures would also occupy a considerable amount of the front yards, so I see consulting with the residents as a starting point when the EWHC is open. Additionally, a sidewalk or active transportation pathway from Walker to Lynn remains my priority, ensuring pedestrian safety and better connectivity for the growing amount of people who walk, bicycle, ride a mobility scooter, use a walker, etc.

MY CONCERN #4. 10 STOREY APARTMENTS ON EWHC

Like most residents, I noticed our city's changing skyline, and I hear the concerns of losing the small-town feel that has been the core of Summerside for such a long period of time.

However, my major concern is the affordability of these units, and I find value in exploring the options for setting standards for the number of affordable units that would need to be considered in building apartments. For example, if there were 40 units, could a certain percentage be affordable? I hope to explore this option as my term proceeds.

Lastly, there was a lunchtime meeting shortly after I was elected but not sworn in, and the discussion focused on the 10-storey apartments. I supported the decision to change the proposed zoning bylaw from 10 storeys as a right to 6 storeys as a right, and up to 10 storeys would need Council's approval. For everyone concerned about Summerside being overtaken by 10-storey apartment buildings (as I was), I'm less worried after a literature review and hearing comments from Councillors who had more knowledge than myself on this issue as they have talked to local developers. There is a reason that while the downtown has had the capacity for a 10-storey building but one has never been built. Apparently, apartment construction returns are not linear. By this, I mean that the cost and break-even point do not increase in a linear fashion on every floor. In fact, there is a nonlinear cost curve where the costs where developers get their biggest profit margins from building, say, a four-storey building than even a six-storey building.

MY DECISION

I was leaning to vote NO up to the day of the vote.

Then a few things happened.

I was contacted by the people at Evergreen Village, who reminded me of the dire situation of the 57 households (over 100 people) who live in their mobile home park and the deadline of Oct 31 to inform the owner of their intention (buy the land for \$40,000) or move out in one year. I see Council needing to help/respond/do something on this issue as a top priority. As HAF provides access to funding and processes to fast-track housing for vulnerable populations, you can't get much more vulnerable than 100+ residents who have no idea where, or how, they will live with the deadline coming up next week.

I also needed to reflect on the oath I would be swearing to honour—to “diligently, faithfully, and impartially” act in the best interests of the “municipality as a whole” (the Guiding Principle in the City of Summerside Code of Conduct: “Members of Council have a duty to make decisions based on the best interests of the municipality as a whole”, sec 8.3).

I was reminded that while some residents had concerns about these amendments and had thoughtful and articular reasons, the vast majority of the 445 people whom I talked with had no issues with them. If the issue was brought up, the concern was the 10-storey apartment buildings, which the city had already reduced to 6 storeys. The biggest issue was the cost of living and affordable housing, which would significantly limit the city’s ability to fast-track housing support for those in need if I voted no on this resolution.

In fact, the images of going door to door and witnessing first-hand so many people living with various forms of hardship that I could not shake out of my head. All of these hardships had one central theme: unsuitable or unaffordable housing.

- one person who I tried so desperately to help ended up dying,
- another person was legally blind and was lost walking around the streets (actually crossed the street) as I held their hand and walked them back to their house,
- a young couple had become homeless and then their child was placed in foster care (they lost their home and their child in a blink of an eye)
- so many people (many seniors) paying between 40-50% of their income on rent when they don’t have the capacity to earn any more income,

Further, when that person died, I cried in the hospital's lobby, and I vowed to make the hard decisions and to do whatever I could to bring more affordable, suitable, and supportive housing to the people who desperately need it in this city. These are the people you would never see come to a public meeting or send an email or reach out to a City Councillor; these are the people you’d need to visit, sit with them in their kitchen, and hear their stories. I spent hours doing this.

[the next paragraph was added on Oct 27, 2024]

Lastly, from a financial management perspective, I’m not in favour of increasing taxes or reducing services, but we need to find a way to generate more revenue to reduce our debt servicing costs. Currently, the city has a debt of \$96.2 million (as mentioned in the October 21, 2024, Council Meeting). During the Council meeting, discussions arose regarding our increasing debt. As a Council, we may need to consider one of two options: (1) increase revenue or (2) reduce the services the city offers. The primary way a city increases revenue is through tax increases. However, I **do not support** increasing taxes or cutting services. Voting in favour of the proposal will expand the tax base, increasing tax revenue without raising taxes for all residents. In the 2024-25 budget, the city is projecting \$11.3 million from property taxation, while our debt servicing costs amount to \$5.1 million per year.

Yes, I knew my decision would disappoint some people, and to say that didn’t matter to me would be a lie. I’ve spent hours also getting to know these individuals—wonderful people who have expressed their concerns about losing trust in the system and whom I would consider long-

term friends. Perhaps those personal relationships may now be strained or even lost forever. I can't say for certain.

What I do know is I have an internal fight inside me – a fight for those who need support as they struggle for the basics in life that many of us take for granted. When I look into the eyes of someone who looks like they are just literally hanging on, barely keeping their head above water, I can't sit idly by. If my "yes" vote could help the city make necessary strides toward real change for those who face real hardship, I need to vote yes.

Two days after my vote, I noticed a homeless person living in a tent in a location I've not seen before.

I received a call from a single mother who has been unable to work since March because of health issues and is worried about affording rent.

So, below, I'm including how a YES vote will help the community. I'm not sure if these initiatives were spelled out in detail during this process, but I think these aspects, which can begin now deserve some mention as well:

Facilitate Accessory Dwelling Units

This incentive would enable multi-generational families to live together on the same lot while maintaining their independence. Imagine your parents as they age, facing mobility challenges or vision impairments, or even a child with unique needs who could thrive independently with close support. Having an ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) on the same property allows family members the independence they desire, with the reassurance that help is just a doorstep away.

For myself, I think of the elderly person who was legally blind, whom I once found walking alone in Summerside. That person crossed the street alone and I held their hand and walked them back to their residence. What if they could have had an ADU on a family member's property? They'd still have their independence, but with the safety of being close to a loved one. I also picture A, the individual I tried to assist during my election campaign. Unfortunately, A's situation deteriorated quickly, and they passed away. If there had been an ADU in place, offering check-in support and assistance with doctor visits, I believe A could have experienced a better quality of life

In short, I think with a target of 15 units over three years (a modest 5 units a year) is well worth voting yes for.

Zoning to develop housing for vulnerable populations, including amending Zoning Bylaw to permit transitional/affordable housing

I'm not sure the public fully understands the complexities involved when the city wishes to build—or support the building of—affordable housing or offer life-changing transitional housing on city land. Affordable or transitional housing does not exist in the current permitted land uses.

Every single application would need to go through a Restricted Use application process. This process can be lengthy, is often subject to delays or denial, and tends to pit residents against one another – and the people who lose out are those without a home, those who need it most.

We also face a significant gap in transitional housing, particularly for men. For example, if a man completes detox in Mount Herbert and spends three months in short-term post-treatment housing, there are no transitional housing options available to him once those three months are up. Without stable transitional housing, many men find themselves back on the streets, and the cycle of mental health issues and/or addiction repeats itself.

Finally, the housing crisis affecting the 57 homes (100+ people) of Evergreen Village has been at the forefront of my concerns. These residents reached out to me, deeply worried about the prospect of their families becoming homeless. This situation influenced my recent vote, as being able to fast-track housing for vulnerable populations must be a top priority for our community. While some continue to say “housing is not a municipal responsibility” or question if we are in an affordable housing crisis, I disagree. If everyone went door to door, you’d see the crisis in the faces of those who are struggling. I need my role on Council to act in a way consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As early as 2008, Canadian Judges ruled that Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms, which protects the right to life, liberty and security of the person, includes a person’s right to housing. So, as a member of Council, I will always fight for a person’s rights and freedoms, and I will strive to always be the voice of those who feel they have no voice, just as we support the freedom of thought, belief, and expression, we must also support a person’s right for housing – that everyone has the right to a secure roof over their head. While we can agree all day that housing is not a municipal responsibility, we need to stop blaming a different level of government, and we need to act to support those who are homeless or on the brink of homelessness.

Incentivize Re-Development of Existing Properties

As we walk through our city, many of us have noticed properties that have been abandoned or left underutilized, properties that could be revitalized to serve a greater community purpose. These spaces hold immense potential for addressing housing needs and supporting urban development. To encourage the transformation of these neglected or underutilized areas, we will be offering an incentive program, which will be capped at developments of up to 20 units. This initiative is specifically aimed at fostering the creation of missing middle housing or other multi-unit developments, which are essential to providing affordable, accessible living options for diverse groups of residents. By leveraging these unused properties, we can not only enhance the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods but also tackle housing shortages, making our city more inclusive and resilient for all.

Establish growth node on the EWHC

The City is proposing the creation of a housing density growth node along the East-West Housing Corridor (EWHC), allowing for the development of up to six-storey apartment buildings on either side of the street. This plan reflects a structured and predictable pattern,

responding to community concerns over the inconsistent approval of apartment buildings across the city.

Unlike the piecemeal "apartment dropping" approach some residents have observed, this initiative represents a carefully coordinated strategy grounded in best practices for active transportation and street planning—areas I've studied extensively through my volunteer work. The proposed growth node will focus on high-density housing, allowing residents immediate access to active transportation options. This includes an AT pathway on the east side of the street and a sidewalk on the west, ensuring mobility for everyone, especially those without private vehicles.

Higher-density residential areas, such as apartment buildings, foster conditions for more efficient public transportation systems. As people live closer together, transit routes become easier to plan, more convenient, and cost-effective. Additionally, land use policies that support apartment development can create walkable neighborhoods, reducing car dependency and promoting healthier lifestyles.

A key aspect of this plan is that it does not disrupt existing land use beyond the new Comprehensive Development Area (CDA). Zoning adjacent to the CDA will remain unchanged, allowing property owners to develop or maintain their land as they choose. Those who opt to develop will have access to streets, water, and sewer infrastructure that were previously unavailable, fostering sustainable and accessible growth. While there is a latecomer charge involved, Council has already addressed and approved this matter, so it would not be appropriate to base my vote on a bylaw that has already been resolved.

We can look at the construction of *The Regent* downtown as an example of the potential for apartments along the EWHC. The Regent is a five-storey development with four floors of residential units (10 per floor) and a commercial ground floor. Incorporating commercial space is key to fostering a connected community. Imagine a space offering amenities within walking distance for apartment residents and the surrounding community—perhaps a corner store, a much-needed clothing store, or a sit-down café. This creates a meeting place where people from all socio-economic backgrounds can come together and share experiences. While the zoning of land adjacent to the CDA will not change, I foresee future developments—single-family homes, townhouses, and duplexes—that will cater to community needs, with all roads leading to the EWHC.

Concerns have been raised about the increased demands on emergency services with population growth, but I view this issue differently. First, we cannot limit population growth. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees a person's right to move to and reside in any province. Second, the EWHC will improve emergency service response times. Currently, some neighbourhoods only have one exit, putting them at risk of natural disasters, fires, or other emergencies. By providing a second access point to areas like Blue Bell, Woodridge Place, Gillespie, and Maple Grove, this plan significantly improves fire and ambulance response times, where seconds can mean the difference between life and death.

The development of the EWHC offers a rare opportunity to build a new neighborhood in the 21st century, and the City is using all the lessons learned to create a foundation for a truly connected community.

Develop Design Requirements for Missing Middle Housing

Missing middle housing is crucial for fostering diverse and vibrant communities. It refers to a range of housing types that fall between single-family homes and large apartment buildings, such as duplexes, triplexes, and small multi-unit buildings. These housing options help bridge the gap in our housing market, offering affordable choices for families, individuals, and seniors alike. By increasing the variety of available housing types, we can accommodate a broader spectrum of income levels and lifestyles, promoting inclusivity and reducing housing shortages.

To effectively address this need, we must establish comprehensive design requirements for missing middle housing. Building without design standards cannot be supported. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) will develop the necessary standards to streamline this process. Subsequently, involving the City of Summerside's Council in modifying these design standards ensures that our housing solutions reflect the community's preferences and priorities.

We aim to develop 24 missing middle housing units over the next three years, demonstrating our commitment to addressing housing shortages while maintaining a moderate pace of growth at eight units per year.

Incentive multi-unit modular dwellings along existing sidewalks and AT pathways

Modular dwellings offer numerous benefits, including affordability, sustainability, and faster construction times. By incentivizing the development of multi-unit modular units along existing and new sidewalks and active transportation pathways, Summerside promotes diverse living options and enhances community accessibility. This initiative will provide affordable housing for families, seniors, and individuals with varying incomes. Utilizing existing sidewalks and pathways will create a walkable community, making it easier for residents to access local amenities and services. Again, the goal is modest at 24 units over 3 years – 8 units a year – allowing ample time to review and make any necessary changes.

Incorporate updated flood plain mapping into the Zoning Bylaw

Voting "Yes" would also provide essential resources to support floodplain protocols in our zoning bylaw. The PEI Flood Guide states: "Every decision that is made about a new development in any community or coastal area in PEI should consider flood risk. Knowing the areas in a community that are most at risk is the responsibility of decision-making authorities. Ignoring flood risk puts the current and future property owners, neighbouring landowners, first responders, the public, and the planning authority itself at potential risk for decades to come."

Currently, to effectively address the rising challenges of sea level rise and storm surges in Summerside, it is imperative that we update our floodplain mapping. I encourage those interested to explore the Coastal Hazards Information Platform (CHIP) and PEI's Climate Hazard & Risk Information System (CHRIS) to understand better the areas in Summerside classified as High to Moderate-High Flood Hazard.

Assessment of Undeveloped lands and conduct a Land Supply Study for housing

Undeveloped lands will be identified to map vacant and underutilized parcels, categorized based on ownership (province vs. city vs. private) and zoning classifications. Evaluation criteria will include accessibility to infrastructure (roads, water, sewer), environmental considerations (wetlands, flood zones, greenspaces), proximity to amenities (schools, parks, commercial areas), and compatibility with existing land uses. An estimate of the number of housing units that could be accommodated on each identified parcel will be provided.

I see value in an optional assessment of industrial lands, which will identify undeveloped or underutilized lands suitable for industrial use and evaluate the infrastructure available to support industrial activities. The city has had a net loss of 25 acres of industrial land since 1998 (Committee of the Whole meeting, Oct 1, 2024), and as industrial land is really “employment lands,” we could dovetail an industrial land study. This study could discuss how industrial growth can influence housing demand, such as job creation leading to population growth, and consider necessary zoning adjustments to accommodate both residential and industrial uses.

Climate Change Adaption Plan

The City of Summerside does not have a comprehensive climate change adaptation plan, which is a critical gap. To effectively safeguard our future, we need to first identify and understand the vulnerabilities within our community and then develop land use responses that promote adaptation and resilience. Including a climate change plan as part of this HAF application is one step toward creating strategies tailored to our unique challenge in the city through proactive measures so we can ensure that Summerside not only withstands the impacts of climate change but thrives in the face of it.

Implement a Density Bonusing Program for Affordable Units

Implementing a density bonusing policy is a key step toward affordable housing. While current market rates for new apartments are out of reach for many, offering incentives for affordable units can help create diverse, vibrant neighbourhoods for all residents. This policy tackles the housing crisis while ensuring our city remains accessible to people from various backgrounds and income levels.

For myself, the crucial element is not just offering incentives but creating a monitoring system with financial penalties if developers fail to provide affordable units as agreed.

Seniors face rising rents that outpace fixed incomes, and the growing homeless population highlights the urgent need for housing solutions. Many families also live in overcrowded conditions, underscoring the need for more affordable homes.

IN SHORT

When I read

- 15 Accessory Dwelling Units over 3 years
- 24 missing middle housing units over 3 years
- 100 transitional/affordable housing units over 3 years
- 20 lots re-developed into lots capable of support missing middle over three years
- 24 units designed for missing middle over three years

They sound doable, not overly aggressive, and certainly a starting point for making a real effort to address the city's affordable housing crisis.

Respectfully,

Ken Trenholm

Ward 5 Councillor
City of Summerside