



Overview

PEI Bylaw Approaches to Residential Zoning

Completed as part of Shape Stratford

March 2024

Summary of PEI Municipal Planning Bylaws

The following is a high-level summary of the Intermunicipal Committee's review of municipal official plans and zoning bylaws on Prince Edward Island, both urban and rural. The review focused on the low to medium density residential zones, what is permitted in each of those zones, the regulations, and requirements for all development.

Housing As-of-Right in Low Density Zones

Single and two-unit residential zones are the predominant residential land uses across the PEI municipalities.

- The typical housing forms in these zones are limited to single, semi-detached, and duplex dwellings.
- Where permitted, townhouse & stacked townhouse are usually limited on how many can units be built and require council approval.
- Traditionally, low-density residential lots are required to be a minimum sq m/sq ft for single detached or side by side dwellings. The average lot widths minimums are between 15m - 23m in the urban municipalities.
- Typically, no housing unit is designed to be built to the maximum of the allowable building pocket, with some floor plan designs leaving anywhere between 5-25% unused land between the side of the house and the side yard setback. These are additional costs that are passed onto the individual/family that purchases the house.

Opportunities

- Removing the limits on housing typology not only encourages more diverse housing form but it can also enable people to move into neighbourhoods they would typically be unable to afford financially and allows for more options as people move through different stages of life.
- By removing the minimum lot areas & frontage, lots can be designed to be more efficient and subdivisions can be designed to meet housing market needs and maximize the number of units in a subdivision. This can be achieved through:
 - › reducing lot widths;
 - › replacing minimum lot areas with maximum lot areas;
 - › permitting narrow lot zones; or
 - › allowing zero lot lines for detached dwelling lots.

Housing As-of-Right in Medium Density Zones

Medium density zones across the island provide opportunities to build more multi-unit housing types but are typically restricted due to restrictions on the number of units, minimum lot areas and parking requirements.

- The average height for multi-unit developments is the same as for single detached dwellings. The average on the island is 10.99m.
- Currently, apartments require a minimum lot area plus an additional area for each dwelling unit in most bylaws.
- Medium density is described differently across island municipalities, such as medium density, multi-unit and PURD, but what is medium density to one municipality could feel like low density to another.
- There is a growing population who are renting apartments over traditional housing types for several reasons and conveniences. Whether those renters choose to own a vehicle or to use public transit, there is still a requirement for parking minimums per number of units. These parking minimums ultimately affect the size of the parking area and the parcel size, whether the parking lot is fully utilized or not.

Opportunities

- Multi-unit developments should not be restricted to the same height as low-density housing. Developers are saying that this model is not cost effective, and developments need to be at least 4-6 floors for a more viable product. Changes to height regulations for apartments should be a minimum of 3 floors and the maximum height regulated by the building code. Where apartments are adjacent to lower height or density residential forms, a transition of housing types will or could be required.
- The minimum lot sizes for apartments should be removed or significantly reduced to promote more units on smaller lots.
- While parking is still generally required given the limited capacity of the transit system to meet the needs of all travelers, reducing parking minimums would significantly reduce the amount of land needed to develop, or use that land for more communal services such as bike sheds, seating areas and BBQ's.
- Reducing or removing parking requirements in coordination with reduced lot sizes and increase heights would significantly decrease the amount of land needed but also allow for more units to be built.
- Canada-wide and through the National Housing Strategy, the new narrative is that residential zoning should permit 3-4, or more, units as-of-right and remove single-use (exclusionary) zoning.
- Municipalities should review where multi-dwelling lots would be more appropriate in their community and pre-zone for those uses, rather than the traditional need for one-off zoning reviews and public meetings.

Mixed Use Developments

Municipalities in PEI have begun to explore mixed-use developments, but these developments are typically only permitted in commercial zones where residential uses are restricted to being located above main floor commercial uses or as special permit uses requiring council approval.

Communities should explore more innovative housing types, as they are a great way to rejuvenate the core areas and spur new professional services, restaurants, and residential units. Providing these types of services in a community promotes local enterprises and can reduce commuting to other areas.

Innovative Housing Solutions

Introducing more housing doesn't have to involve large tower/high rise apartment buildings. Using innovative solutions can provide the additional housing needed, in a way that fits your community's needs and the existing housing context.

Housing solutions for low density zones and traditional neighborhoods:



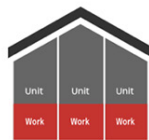
Four-plex



Accessory Dwelling Unit



Live-work Townhouse



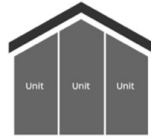
Cluster-Cottage



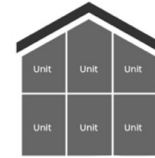
Housing solutions for medium density zones and mixed-used areas:



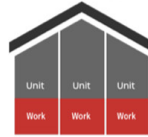
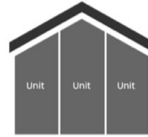
Townhouse



Stacked Townhouse



Mid-Rise / Mixed-use Development





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