

## Walter, Penny

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**From:** City Council  
**Subject:** FW: Email - Communication - John J Penner - Housing Accelerator Fund - CK 750-1

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**From:** Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 24, 2024 2:09 PM  
**To:** City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>  
**Subject:** Email - Communication - John J Penner - Housing Accelerator Fund - CK 750-1

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, June 24, 2024 - 13:59

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

**I have read and understand the above statements.:** Yes

**I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.:** No

**I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.:** No

**Date:** Monday, June 24, 2024

**To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

**First Name:** John J

**Last Name:** Penner

**Phone Number :** [REDACTED]

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**I live outside of Saskatoon:** No

**Saskatoon Address and Ward:**

**Address:** [REDACTED] 7th Ave N

**Ward:** Ward 1

**What do you wish to do ?:** Submit Comments

**What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known)::** June 27 Council Meeting: To Consider reports regarding the Housing Accelerator Fund

**What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?:** Proposed Zoning Bylaw No 1008

**Comments:**

Members of Council  
City of Saskatoon

June 24, 2024

Re: Proposed Zoning Bylaw Changes in Response to the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund

It is common in the development industry to blame Zoning and Building Regulations for delays or failures to deliver on building projects, particularly in housing. In considering the dramatic zoning changes the Planning Department is proposing, it Council should be reminded that the existing regulations were developed over many years and provided for the orderly and stable development of the city; they provided predictability for both the developer and the homeowner.

The reasons for the national housing shortage are complex and have been building for many decades. Most recently, they have been exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, inflation, and high immigration rates. As housing became commodified, low interest rates and low down-payments fuelled inflation. A tight housing market favoured sellers.

The federal Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation had numerous programs to simulate housing until the early 1980s but terminated these programs and left housing initiatives to the private market. Now it appears the Federal Government is trying to play catch-up by throwing a pile of money at the problem and convincing municipal governments to dramatically change long established regulatory rules to solve a problem of bureaucratic red tape which they blame for the crisis.

I understand the logic of increasing the housing density within the inner areas of the city, particularly along rapid bus routes. But this intensification can and should be done with sensitivity and targeted projects, not with the sledge-hammer zoning changes the Feds are demanding. Allowing four-plexes in all residential zones will be disruptive and destabilizing to older neighbourhoods. Not requiring any landscaping for this type of redevelopment will exacerbate the problem. Landscaping and a reasonable level of architectural control helps to integrate newer building into the existing neighbourhoods. Infill development often results in the destruction of both boulevard and on-site trees. Given the years of drought, current and impending threats of disease, and the lack of landscape planning for the new subdivisions, we can ill afford the destruction of more trees and the loss of tree canopy.

While the City Council has implemented some inner-city housing incentives such as tax abatement, it has been hesitant to undertake a more aggressive and effective approach. A better idea, possibly in conjunction with the Housing Accelerator Fund, would be the use Land Bank resources to leverage private housing development, particularly in the rental market. The City could assemble or provide exiting land to developers as long-term leases at nominal cost. This would reduce the up-front capital costs to the developer and turn the land acquisition into an operating cost for the owner. This strategy is not without precedent. The Northgate shopping mall in downtown Prince Albert was developed on land assembled by the city and leased to the developer on a 99-year term. I also believe Preston Crossing was developed on land leased on a long-term basis to the developer by the University of Saskatchewan. This approach to housing would leverage housing development without diminishing the Land Bank's inventory of land holdings. An initiative such as this would result in more housing, an increased tax base, the rational use of existing infrastructure and a density increase in the inner-city area enough to justify the long- sought development of a downtown grocery store.

Increasing density along the future rapid bus routes is logical, but scattering small medium density housing projects within low density neighbourhoods without any development conditions would not substantially increase the housing inventory but disrupt well integrated neighbourhoods. Instead, the City should apply it resources and any Federal or Provincial resources to the most effective strategy, and that is facilitating high density housing, particularly rental housing, along the rapid bus route corridors as proposed, and on strategic properties within the Downtown, Broadway, and Riversdale areas.

I would urge City Council not to approve the zoning changes as currently proposed unless they provide for conditional development control to integrate housing projects into the neighbourhoods where they are located.

Yours sincerely,

John J Penner  
Former Urban Design Coordinator, City of Saskatoon

**Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No**