



November 7, 2011

Common Council
City of Saint John
15 Market Square
P.O. Box 1971
Saint John, NB E2L 4L1

Your Worship and Councillors:

The Saint John Board of Trade respectfully submits this letter as feedback on the new Municipal Plan.

Generally, we are pleased with the Municipal Plan that was presented and are encouraged that a more sustainable growth plan for the City is supported in the draft. We agree that the scattered development of the past few decades has weakened the City and a new approach is needed to improve the City's health and future.

For the new municipal plan to be successful, it is important that its policies and those who administer them recognize that people/citizens are increasingly able to choose where they live, where they work, and where they invest. We need to ensure that we have a user friendly implementation of the Plan that encourages people to choose Saint John.

Just as important, a strong economy is critical to the municipal plan's success. As a result, we firmly believe that several supportive measures will be necessary, including:

1. Implementation of the appropriate tools and/or incentives to encourage development in the priority neighbourhoods since urban development will be more costly. Also, inclusion of appropriate policy wording with a positive tone will ensure that the Plan's goals are met.
2. Development of neighbourhood plans to encourage population density, and encourage collaboration between the areas, not competition.
3. Unified land use planning for the Inner Harbour.
4. Creation of a mechanism or plan to address the concerns of citizens who have previously purchased land outside the growth boundary with plans of building homes there; and
5. Development of a Regional plan to complement and enhance the goals of the draft Municipal Plan and recognize the important role of the region in the growth of our economy. The City is not an island.

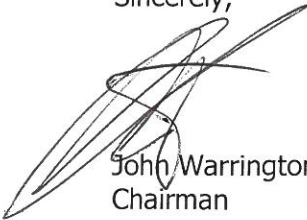
One of our primary concerns from the outset has been the possibility of the new growth boundary being used as a punitive measure which would lead to further reduction in population density. There has been concern expressed by our members regarding recent decisions taken by Common Council citing PlanSJ core values as decision triggers to not permit developments to proceed in areas that would be considered infill. The new Plan must not become a barrier for development but rather provide positive reinforcement that will encourage development in specific areas and provide developers more options to grow.

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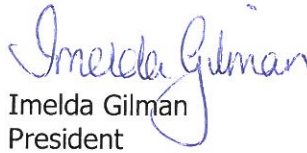
Finally, we support the careful, measured and accountable implementation of the Plan. The Saint John Board of Trade feels that a well defined project governance structure, regular progress reports, and a continued commitment to effective community and stakeholder engagement will be essential. Evaluating the City's successes and failures on a regular basis will ensure the effort that has gone into the creation of this new Plan thus far will not be wasted. In particular, we welcome the opportunity to be part of any future body that is tasked with periodic review and updating of the Plan.

We look forward to the public hearing of the Municipal Plan in the upcoming months.

Sincerely,



John Warrington
Chairman



Imelda Gilman
President



CC: Mr. Ken Forrest, Commissioner of Planning & Development, City of Saint John