

**From:** Matthew Wells [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 10, 2024 2:05 PM  
**To:** Alexander Burnett [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Comments in Support of Application for Zoning By-law Amendment (Z01-24)

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Good afternoon,

I am writing this message to express my support for the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment: Z01-24 - 93 Trinity Street & 266 King Street. Please find my comments in support below.

I have been able to call Stratford home for a year now. In my short time here, I have enjoyed the opportunity to discover some of the many great things the city has to offer. However, I count myself lucky that I have a job that provides me with enough income to afford the rent on my one-bedroom apartment. I fear that if the city does not take action to increase the supply of apartments, more and more people will find themselves priced out of the city. It is my opinion that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment: Z01-24 - 93 Trinity Street & 266 King Street be approved by council.

There are numerous benefits to increasing residential (and of course a few challenges that can be addressed) but I will focus my comments on two. One, the impact of additional housing supply on local rents. Two, how the proposed development provides the types of housing the city needs given its changing demographics.

According to Statistics Canada, since 2001 Ontario's population has been growing at about 6% between every five-year census. However, Stratford's population growth lagged the provincial average, that is until the 2021 Census saw the city's population grow 5.6% from 2016, nearly matching the provincial average. Since 2021, the province's population growth has accelerated. Statistics Canada estimates that in Q1 of this year Ontario's population is approximately 15.9 million, a nearly 12% increase since the previous census. The rapid rise in population has put pressure on housing, whether buying or renting, and Stratford is no exception.

According to CMHC's Rental Market Survey, from 2016 to 2023 the average rent on a one-bedroom apartment in Stratford has gone from \$728 to \$1445, essentially doubling in seven years. Similarly, a two-bedroom has gone from \$873 to \$1566. These numbers include units under rent control, for someone looking to move into a unit, the numbers are even worse. When I moved into my one-bedroom in June 2023 my rent was \$1700, plus electricity, I now pay \$1742.50. A quick look on Rentals.ca and you will find the lowest asking price for a one-bedroom is \$1754.

The rapid rise in rents reflects the city's low vacancy rate. Since 2017, the city's vacancy rate for one and two-bedroom apartments has not been lower than 2.1%. A healthy market, where rents are stable, would have a vacancy rate between 3 and 5%. Given that demand for these units has not been met for years, it is no surprise rents have skyrocketed. There is a clear need for more apartments in the city. The 2021 Census counted 4400 apartments (rented and owned) in the city. The proposed development would add 334 desperately needed units to the market, increasing the apartment stock by 7.5%. These new units can go a long way to bringing the city back to a healthy vacancy rate and eventually restoring affordability.

The second thing to consider is the changing demographics of the city and how that will impact future housing needs. The city's population is aging. Comparing the age groups between the 2016 and 2021 Census, you see the number of children in the city is flat, there has been some growth in the "working age" demographic, but the big increase is in those ages 65 and up. There is also a trend towards smaller households as families have fewer children. In the 2021 Census, 33% of the households had one occupant, and 37% had two.

Age Group	2016 Census	2021 Census	Numerical change	% change
0-14	4690	4800	110	2.3
15-24	3615	3385	-230	-6.4
25-34	3560	4005	445	12.5
35-44	3705	4000	295	8.0
45-54	4390	3955	-435	-9.9
55-64	4970	5155	185	3.7
65-74	3520	4440	920	26.1
75+	3000	3495	495	16.5

It needs to be asked if the residents of Stratford have enough housing options available for each phase of their lives. Apartments offer a great option for both those starting out in life, but also those looking to downsize and reduce the amount of upkeep required. The proposed development should offer better accessibility than the current apartment stock, many of which lack elevators or automatic doors. Given that the future appears to feature smaller households with fewer kids and more seniors looking to stay in their community, it is critical that there is adequate availability of all housing types so people can choose what best suits their needs.

I hope my comments have made clear the need for the proposed development to add new units to the constrained markets and how this type of development is needed given the changing household demographics in the city. I urge the city to approve the zoning by-law amendment. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to share my sources if you wish.

Sincerely,

Matthew Wells

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