

## District 5 Provincial Election Candidate Written Forum – Responses from Jill Burridge

- 1. Housing is of serious concern in Stratford, as it is across PEI. From affordability, to general inventory, to variety of housing stock, it is challenge for many residents to afford to stay in their existing housing, let alone to consider trying to move and find something. What tangible commitments are you prepared to make to help address this issue over the next four years?**

“It is a challenge for individuals in varied circumstances to find appropriate and attainable housing in our community today. Looking at the continued growth we expect to see, it will continue to be a challenge. The Charlottetown Region Growth Study and Housing Needs Assessment put out last year gives us a picture of what to expect. SHAPE Stratford, which I did chair, is already working towards allowances for a more diverse housing supply in our community. I will commit to having provincial representatives continue to contribute to this initiative.

My municipal and planning experience, paired with my strong relationship with town staff and council will prove to be valuable as we move forward in tackling this.

A re-elected PC government will:

- Increase the Housing Challenge Fund by \$50 Million Dollars, providing developers with 2% financing for quick-start housing projects;
- Create a \$25 Million Infrastructure Fund for municipalities and regional development corporations to develop construction-ready lots for Islanders to purchase and use for modular builds;
- Launch a Rent-To-Own program with financing options through government so that Islanders have the opportunity to purchase a home after renting for 24 months;
- Launch a Closing Cost Housing Support Program to provide first-time home buyers with up to \$2,500 towards closing costs of purchasing their first home;
- Continue to invest in public housing with the goal of eliminating the housing registry within the next 24 months;
- Provide support, mentorship, and financing to establish new co-operative housing complexes across the province by working with communities, non-profits, and regional development corporations so tenants have authority and input into the operation of their buildings;
- Work with the federal government to find expedited routes for international skilled workers to join our province’s workforce either on a temporary basis or permanently;
- Work with groups like the Construction Association of PEI, unions, and local contractors, to launch and expand existing programming to expose more Islanders to career opportunities in the construction industry, recruit more skilled workers for the construction industry internationally, and expand vocational training opportunities and mentorships to forge more pathways to careers in the skilled trades.”

- 2. The Town of Stratford has an exciting Community Campus project underway with plans for a multi-purpose recreational facility, sports fields, and cultural spaces to be included on the site, along with the upcoming high school. Are you supportive of this project and in what ways?**

“The community campus project was originally my idea, and I have been a devoted champion of it since. Town staff and council, in consultation with the community and various stakeholders, have taken it to a point where we have a fantastic masterplan that includes schools, ball fields, soccer fields, multi-use courts, and an indoor facility that will include both recreational and cultural amenities. The campus will be a community hub and a strategic investment for our town. We are excited to see this develop first with the high school opening in Fall 2025 and now paired with our recently announced plans for a junior high school on this site as well.

I commit to working closely with the Town of Stratford so that together, we can see the key pieces of this realized. We are an active community of all ages, and I know we are seeing constraints when it comes to serving minor sports associations in our community. It is a priority of the Town to bridge these gaps, and I will do what I can at the provincial level to help them through those challenges.”

- 3. A recent review by Norbert Carpenter, Director of the Public Schools Branch, identified five schools of concern including three in the Charlottetown Family of Schools – Birchwood, Queen Charlotte and Stonepark Intermediate. These schools are of concern for a variety of reasons, including the increasing pressures on the school’s functional capacity. Before renovations or additions are completed on any of these aging school structures, will you commit to being a strong advocate for a new build in Stratford?**

“A re-elected PC government has committed to expanding the Stratford Campus plans to include a junior high school.”

- 4. The responsibilities of municipalities have grown substantially, and that trend will continue as municipalities deliver increasingly complex services and tackle complicated issues. Since the government made a number of changes to the financial arrangement in 2008 from a tax credit to a grant system the Town of Stratford has been losing tax revenue in the amount of approximately \$600,000 per year. In the past five years this alone amounts to close to 3 million in lost funds. What are your party’s plans to work with the municipalities, including Stratford, to negotiate a revenue sharing deal that is fairer, predictable and provides municipalities with the funds needed to grow and service our communities?**

“My time on town council has given me insight into this issue. I know the challenges, and I also know that a re-elected PC government is committed to building a stronger, more equitable funding formula for all Island communities, including Stratford.”

- 5. The Town of Stratford has had great success with our Switch Stratford Program, which has allowed many residents to get off of fossil fuels and make their homes more efficient, including winning a national award recently alongside fellow municipalities in the program. However, our Federal funds in Stratford have been depleted for a second time. With climate change, natural disasters and other related environmental concerns a growing reality, what are your plans to help us address these from both the resident, business and municipal perspectives?**

“The Switch Program has been a fantastic program in Stratford and other municipalities in Atlantic Canada. Stratford’s strong sustainability values align in many cases with provincial goals. We should build on this alignment to see what more we can do together.

To support Islanders who are working to make their homes and to move away from fossil fuels, our government has made significant investments, such as:

- The Free Heat Pump program, which provides Islanders with an annual household net income of \$75,000 or less for a free heat pump for their home.
- Solar Electric Rebate Program, which provides financial incentives for Island homeowners, farms, and businesses to install solar panels.
- Home Insulation Rebates, and financing program, to assist Islanders with installing insulation and air sealing improvements for windows and doors.
- Energy Efficient Equipment Rebates, which provide support for the purchase of geothermal heat pumps, water heating devices, and biomass heating devices.

To support businesses and community organizations on their path to Net-Zero, our government has made investments, such as the:

- Business Energy Rebate, which supports businesses, non-profits and institutional organizations in installing high-efficiency products.
- Solar Electric Rebate Program, which provides financial incentives for Island homeowners, farms, and businesses to install solar panels.
- Community Energy Solutions that provides support for upgrading heating systems and optimizing ventilation, thermostats, and controls.
- Residential Rental Efficiency Rebates reduce the environmental impact of rental buildings.”

- 6. Healthcare remains a high priority for residents in Stratford, and across PEI. What steps will your government take, if elected, to move us from the situation that we are in now on PEI? And how are your plans expected to get us different results than we’ve had with promises in the past?**

“This is a top priority, hands down. Improvements and investments need to be made to our healthcare system to ensure it better serves Islanders. Our plan for health care is focused on supporting and growing our front line staff and removing barriers to access to care.

A re-elected PC government will support existing and new front line staff in the healthcare system by:

- Providing free tuition for RCWs, LPNs, and Paramedics who train on Prince Edward Island in return for two years of service;
- Launching an Emergency Medicine Residency Program;
- Work with post-secondary institutions to launch an 'Earn and Learn Program' to upskill RCWs to LPNs, and LPNs to RNs without having to leave the workforce;
- Launch an Associate Physician license to allow foreign-trained physicians expedited licensing to practice to a defined scope under the supervision of other fully licensed physicians;
- Introduce legislation to have domestic and foreign recognition of credentials for RCWs, LPNs, and RNs recognized within set timeframes;
- Introduce a 'Job Guarantee' program for students studying in health care fields to guarantee them a full-time position the day after they graduate;
- Introduce a Health Bursary for students studying to become LPNs, RNs, and Paramedics that pursue studies off Island in exchange for a return in service to work on PEI; and
- Provide free licenses to healthcare professionals who have left the workforce to return to work on a casual or part-time basis.

A re-elected PC government will further expand access to care for Islanders by:

- Accelerating the roll-out of 16 more Patient Medical Homes across the province by the end of 2024 and hiring 100 new full-time positions to support existing and future medical homes;
- Incentivizing newly created Patient Medical Homes to take unaffiliated patients off the Patient Registry and attaching all Islanders on the Patient Registry to a Patient Medical Home in the next 24 months;
- Making Apps like Maple, Skip the Waiting Room and other virtual care apps free for all Islanders to access care and book appointments;
- Expanding Primary Care Access Clinics (PCAC's) to provide care for unaffiliated patients;
- Establishing Mobile Primary Care Clinics that can provide care in any community across the province based on need;
- Creating a Portable Health Benefits Program to provide health, dental, and medication insurance for workers who may not be employed full-time, year-round, or those facing barriers to insurance coverage like seasonal workers, contract employees, and gig economy workers.
- Develop and support a Chronic Pain Management Strategy and Chronic Pain Management Clinic.
- Work with the PEI Speech and Hearing Association to reduce waitlists and service gaps by adding new Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in the public health system.
- Working with the PEI Physiotherapy Association and PEI Chiropractic Association to expand their scope of practice;"

**7. PEI is long overdue for a province-wide land use plan. What, if any, are your plans and timeline for introducing strong land use policy to control development and protect the land where municipal land use planning does not exist?**

“There has already been an incredible amount of work done on this issue. More recently, in 2021, the Land Matters Advisory Committee presented a final report which gives recommendations on land protection and land use policy. I do believe that we continue that work towards legislation and policies needed to protect our lands and the unique character of PEI.

My educational background includes Urban and Rural Planning, and my professional designation is in land surveying. I understand the importance of this and the need to take action. Land is a finite resource on this Island of ours and we are looking at record population growth. We must plan, so we can build smarter to protect what we have.”

**8. In no more than 250 words, what would you like residents of the Town of Stratford to know?**

“I care deeply about our community and have worked to give back to make it an even better place to live. I’m proud to have served on Stratford Town Council and been part of initiatives to improve our community like SHAPE Stratford, the Community Campus Planning and Implementation Committees and the Stratford High School Planning and Construction Committee. I want to help make a difference for the people of Stratford, and if I am fortunate enough to be elected as the next MLA for Stratford-Keppoch I will dedicate myself to working hard for the people of District 6, Stratford-Keppoch in a new Dennis King PC government.”

**Jill Burrige - PC Candidate, District 6, Stratford-Keppoch**