

What are priorities for Charlottetown?

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Editor:

The Prince Edward Island government told the City of Charlottetown to find a new well field in light of the serious water shortages the city sometimes experiences. The Government of Canada told the City of Charlottetown to install a new sanitary/ storm water separation project to prevent pollution in the Hillsborough River. When is someone going to tell the City of Charlottetown to start reducing costs on ditch in filling?

Tenders have recently been issued by the city for additional ditch in- filling projects for the coming season. The projects will include the installation of a further five kilometres of plastic pipe at an estimated cost of between \$ 1.5 and \$ 2.0 million. This is not counting the related contractor expenses, which last year were budgeted at \$ 660,000.

So far, the city has spent approximately \$ 16 million on ditch in- filling, while it continues to ignore much more pressing priorities.

While the city continues to implement ditch in- filling projects, it has yet to implement a comprehensive storm water management plan, a plan which would have been a far superior and a much more environmentally beneficial alternative to ditch in filling. This plan is an integral part of overall municipal planning, especially with changing climate patterns.

While the city continues with its pet projects, it has put our water supply at risk. The present source is operating at near capacity, resulting in untold environmental consequences in the Winter River watershed. Mismanagement of this issue has caused some proposed housing developments to find and develop their own water resources.

This kind of mismanagement does little to raise the level of confidence among residents and businesses. It is even more disturbing in an election year when we should be looking at longer- term needs and priorities.

The recently released report on municipal financial performance and transparency from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy ranked Charlottetown 95th out of 100 Canadian cities. I believe that more oversight and openness would provide robust controls and evaluation over wasteful schemes that do little to improve much- needed municipal infrastructure.