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**Letter to the Community from White City Town Council
Planning for White City's Future Growth, Stability and Preserving our
Community**

Dear Residents,

Over the past several weeks, Council has received many letters and emails from residents expressing strong feelings about proposed developments and the future of growth in White City. I want to begin by saying we hear you.

Many of you have shared why you chose to make White City your home for its quiet streets, strong sense of community, and small-town charm. These are the very same reasons why a lot of us Council members moved out here. Protecting what makes White City special is not only important to you, but also a priority for all of us serving on Council.

That said, as your Council, we also have a responsibility to speak to the financial realities that affect our community's long-term future. Today, over 99 percent of White City's tax base comes from residential properties. That means the cost of maintaining our roads, parks, utilities, and recreation facilities is almost entirely funded by homeowners.

As our infrastructure ages, those costs will continue to rise. Without some form of new development whether residential, mixed-use, or commercial, the only alternative to cover those expenses is higher property taxes. There is no third option.

Council has explored efficiencies, regional cost-sharing, and grant opportunities but the reality remains that our existing tax base cannot sustainably fund major infrastructure renewal on its own.

If we stop growing, we may find ourselves in a situation where future councils are forced to defer needed infrastructure repairs just to keep taxes stable. We've seen this happen in other communities and eventually, the bills come due, often all at once.

The Role of Federal Infrastructure Funding and Why It Matters

White City, like all municipalities in Saskatchewan, is now navigating new conditions tied to federal and provincial infrastructure funding. Through the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF), Saskatchewan has access to more than \$340 million in federal-provincial support for building the water, sewer, stormwater, and solid waste infrastructure required for future growth.



But here's the reality: to qualify for this funding, municipalities must permit a broader mix of housing types, including townhouses, fourplexes, and other "missing middle" forms. This is not a policy created by White City it's part of a national strategy aimed at increasing housing supply and affordability.

That leaves Council and residents with a choice:

- We can say no to all new housing types, but the full cost of infrastructure will fall directly on residents through tax increases; or
- We can carefully adapt to allow some moderate-density housing, and in doing so, unlock millions in infrastructure funding to help cover those costs.

Adapting does not mean White City will become like a larger municipality. It means ensuring we remain eligible for support that helps fund the very infrastructure residents expect reliable water, roads, sewers, and emergency services without overwhelming our existing tax base.

What Development Really Means And What It Doesn't

There's been concern that new projects mean White City will lose its identity or become unrecognizable. That is not our vision. Responsible growth does not mean high-rise apartments or urban sprawl. It means carefully planned, small-scale development that complements our existing neighborhoods and helps balance our finances.

And it's important to understand when a development proposal is brought forward, it doesn't mean Council supports it. Every application goes through a formal process with technical reviews, infrastructure and traffic assessments, and public input.

Understanding the Boundary Alteration (Epona Farms)

Another development item you may have heard about is the boundary alteration (annexation) request for land east of White City, known as Epona Farms. This is a landowner-initiated request, not a Council-driven expansion. We are required to formally respond to these types of requests through a public process.

Council supports the land owner's request because this annexation aligns with our 2015 agreement with the RM of Edenwold, which identified this land as a logical extension for White City's long-term growth. Although there are currently lands available to develop in White City, Council does not control if and when a landowner will choose to begin development of that land – we do have a say in how the land is developed.



The vision for the lands in the boundary alteration request is for an exciting new development of primarily single-family homes with some ground-level two-storey townhomes with an ownership model. The vision is focused on pedestrian connectivity, green space and reducing infrastructure requirements which is a benefit for service provision and maintenance. We are confident that this will blend into our existing community seamlessly.

Addressing Common Concerns

We've heard a few consistent concerns around development in general, and we want to respond to them directly:

- **Traffic and Infrastructure:** No project moves forward without proper engineering and traffic studies that take current, proposed and future development into consideration. These ensure our systems can safely handle growth.
- **Schools:** We continue to work with local school boards to share data early so they can plan for future needs. Ultimately, it is up to the province to determine where to invest in new schools – it is highly unlikely they will choose to invest in a community whose population and growth is stagnant or declining.
- **Crime and Safety:** White City remains one of Saskatchewan's safest communities. Research shows that crime is more tied to design and community engagement than housing type.
- **Property Values:** Quality developments that are well-managed and well-designed often enhance local value by adding walkability and nearby amenities.

Three Possible Paths for White City's Future

As your Mayor and Council, our job is to plan responsibly not just for today, but for the next generation of White City residents. When we look at our long-term financial picture, there are essentially three paths forward:

1. No Further Development – Higher Taxes for Residents

If White City were to pause all residential and commercial growth, we would remain almost entirely dependent on property taxes from existing homeowners.

Currently, more than 99% of our tax base is residential, meaning every new road repair, water main upgrade, or recreation project must be paid for by you the homeowner.

Without growth, we estimate future infrastructure renewal could result in substantial annual tax increases just to maintain current service levels. This is the financial reality for small, single-use tax bases like ours.



2. Balanced Residential Growth (R1–R5) – Shared Costs and Stability

A second path is managed residential growth across zones R1 through R5 including a mix of single-family homes townhomes, and moderate-density housing with no rental.

This approach would:

- broaden our tax base gradually;
- help White City remain eligible for federal and provincial funding through programs like the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF); and
- distribute the cost of roads, utilities, and recreation infrastructure across more taxpayers keeping rate increases moderate for everyone.

This is not about changing White City's character it's about allowing thoughtful, small-scale growth that helps us pay for the infrastructure we all rely on. While considering that many of the people that make our community who we are, such as seniors, young adults, or families that may be separating, have places to land in our community and aren't forced to leave because there are no housing options to accommodate them.

3. Expanding the Commercial Tax Base, Offsetting Costs for Homeowners

A third, longer-term path is to grow our commercial and light-industrial tax base. Successful municipalities often have 20–30% of their total tax revenue coming from commercial properties compared to less than 1% in White City today.

A strong commercial base helps pay for public services, recreation, and Infrastructure while reducing the burden on residents.

However, this type of growth takes time and depends on population thresholds, available land, and infrastructure capacity all of which require careful planning and strategic development.

This is also something that Council will be carefully considering as accepting any and all commercial development isn't always the answer. There will be a conscious effort to move ahead with appropriate commercial development that makes sense for our community.



Protecting White City, Responsibly

This isn't about whether we grow, it's about how we grow. If we want to protect the character, services, and affordability of White City, we need a balanced approach: thoughtful planning, responsible development, and financial sustainability.

That means making hard but necessary choices and ensuring residents are part of the process every step of the way.

Thank you for your continued engagement, your concern for our shared future, and your passion for White City. Your voice matters — and it helps shape how we move forward, together.

On behalf of White City Town Council,

Mayor Mitch Simpson