

The Habitability of Prince Edward Island

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Introduction

What is Habitability/habitability of Prince Edward Island?

- ▶ Habitability is the concrete core for assessing the sustainability of an island. Every sustainable society has to be habitable to survive, develop, and keep its resilience.
- ▶ The idea of habitability for small islands was developed between the year 2018 and 2020 on one of the Finnish Islands . (Abo Akademi University, 2022). Based on the United Nations Sustainability Goals (United Nations, 2022).
- ▶ The handbook has 7 focus areas and 45 indicators in all
- ▶ Using this handbook, my work is to use one of the indicators to assess the habitability of PEI.



Prince Edward Island in Context

- ▶ It's the smallest province and one of the 4 Atlantic provinces in Canada
- ▶ According to report, on March 22, 2023 Statistics Canada published its provincial population estimates for the fourth quarter of 2022. The data shows Prince Edward Island's population is estimated to be 173,954 as of January 1, 2023
- ▶ Prince Edward Island maintains a largely rural character, and population growth in the province has been most apparent in and around the capital city of Charlottetown and in the second largest city, Summerside (there is need to explore and grow other surrounding cities to ease pressure)

Habitability of PEI

- ▶ According to Leonard Ng Keok Poh, Country Market Director, Singapore in (Chiara Lissandrello et al., 2022), a range of factors make places liveable. Liveability is measured by quality-of-life factors, such as access to fresh water, food, housing, transport, health care, education, and a safe and stable built and natural environment.
- ▶ The Housing Action Plan of PEI developed as a 5 year plan is expiring in 2023 and is yet to address the housing deficit on the island.
- ▶ At its core is “availability” and “affordability” it appears it is yet to achieve these goals even in 2023.
- ▶ One of the metrics for habitability is the ability to retain people (immigrants, newcomers, tourists among others) however, if it is difficult to get a roof over ones head, there is a likelihood of finding an alternative in a more habitable place that seem to make available good housing options.



Challenges of Housing

- ▶ Higher rate of immigration
- ▶ Unharmonized housing policies
- ▶ Higher rate of admission offers
- ▶ Lack of lands (fear of losing farmlands to housing)
- ▶ Inability to provide references and proof of employment by new renters/students
- ▶ Concentration/saturation of a town/ towns in PEI
- ▶ Insufficient housing options provided by tertiary institutions
- ▶ Inflation and high interest rates on financial aid to construction companies
- ▶ Unexplored Public Private Partnerships
- ▶ Political will/slow strategic intervention

Recommendation

Government

- Good housing policies with strong commitment to affordable, accessible and available housing schemes that helps the growing population. Also review of existing policies, adjustment of permit processes among others
- Better transportation system that connects neighboring towns as this will reduce pressure in the cities where the schools are located. This will make commuting easy.
- Encourage Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) where companies/individuals construct low-cost housing specifically for students and temporary residents.
- Offer housing incentives as well as waivers to construction companies
- Consider converting unoccupied or abandoned buildings to residential buildings

Schools

- Consider admission ratio to graduation ratio when offering admissions for new intakes
- Provide more accommodation options (hostels, shared rooms, single occupant apartments, house for students with families)
- Publicize more the option of host families especially for first year students
- Engage in partnerships with hotels and Airbnb for students arriving the island for the first time/first year for discounts.
- Explore satellite campuses in other towns in PEI

Recommendation Cont'd

Regulatory Bodies

- Unsuspecting people have fallen victim of fraudsters who capitalize on the housing shortage to defraud people, regulatory bodies need to rise to the occasion and rid the system of these fraudsters
- Develop harmonized or regulated platforms where people can source and secure accommodation without fear of being defrauded.
- Constantly engaging the government on housing trends and innovations

Combined Bodies of Builders & Association

- Make proposition to relevant government bodies on affordable housing options
- Collaborate as a body (housing material producers, electricals, builders, engineers etc) to ease the housing pressure with a joint intervention such as temporary buildings that can be unassembled after use and these materials can be stored for a future use.
- Come up with mobile homes/mini homes, temporary house with all the basic amenities to meet the housing shortage.

Conclusion

According to the Habitability Handbook, some of the indicators consist of basic facts, such as the area and the population size while other indicators are numerical on a scale of 1–4, where 1 (red colour) stands for a critical state, 2 (yellow colour) is bad but not in need of immediate action, 3 (light green colour) is good, and 4 (dark green colour) is excellent.

Going by the above scale and considering this paper on Housing in Prince Edward Island, the proper score for housing on the island is 1 as this housing deficit has a major impact on the growth and habitability on Prince Edward Island.

Thank You