

Municipal Election 2013: Make Housing Matter

Housing is one of the most important issues affecting quality of life for every person in a community. It is linked to economic prosperity, health, schools, transportation, and safety. Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ECOHH) encourages voters to consider candidates views on key issues related to housing in deciding who to support October 21.

Learn where candidates for mayor stand:

On **October 8**, ECOHH is presenting a public forum at **NorQuest College** (Health Programs building at 10232-106 Street) at **Noon**. Mayoral candidates **Kerry Diotte, Don Iveson, and Karen Leibovici** will be present. Learn more and ask questions. There will also be many forums with candidates in every part of the city.

Information about the election:

Detailed information about the election, such as where you vote and dates of advance voting, is at www.edmonton.ca/city_government/

[edmonton-elections](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/). Most candidates have websites and Facebook pages with information about their positions on many issues.

ECOHH has sent a survey to all candidates for Mayor, Councillor, and School Trustee. Responses to this will be released before the election and available at the ECOHH website (www.ecohh.ca).



Ask questions:

Information about many housing issues is available at the ECOHH website. Some key questions ECOHH believes should be raised:

1. Should the City of Edmonton take more action to make municipal land available for low-income affordable housing development (eg. surplus school land)? *The City has land of its own and could act to*

have affordable housing built on this land. Most developers have little interest in low-income affordable rental housing when there is more profit with higher-cost housing for sale. But the cost of developing affordable housing would be reduced if the City used its own land and worked with not-for-profit developers (and willing for-profit ones as well) to put a priority on such housing. Currently there is a need for about 20 000 units of affordable housing.

2. Should the City ensure better distribution of affordable housing in all neighbourhoods throughout Edmonton? *Some communities have expressed concern about too much affordable housing concentrated in them. Others have expressed opposition to proposed affordable housing developments. The facts say affordable housing does not have a negative impact on property values. Historically affordable housing was part of developing new communities in Edmonton.*

3. Should the City use zoning flexibility to support the development of more affordable housing initiatives? *Reasonable requirements in zoning rules for market housing developments may not be necessary for affordable housing. For example, often fewer people have personal vehicles in such housing. Costs and timelines for new affordable housing would be better if the City made clear it would use flexibility.*

4. Should the City commit funding to extend the Cornerstones Affordable

Housing program?

The majority of funding for building affordable housing needs to come from the federal and provincial governments, but the City has been able to support some construction with modest funding investments. Affordable housing should be seen as part of public infrastructure commitments of the City, just as roads, parks, LRT, and sewers are.

5. Should the City have a comprehensive strategy to address the need for affordable housing in a comprehensive and coordinated way that includes attention to schools, public transportation, and community services?
There is an urgent and large demand for affordable housing. but new developments are largely ad hoc. There is no clear plan for where, when, and how this demand will be met. The population of the City is increasing rapidly, almost no new rental housing is being built, and the supply of existing rental units is decreasing.

6. Is the City doing a good job to end chronic homelessness through the 10 Year Plan and the work of the Edmonton Homeless Commission?
Emergency shelters are the only place to sleep for many thousands of people each day and there are some views that more people than ever are living in parkland or other public areas. There is wide agreement there are many more homeless people not being counted or served because they survive in other less visible ways.

7. Should the City be more active in advocating with the provincial and federal governments for more funding and better policies on affordable housing?
The current crisis in housing security and homelessness developed about 20 years ago largely as a result of policy and funding decisions of the provincial and federal governments, yet much of the responsibility to deal with it falls to the municipal government. If Edmonton and other municipal governments were more aggressive in urging these governments to develop proper housing policies and fund the needs there would be savings for the city.

8. Should the City develop and use better ways to gather views of all residents about housing issues, and not depend so significantly on input from community leagues and developers?

Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness

Active since 1987, ECOHH believes housing security is a human rights issue, as well as a human services and public policy/political and economic issue.

- Decent affordable housing is essential for all people.
- Good homes for all create strong healthy communities.
- Housing is more than four walls and a roof-- it's homes, support, and community.
- Lack of decent affordable housing has negative consequences for everyone.

www.ecohh.ca

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