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QUESTION 1: The City of Edmonton should take more action to make municipal land available for low-income affordable housing development (eg. surplus school land).

I believe it is both the humane and economic thing to do. Providing housing for everyone allows more people to work and enjoy a standard of living that should be afforded to all Canadians.

QUESTION 2: There is not enough subsidized housing in some neighbourhoods, and the City must ensure a better distribution in all neighbourhoods throughout Edmonton.

The city definitely does not see enough distribution of housing. You can see that the homeless and low-income population is much more dense in some areas than it is in others. This leads to higher crime rates and the issue begins to snowball. I believe that allowing all neighborhoods a diversity of housing can encourage people of all income levels to migrate to the area. This will allow more people to find jobs, enjoy more benefits from the city, and simply escape the issues that can plague denser areas.

QUESTION 3: The City should seek to use zoning flexibility (on issues such as required parking spaces) to support the development of more affordable housing initiatives.

No answer.

QUESTION 4: The City should commit funding to extend the Cornerstones Affordable Housing program.

This program is a great way to start the process. Developing more affordable housing in the city helps those that wish to take advantage of these programs. We must ensure that the program is taken advantage to its fullest extent. Dropping all of the new housing projects in one area or simply redeveloping areas where there is already a high population of low income or homeless individuals will not fix the problem. We have to make sure the houses are being spread throughout the city and even in newly developed areas. This allows the individuals and families to find a place in the city where they can not only live, but work, get to school, and raise their standard of living.

QUESTION 5: The City should create a comprehensive plan to address the need for thousands of units of affordable housing in a comprehensive and coordinated way that includes attention to schools, public transportation, and community services.

In addition to my point above we must ensure that the growth of the school, transport, and community programs reaches the new areas in an effective manner. Those taking advantage of these programs and seeking affordable housing are less likely to be able to reach schools and community services by their own means so paying extra attention to the public transit system is necessary. Lowering the rates and ensuring that routes reach the areas will assist those that want to attain all of the services they require.

QUESTION 6: The City is doing a good job to end chronic homelessness through the current 10 Year Plan and the work of the Edmonton Homeless Commission.

I appreciate the effort the city has put in to end the homelessness issue but obviously did not feel it was enough. This is one of the reasons I began my work as Can Man Dan, alleviating hunger for those in need. The steps taken have improved the situation but there is always room for more work and effort to be put in.

QUESTION 7: The City must be more active in advocating with the provincial and federal governments for more funding and better policies on affordable housing.

As I stated above the benefits to providing homes to those in need are more than humanitarian. I see the provincial and federal government assisting in Edmonton's goal to end homelessness as more of an investment because once the individual has shelter and a job they will require less support from the city and will even begin to give back. I would definitely push for the province and Ottawa to provide more assistance because there is only so much the city can put into the program before it begins to cost too much and that is not fair to those already living in homes who have been paying property tax.

QUESTION 8: The City must develop better ways to gather views of all residents about housing issues and not depend so significantly on input from community leagues and developers.

I believe that both the developer and the community leagues have valid voices that should be adhered to. However, if the entire area in question would be communicated with I believe that a more accurate opinion can be ascertained. With proper education and communication I would want to do my best to get a consensus on exactly what should be done in a community.

QUESTION 9: Finally, you may provide any additional comments about any other aspects of housing and homelessness.

This topic has always been one I am most passionate about. I believe the city can always do more but so can the community. If community leagues and residents are talked to and everyone understands the benefits behind allowing everybody the benefits of a place to live than it would be much easier for these programs to go into affect. The stigma behind homelessness and those in need is still somewhat harsh in some peoples minds and overcoming this is a major step in fixing the problem. I also acknowledge that the city can never fix all of the problems directly and volunteerism and community support will always be required which is why the government also supporting charities and non-profits will be an additional benefit to those in need, it allows for multiple approaches to address a common problem.