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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).

Homelessness and affordable housing is an issue close to my heart. I have worked with the Greater Edmonton Alliance to create 438 more affordable housing units in the city and with the Bissell Centre to help empower inner city leaders. I have demonstrated my commitment to making homelessness an issue that is at the forefront of the city's agenda. It makes sense to maximize our existing infrastructure and encourage infill in underdeveloped areas. One strategy for future development is the use of density bonusing. Density bonusing allows a developer to exceed the maximum unit density levels in exchange for lower cost units. This would be an economical way for the city to promote affordable housing.

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

Great communities represent a city as a whole and consist of a mix of solid and supportive citizens from all walks of life. One of the strategies to close the door to homelessness is to provide affordable and low-income housing, which sometimes requires subsidies. Concentrating affordable housing developments in the downtown core can isolate individuals from the activities going on in the rest of the city. I support the distribution of subsidized housing with community consultation throughout Edmonton.

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.

Greater flexibility in zoning could help promote construction of affordable housing in a number of ways. For example, easing parking requirements for new developments when they have good access to transit could enable the construction of more units in a given development. Another example is inclusionary zoning, which has been adopted by the Halifax Regional Municipality. Inclusionary zoning requires developers to incorporate affordable units into their project in exchange for special permissions, such as the right to build in a certain area. This would also be a potential way to promote more density and walkability.

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

I support the second phase of the Cornerstone program, Cornerstones II. I particularly support the secondary suites grant program. Secondary suites are a great way to create affordable housing for both the secondary suite renter and the house owner who is able to collect rent making their own home more affordable. This is an economical way of addressing affordable housing and promoting unique solutions to residential infill.

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.

Ensuring that all neighbourhoods have access to schools, transportation, and community services is part of developing sustainable growth strategies for Edmonton. Innovative development should include access to amenities as well as a variety of housing choices. Through smart investments in our communities, we can ensure that affordable living is attainable, and that the services that we pay taxes for are utilized effectively. Moving forward, the city needs to develop a comprehensive plan to coordinate the establishment and delivery of these services.

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.

Edmonton has led Canada in its effort to end homelessness and we have achieved some real results. We need to be diligent in ensuring we continue to meet our timelines and objectives.

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.

The city should continue to actively request provincial and federal funding to support the development of affordable housing. We should also be pursuing regional funding – Edmonton provides affordable housing options for citizens from across the capital region, in addition to providing a number of other services. Other suburban communities rely on Edmonton to provide many of these services. As a city, we should be pushing for a better distribution of tax revenue to ensure that we have the funding to provide services that whole capital region benefits from.

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.

My approach would be to promote a reorganization of the EFCL and the Community Leagues to put far more emphasis on leadership development and volunteer recruitment from which any political advocacy would arise. It is clear that most community leagues struggle with capacity and recognize they don't speak wholly for the community at large. Communities need increased ability to collaborate and negotiate with developers and affordable housing providers toward increased housing choice and more amenities.

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

No Answer.