



For Immediate Release

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End the City's housing crisis with *The Housing Answer*

Candidates urged to support campaign to end homelessness, build new housing

OTTAWA – Housing advocates unveiled today a new plan to end the housing crisis in the City of Ottawa, with no new taxes or spending increases required: *The Housing Answer*.

“City Council has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to actually end the housing crisis in the City of Ottawa without raising taxes or increasing the City budget” said Ishbel Solvason, Chair of the Ottawa Social Housing Network (OSHN). “We can do this now because the provincial government is taking back the cost of some social services. By the year 2018, we’ll have \$80 million per year freed up – we can’t pass this up.”

Council must use these freed up resources for their original purpose – reducing the effects of poverty in our community, said Solvason, adding that Council has an obligation to keep the money in the social services budget.

Solvason urged City Council to establish an annual fund of \$15 million for housing, and use this to leverage more resources from other levels of government. *The Housing Answer* would enable the City to work towards building 1000 new affordable housing and supportive housing units and fixing up 1,500 existing ones, boosting the quality of life and economic activity of thousands of Ottawans.

“Responsible leadership is all about converting plans into action,” Solvason said. “City Council has already adopted an Affordable Housing Strategy, an Action Plan on Homelessness, and a Poverty Reduction Strategy – now Council needs to turn those plans into action. I challenge candidates for Mayor and Council to get behind *The Housing Answer* during the campaign.”

The need for more affordable housing and supportive housing is clear, Solvason said. Two in five Ottawa renters pay more than 30 per cent of their income on rent, making their housing unaffordable. Half of all income earners in Ottawa can’t afford the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment. Roughly 37,000 renter households in Ottawa have incomes less than \$25,000 per year. The cost for emergency shelter spaces are projected to double over the next ten years if the housing crisis isn’t solved.

“City Council now has the resources and it has *The Housing Answer*,” Solvason said. “Let’s act. Let’s build new affordable housing, improve the existing stock and end the housing crisis once and for all in the City of Ottawa.”

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