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During October election door-knocking, the topic I most often heard about was housing affordability and homelessness. The City of Edmonton is aggressively dealing with these areas of concern. While affordable housing and homelessness issues are primarily a provincial responsibility, the City of Edmonton is partnering with the other orders of government, industry, and non-profit agencies to create innovative and real solutions that work.

City Council has demonstrated leadership with its creation of Cornerstones – Edmonton's Plan for Affordable Housing. The Plan will create over 3,800 long term affordable housing units by 2010 through 18 different initiatives, ranging from establishing a land bank, building and purchasing new units, rent supplements and leveraging millions of dollars.

Program and initiatives underway or in place:

- Secondary Suites Bylaw amendments
- Cornerstones Inclusionary Policy
- Edmonton Fixed Rate Rent Supplement Program
- Edmonton Fee Rebate Program for Affordable Housing
- HomeEd, the City of Edmonton's non-profit Housing Corporation manages 670 AH units
- First Time Homebuyers Program
- Fort Road Revitalization Project (20%) units will be more affordable
- Redevelopment of The Quarters
- Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program grant delivery

Cornerstones Roadmap:

- 975 units - new construction of affordable housing units
- 800 units – fixed rate rent supplement units
- 1,000 units – construction of new and renovation of existing secondary suites
- 296 units – purchase/renovate existing rental and condominium units and “newcomer” assistance motel
- 107 units – new construction transitional housing
- 700 units – purchase and or provision of land for mobile homes, modular construction, apartments

The Housing First policy for surplus city-owned land consideration, Fee Rebate for Affordable Housing Program and community based efforts to address homelessness are part of the comprehensive plans and partnerships between Edmonton, the other orders of government and community.

Without an adequate supply of safe and affordable housing, we cannot continue to attract and retain skilled labour. Without sufficient skilled labour, Edmonton's successful and growing economy will be negatively impacted with economic and social repercussions through Alberta and Canada.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at my office, 496-8130 or by e-mail at bryan.anderson@edmonton.ca.