

**Ron Smith (D-District 3) Responses to Heading Home Candidate Survey  
for the May 2, 2023 Bloomington Council Primary Election**

**1. What do you see as the most effective strategies to strengthen housing security in our community, ensuring that everyone has a safe, stable place to live? (250-word limit)**

I believe that to see everyone has a safe and stable place to live requires multiple and changing approaches to the issue. For the chronically unhoused with co-morbid conditions such as mental illness and substance use issues, we a more intense service model with robust staffing perhaps similar to a group home model for those with developmental disabilities. While coordinating group home placements during my 10 years with the Indiana Division of Developmental and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), I saw that intensive service levels are needed to help people manage their intensive behavioral and psychological conditions.

For those whose unhoused duration appears temporary, the services needs must be focused on helping people move though their temporary challenges such as rehabilitation due to a health issue, an industry downsizing or other non-chronic and less intensive challenges. New Hope for Families is a good example of a service organization addressing temporary homelessness.

For those whose income can't keep up with the increasing cost of development in Bloomington, the city needs to modify the Unified Development Ordinance to incentivize workforce/affordable housing so people don't have to move out of Bloomington when looking for an affordable home to buy. Additionally, the city needs to continue funding the multiple approaches.

**2. What are your top 3 council legislative priorities to address the scarcity of low-income housing in Bloomington? (250-word limit)**

1. Help a lead agency work with the county and local communities to consolidate resources for a region-wide approach to the complex housing problem. Bloomington just can't do it alone.
2. Modify the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to incentivize affordable housing tied to Area Median Income (AMI) levels so we have an idea of what that means in terms of affordable rents for people.

3. Add additional funds to a city housing programs to help people access a “Section 8 like” housing voucher system to subsidize housing costs and associated programming to move able people into job training programs.

**3. What actions should the City of Bloomington take to reduce homelessness, and what would you do on council to implement those actions? (250-word limit)**

The actions the City of Bloomington should take to reduce homelessness are, as previously mentioned, helping coordinate a region wide approach to the issue of homelessness, enhancing the funding for a “Section 8 like” housing program with ancillary services to help people move into employment, and modify the Unified Development Ordinance to incentive more affordable/workforce housing.

I have had discussions with city staff, local real estate professionals and Plan Commission members in an effort to understand how to modify the Unified Development Ordinance in order to produce more affordable housing. I will continue to support funding existing and new programs who provide social services and shelter to the unhoused.