

## Hopi Stosberg (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?**

In order to strengthen housing security, we need more units of housing, to ensure adequate oversight of existing housing, and improve community connectivity.

More rental units are needed for moderate, low, and very low income levels. More ownership options are needed for moderate and middle income levels. It would certainly be an effective strategy to add more of these units to the Bloomington housing stock. Specifically in District 3 there is a need for more affordable ownership opportunities. The real challenge is figuring out where there is space to expand available units and finding developers interested in creating more affordable housing stock.

Second, having a place to live is one thing, but making sure the housing is safe and secure is a different issue. It is imperative HAND continue to support citizens by inspecting apartments on a rotating cycle and responding in a timely manner to complaints made against management companies.

Third, part of stability is being able to access necessary services, like grocers, employment, schools, childcare, and healthcare. To that end, ensuring connectivity for multiple transportation modes is essential. I'm happy to see public transit already being expanded with new bus lines and additional services. This needs to continue. Areas that lack safe pedestrian street crossings, making it challenging for residents to access essential services, need to be improved. In some cases safe cycling routes need to be advertised more widely and in other cases safe routes need to be created.

### **2. What are your top 3 council legislative priorities to address the scarcity of low-income housing in Bloomington?**

First, Land Trust options are a good way to add affordable ownership options to the Bloomington housing stock. A local land trust is just getting started and as a council member I would do what I could to support establishment and expansion of land trusts.

Second, I would support incentivizing developers who have a strong history of family focused development, to create affordable housing units by offering subsidies, reduced fees, etc. as possible.

Third, diversifying available housing to ensure that people can find right-size housing that suits their needs no matter what area of town they want to live in would be a priority. This could be done through owner occupied incentives for additions like Accessory Dwelling Units, land and housing studies to determine which categories of housing are missing and what land might be available for future development, and potential zoning changes.

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

First, as mentioned above, more housing stock geared toward low and very low income residents needs to be added to the Bloomington housing stock.

Second, homelessness occurs for a variety of reasons including job loss, unexpected disaster, mental instability, and addiction. While it is essential to ensure adequate housing options are available, the root causes of homelessness need to be addressed in order to keep people successfully housed. Residents who are unhoused due to addiction or mental instability have additional needs. It is essential that those needs be supported. From a City Council perspective this means collaborating with and supporting local organizations providing addiction and mental health support services. This could mean supporting creation of a community that provides wrap-around care so people can access many support services (food assistance, physical and mental health care, employment support, etc.) in one place to make it easier for both the client and the partner organizations. This could also mean collaborating with an agency interested in supported living arrangements for those struggling with addiction or mental health.

Third, the city of Bloomington HAND department has numerous grant, loan, and risk mitigation programs to support landlords and tenants in low-income complexes. I would support additional educational outreach to the rental community (including tenants and landlords/management companies) to ensure full understanding of the options available.