

Shruti Rana (D-District 5) 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?

Our city must prioritize access to affordable housing and building sustainable neighborhoods with thriving public spaces and easy access to public transportation. I believe in adopting best practices from communities similar to ours that are building affordable workforce housing. We must also utilize a shared collaboration model, including residents, neighbors, employers, experts in the field, and city and county leadership to develop solutions, as we saw with Heading Home in 2021. We can offer creative solutions such as housing grants or providing loans to reduce housing costs. I would propose funding these programs through budget and public finance surpluses, and seek voter approval as appropriate. We can also support the construction of climate and energy friendly buildings with multiple housing options that will help us increase the diversity and inclusivity of our city. The costs of these options would be integrated into the costs of development, and would be supplemented by federal grants for renewable energy programs as offered through the Inflation Reduction Act.

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

Housing security is a pressing concern that requires fast, equitable and sustainable action. My first priority would be working to get housing grants into the hands of the people and families in urgent need or in precarious situations. Second, I would prioritize researching best practices for workforce housing and working with employers to ensure they are supporting secure and affordable workforce housing in Bloomington. Third, I believe we need to work with Indiana University to support student housing options and planning that takes into account the varied needs and stakeholders in our city.

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

Our city must play a critical leadership role in bringing together community groups, healthcare providers and resources to proactively address the root causes of homelessness and reduce the barriers preventing people from receiving care and support. Our city must enhance the continuum of care to improve mental health and



recovery as well as provide crisis support and resources to prevent smaller issues from cascading into evictions and the loss of safety nets. City leaders can improve integration and coordination of services to make it easier for people to access the full range of support needed to thrive. I also support utilizing “one-stop” care models I have studied in my human rights advocacy work. Under this approach, people in crisis can access counseling, healthcare, housing services, legal and social services in one location. This type of comprehensive approach is a model our city can successfully draw from to improve and support housing security in an equitable manner.