Cities for Everyone

Cities for Everyone supports more affordable housing and transportation, in order to provide security, mobility and opportunity for people with all incomes and abilities

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Municipal Candidates Affordability Survey

Please fill out this survey and return to info@citiesforeveryone.org by 24 September 2018.

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For more information see the *Victoria Affordability Backgrounder* and other documents at www.citiesforeveryone.org.

Context	Questions	Comments
Our region is considered unaffordable, based on income-to-cost ratios (households spending no more than 45% of income on housing and transport), and low rental vacancy rates.	1. What priority do you give to local efforts to increase affordability? **High: x**	
Many middle-income households ($40-80k per year) spend more on housing and transport than is affordable, and so want more middle-priced ($1,200-2,500 per month) housing in walkable urban neighbourhoods.	2. Do you support efforts to increase middle- as well as lower-income affordability? **Yes: x**	
Affordable infill (more compact housing types, such as multiplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings, within existing urban areas) is often opposed by neighborhoods who want to preserve existing conditions.	3. Do you support affordable infill: **In some neighborhoods x**	We need to bring in infill rules and guidelines so people can bring forward projects to council. We will still control the form and design of any infill project, but we need more housing options.

Context	Questions	Comments
Most residential neighbourhoods only allow two stories and limited densities, which excludes most *missing middle* housing (see below). Affordable housing requires upzoning.	4. Do you support upzoning: **In a case-by-case basis x**	Because Oak Bay is a suburban setting with primarily with single family homes, it makes more sense to focus increases of density around already dense areas and those within walking distance of services.

The "missing middle" includes moderate density housing types such as multiplexes, townhomes and low-rise apartments. These are generally the least costly houses to develop.

Context	Questions	Comments
Many jurisdictions have *inclusionary* mandates which require that a portion (typically 5-15%) of new units be priced below market rates. However, if this requirement is excessive it can reduce the number of new units built.	5. Do you support mandates: **Only on a case-by-case basis x**	We have very few large projects like this, so it would make sense to judge them on a case to case basis.
Urban parking typically costs $10-60k per space, and an increasing portion of households are car-free. For affordability and fairness sake many experts recommend reducing parking requirements so occupants are not forced to pay for costly spaces they do not need.	6. Do you support reduced parking requirements for infill housing, even if some neighbours object? **Maybe x**	When deciding parking requirements, it depends on the traffic and parking studies done by experts, and by also what staff believes is appropriate.

Context	Questions	Comments
Infill development often requires variances to allow taller buildings, higher densities and fewer parking spaces than codes require. Neighbors often oppose these variances.	7. Would you approve variances needed for medium-priced infill? **Approve if appropriate**	Depends on the area and location of the infill, setbacks and other factors. It's important to rely on both technical studies and staff recommendations for variances on, for example, parking.
Oak Bay's *Official Community Plan* allows up to three stories in *urban villages* and eight stories in *multi-unit residential areas,* but some residents consider these too tall and dense.	8. If a proposed development meets OCP guidelines and includes moderate-priced units (less than $600k), but is opposed by some neighbors, would you: **Approve if the project makes sense for Oak Bay.**	There are many other factors that come into play when considering building these sorts of buildings. There are also other portions of the OCP, like protecting our urban forest, that needs to be considered. We do need more affordable housing in Oak Bay, and we need to work with both the residents that are impacted and with the developers to try to get a project that affects the neighbours the least, but also provides the missing middle in our housing.

9. What other municipal affordability strategies do you support?
One strategy we should move on is legalizing and regulating secondary suites. It will increase the rental market but, more importantly, remove the quasi-legal status that people that live in suites currently face. Legalizing suites is not just about confirming a revenue stream, but making those that live in suites secure in their housing and legitimate members of our community.

10. Please let us know if you have other thoughts concerning our community's inaffordability problems and solutions?

The affordability crisis is a region-wide problem, and one that every municipality has to do its part to help provide more housing options.