

## Canada Votes 2025: Candidates address the affordable housing crisis

Affordability and housing remain top issues among Canadian voters this Federal election, as it was in the Provincial election earlier this year.

Each of the Federal parties has proposed what they feel are solutions to ease affordability and increase housing stock.

This week, The Auroran asked confirmed candidates in Newmarket-Aurora and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill how they would achieve that and whether the Federal government should be in the business of building homes.

### AURORA-OAK RIDGES-RICHMOND HILL

Conservative candidate Costas Menegakis says if his party forms government, Canadians will see an approach based in 'targeted relief' and GST exemptions on new homes up to \$1.3 million, which he says will see home buyers save up to \$65,000.

'Our plan also rewards municipalities exceeding housing targets with a 'Super Bonus' while holding CMHC accountable by cutting executive compensation if approval timelines exceed 60 days,' he says. 'Additionally, within 18 months, our Party commits to repurposing 15 per cent of Federal buildings and appropriate lands (from the government's 37,000 properties) into affordable housing. After 10 years and repeated broken promises by this Liberal government, it's time for a government that backs up words with action.'

Incumbent Liberal candidate Leah Taylor Roy, on the other hand, cites a number of ways the Liberals took action in the most recent Parliament to improve the situation.

'Housing is one of the defining issues shaping the future of our community. Whether you're a young professional thinking about your next step, a growing family searching for more space, or an older adult looking to stay close to your support network, finding a home that fits your life shouldn't feel out of reach,' she says, adding people in Aurora and Richmond Hill are proud to live, work and raise families in the communities 'communities in which they want to stay.

'That's why we need to make sure housing is built in a way that supports the real needs of our residents, not just the pressures of the market,' she says. 'This is why I joined our new leader, Mark Carney, right here in York Region to support a serious, national housing plan 'one that reflects the urgency we're seeing and delivers practical results for people in our community. This isn't about quick fixes. It's about finally catching up to what Canadians need 'homes that are affordable, accessible, and built in the right places. We're not building fast enough today, and we won't close the gap if we keep relying on the same approaches. Like we did after World War II, it's time for the federal government to lead 'and that's exactly what we're doing.'

The Liberal plan, she says, includes working with municipalities, builders and non-profits to build 500,000 homes annually, 'faster and smarter'; eliminating the GST on new homes under \$1 million for first-time home-buyers, which would save families up to \$500,000; an expansion of the Housing Accelerator Fund to support communities in planning, unlocking new land for housing, and speeding up the permit process; an investment of homes near GO stations and other public transit routes; and facilitating 'diverse housing options,' including modular and student housing.

'This isn't about politics. It's about ensuring that people can stay in the communities they love 'close to their support systems, close to opportunity, and close to each other. We need to stop thinking of housing as just an economic issue 'it's a community one, a family one, a future one,' she says. 'I've fought to bring housing dollars and tools to our region, and I will keep doing that. Because for me, this isn't about announcements 'it's about outcomes. It's about making sure that the next generation can afford to live here, that seniors can age with dignity nearby, and that housing works for real people 'not just markets.

People's Party of Canada candidate Igor Tvorgov says the 'fundamental problem' when it comes to housing affordability is 'the

mismatch between supply and demand.?

?That is made worse with mass immigration and zoning restrictions,? he says. ?Inflation is also a major problem in every sector of the economy, and housing is no exception. This is a consequence of Bank of Canada having printed too much money to fund Trudeau's government gigantic deficits. A People's Party government will impose moratorium on immigration for as many years as necessary until the housing crisis has cooled down. We will also impose restrictions on foreign home buyers to curb speculation and money laundering by non-residents, as well as modify the Bank of Canada's inflation target from 2% to 0%. This will cool down the inflation in all sectors, including housing. Finally, we will respect local governments' responsibilities in housing and stop pressuring municipalities to ?densify? old neighborhoods in order to accommodate mass immigration policies.?

## **NEWMARKET-AURORA**

Liberal candidate Jennifer McLachlan says she has heard ?loud and clear from young people and families? in the riding that they feel homeownership is ?slipping further out of reach,? something she says she takes particularly to heart as a mother of two daughters in their 20s.

?We need to take bold action to make sure that our kids can afford housing,? she says. ?That's why Mark Carney and the Liberal team have put forward the most ambitious housing plan since the Second World War ? and yes, this means getting the federal government back into the business of building homes Canadians can afford. Our plan will double the pace of home construction to almost 500,000 new homes a year over the next decade. We're creating Build Canada Homes (BCH) ? a national initiative that will act as a developer to build affordable housing at scale, including on public lands. BCH will provide over \$25 billion in financing for innovative home builders, using Canadian resources like mass timber and softwood lumber, and helping to cut construction costs while building sustainably.?

Additional measures cited by McLachlan include cutting municipal development charges in half for multi-unit housing to lower building costs; reintroduce tax incentives to spur rental housing ?as we did successfully in the 1970s?; the aforementioned elimination on GST for first time home-buyers on homes priced up to \$1 million; and a \$1 billion investment in home retrofits to help families ?adopt clean heating and cooling technologies, and protecting against extreme weather events like floods and wildfires.?

?Canada has solved a housing crisis before, and with this plan, we will do it again,? she says. ?In short, the Federal government must play a direct role in building homes. And under a Liberal government, we will.?

Conservative candidate Sandra Cobena says housing costs have doubled ?as Liberals inflated demand with out-of-control immigration and money-printing, and blocked homebuilding with bureaucracy.?

She says the solutions offered by the Liberals under Mark Carney is simply ?recycling failed Trudeau housing policies.?

?They would create a new crown corporation called Build?Canada?Homes. It is the old Trudeau housing strategy from 2017 with a new paint job, the government as contractor, banker, foreman and landlord,? says Cobena. ?Should Ottawa be in the home?building business? No. It should create the conditions for homes to be constructed at a price that they can be bought. I have not met a single person in our riding who said that they want the government to be their landlord, everyone has said that they want to own a home and start building a future for their family. We can't elect a government that is giving up on home ownership. Canada needs energetic and decisive leadership to take steps in the right direction with the housing crisis and align our immigration strategy to housing availability.?

The Conservative solution, she says, is to ?open the gate, let builders build, and get out of the way.? Measures include scrapping the GST on new homes up to \$1.3 million; bringing back apprenticeship grants and fund training halls ?so we have sufficient trades workers to get homes built?; incentive municipalities to speed up permits, free up land, and cut development charges to build 15 per cent more homes per year; and auction off ?idle? Federal land and buildings where residential construction is possible.

?We need change. With this plan the young couple in Newmarket-Aurora just might turn the keys to unlock their new home,? she says.

**By Brock Weir**