

Steven Warren – Green Party of Ontario

Q: Do you support zoning and building code reforms that would make intensification simpler and more permissive, with an explicit goal of creating 15-minute walkable neighborhoods and building missing-middle housing and purpose-built rental units? If yes, which?

A: Absolutely, the Ontario Greens are committed to making housing more accessible and affordable for everyone. Our plan on housing is very comprehensive and includes policies focused on investing in purpose-built affordable homes in communities where people want to live, work and play. We are also committed to investing in new pathways to homeownership, and believe in protecting renters from the unaffordable price of rentals. Our strategy also includes investments in sustainable development strategies such as building within existing urban boundaries, with respect to our natural environment.

Q: Do you support the province allowing four-unit multiplexes in all neighborhoods and 10 units by right near transit?

A: Yes. The housing crisis has made it nearly impossible for young people to even dream of ownership in their lifetime. Each and every year, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep a roof over one's head while also paying the bills and putting food on the table. Fact is, too many people are experiencing legislative poverty, and we should be investing in new solutions to these problems.

Q: What should the province be doing to invest in deeply affordable housing, including co-op housing, and to reduce waitlists and repair backlogs for social housing in Ottawa?

A: To effectively combat poverty in our densely populated communities, it is imperative to prioritize investments in new housing developments, specifically designed for affordable rental units and cooperative housing. Regrettably, it has been almost thirty years since we last adopted a proactive stance towards housing in our province. Since 1992, there has been an alarming lack of investment in affordable or social housing initiatives. It is unrealistic to expect to provide adequate housing for individuals if we fail to construct affordable homes within the communities they hold dear. The solution is as straightforward as that.

Q: What should the province be doing to protect tenants?

A: The provincial government should be protecting tenants by providing support to help them, instead of gouging them each and every year. The average rent for a 2 bedroom apartment in Ottawa in 2013 was \$1,168 - that number today is \$2,363. The provincial government has a responsibility to protect renters, not speculators. We also need to take into account homeowners, for example the 2024 rent increase is capped at 2.5% while inflation hit 7% in 2021.

Q: What should the province be doing to ensure that Ottawa reaches the provincially set target of new homes that the city agreed to in their housing pledge?

A: The province should be supporting communities by investing in the development of sustainable, 15-minute communities where we can live, work and play. We can achieve this by investing in the building of new affordable housing units, putting protections in place for renters, and incentivizing homeownership by investing in families. The provincial government should also look at investing in improvements for existing low-income housing to improve existing supply.

Q: Kanata-Carleton is a primarily rural riding and would be negatively affected by urban sprawl. What will you do to ensure the majority of new housing development happens in existing neighborhoods in Kanata as infill?

A: The Ontario Greens are committed to protecting the vulnerable communities within and around our Greenbelt, and other natural protected lands. Ontario Greens will ensure that the rural communities within our riding are supported as they grow, investing in new solutions and without paving over the lands that protect and feed us. We need to take value for money into consideration when talking about building affordable housing. Take into consideration the space we have available that isn't protected or otherwise vulnerable. We need to design these growing communities with families & renters in mind.

Q: The City of Ottawa's Official Plan envisions rural villages, such as those in Kanata-Carleton, remaining affordable to residents by evolving to 15-minute villages with some multifamily infill development. Do you support that, and if yes, what can the province do to encourage it?

A: Definitely. I think it's important to look for new ideas, to find solutions with people and communities in mind. I think it's also very important that there is a dialogue between the government and the communities they represent to ensure that there's consultation and transparency. The provincial government should focus on investing in these solutions, such as building multi-purpose buildings for low-income families, geared to income units for those living in legislative poverty, or those on ODSP. Furthermore, we should be investing in more housing within existing urban boundaries and with respect to our natural and protected environment.