

HOUSING AS A MUNICIPAL ELECTION ISSUE



*Municipality of the County of Kings
Candidate Responses*



www.homelessnomore.ca



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

The Homeless No More Initiative invited candidates to respond to questions about housing. Candidates were provided the opportunity to respond to our questions via email or complete an online questionnaire. Candidates who completed the questionnaire had the opportunity to provide responses to additional questions. This report includes publicly shareable responses.

Question 1: If elected, what action(s) will you take to address housing in your community?

Paul Dixon, Candidate for District 6

I own Safeguard Property Management and through my job I am very aware of the issue of housing. As a Councillor I would ensure we are stream lining processes to allow for the responsible development of all forms of housing. I would also work with community groups to support housing initiatives as well as counterparts of the Provincial Government for funding of projects.

Kevin Davison, Candidate for District 8

When I was elected in the by-election last year, one of my biggest concerns was housing and affordable housing. I met with several developers and we openly spoke about affordable housing and how we should push to have the development quicker to elevate the pressures of homelessness.

Ryan Levy, Candidate for District 9

I would support any reasonably rezoning to promote development for first time house buyers

Lexie Burgess, Candidate for District 2

Housing has been on my radar since first elected in 2020. I attended meetings with the housing no more folks early on in my tenure. I've spoken openly at council and in community about what is currently not working and what changes could be beneficial. I attended meetings with the province in regards to the pallet project; advocating for the community but also ensuring we are meeting the housing needs. I will continue to advocate at a provincial level for meaningful change that can take place in a timely matter. I will advocate and push for support of grassroots organizations to receive funding for projects which directly impact housing challenges. I would challenge council to find vacant land, and vacant properties that could be used to serve the community.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 1: If elected, what action(s) will you take to address housing in your community?

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8

I will pursue both long-term and short-term strategies to address housing access and affordability. On the long-term side, I will work to engage and leverage the considerable resources of both federal and provincial governments to ensure the county is able to take advantage of programs, incentives, and cost-sharing initiatives to directly support housing.

In the short term, I will propose an amendment to our Land Use Bylaw, to remove portions of the bylaw that prohibit granny flats in residential zones. The previous council made a good start by removing this prohibition in growth centres but in my opinion, during a housing crisis, it is inexcusable that there is any potential housing space that is unavailable due to a bylaw.

Madonna Spinazola, Candidate for Mayor

I plan to champion proactive housing initiatives that build on my previous successes in Kings County. My approach will involve:

- Expanding affordable housing options through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and provincial funding programs.
- Streamlining the approval process for constructing housing units, particularly for affordable and mixed-income projects.
- Encouraging innovative housing solutions, such as community land trusts and co-operative housing models, which empower residents and ensure long-term affordability.
- Advocating for stronger municipal protections against renovictions and other practices that displace vulnerable residents.

Rob Buchan, Candidate for District 6

I am committed to reviewing policies and bylaws to simplify development in our community as well as rezoning to reflect more mixed density neighborhoods, providing more opportunities for affordable housing which meets a variety of needs.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 1: If elected, what action(s) will you take to address housing in your community?

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor

As Mayor, I will lead council to address the urgent need for affordable rental and/or home-purchases as a priority.

Mary Ritchie, Candidate for District 5

When I am elected: I want to help owners and developers easily rezone unused buildings, such as old churches, old schools, community halls, even former commercial structure that have been vacant and change them into housing buildings. My hope is that if these buildings have been vacant for say 5 years... Then the Municipality should allow the owner of the building the option to rezone them to residential for a nominal fee, and get these buildings redone into homes instead of being empty and unused. The process now to change the zoning on these properties, is very expensive and time consuming and a literal Battle to get planning permission to even bring it to council to change. If we made it that at a set period of time, they have been empty, they would have the option to change to Residential. I feel that would be one way to get a lot of homes available quickly.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 2: In your opinion, what are the housing needs of people living in your district or municipal unit?

Paul Dixon, Candidate for District 6

Throughout Kings County, the need for housing is extreme and all levels of Government need to work together for solutions.

Kevin Davison, Candidate for District 8

The needs are not just that we don't have enough housing, but how most can not afford to pay for rent, or have issues getting mortgages. We must find a way to cap rent and make it easier for people to get a mortgage.

Ryan Levy, Candidate for District 9

In my district. Residents need more access to land rezoning to build small first homes or the ability to subdivide existing family property to build a secondary family home

Lexie Burgess, Candidate for District 2

The housing needs that I see in my area are exurbanite wait times, unrealistic support programs, turn over of public housing, accountability and client support in public housing, lack of funding and support for current agencies, the influx of clients from out of area stretching the current resources beyond capacity.

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8

The Ivany Report, released over 10 years ago, laid out a plan to grow the population of the province through Eastern Migration. The pace of growth has only increased since then: from just over 930,000 in 2016 to over 1M today. The inability of all levels of government to adequately plan, prepare, and facilitate growth (including the maintenance and expansion of critical infrastructure, like drainage/flood mitigation, water services, and sewer services) has left us in a tough spot. Add In a multi-year global pandemic and an extraordinary supply-chain crisis and we end up where we are today: even further behind the 8-ball.

There is no one social or economic demographic that has not been affected by this confluence of factors and current level of government response. Housing prices



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 2: In your opinion, what are the housing needs of people living in your district or municipal unit?

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8 (continued)

have gone up exponentially, as have interest rates. Increased borrowing costs have caused overhead to balloon and lead developers to scale-back their building plans. The lack of supply and affordability has driven people from home ownership to the rental market which, as a result, is not able to meet demand and has driven those prices up. People who have long-ago paid for their home, living on fixed income, are struggling to pay their property taxes. A two-income family can no longer afford to pay a mortgage payment that started at 1% interest and currently sits at over 5%. Students have difficulty finding safe, secure rental accommodations. Young families can no longer save enough for a down-payment for a starter home. It impacts all of us.

Madonna Spinazola, Candidate for Mayor

The most pressing needs in our district include:

- More affordable rental units for low- and middle-income families and seniors.
- Supportive housing for individuals transitioning out of homelessness, especially those with mental health and addiction challenges. (i.e. Counselling workshops to provide valuable resources to ensure families and individuals have the skills necessary to be successful)
- Emergency shelters and temporary housing for those experiencing crisis situations.
- Sustainable housing options for seniors and people with disabilities, including accessible units and opportunities for aging in place.

Rob Buchan, Candidate for District 6

Affordable housing, whether it be renters or owners.

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor

It is notable that mayor and all councillors are mandated to consider all districts, not only his/her/its own. A variety of age groups require help with housing, from youth living rough, because they cannot find an affordable rental unit, to seniors living in higher income circumstances, who downsize as they age and may lose the ability to manage homeownership. When mental health, physical disability and/or addiction



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 2: In your opinion, what are the housing needs of people living in your district or municipal unit?

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor (continued)

issues are also present, the complexity of how best to provide safe and/or affordable options increases. Delivering appropriate housing to meet demand will require input from those without housing, governments at all levels, developers, and organizations like yours who are connected and have first-hand knowledgeable of current issues.

Mary Ritchie, Candidate for District 5

The housing needs currently besides the obvious shortage, is the cost of rent, the cost of property tax, and insurance, and the cost to heat.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 3: What role do you think municipal government can play in addressing those needs?

Paul Dixon, Candidate for District 6

Zoning, development and support.

Kevin Davison, Candidate for District 8

The Municipalities need to get moving on steps to get development started sooner. . . When councillors see the problem on starting a development, they need to go to bat and have these move quicker and more smooth.

Ryan Levy, Candidate for District 9

Reasonable rezoning should be easily approved. Barriers for development need to be lowered so our homeless or hidden homeless can have access to 1st homes or secondary homes on existing family property

Lexie Burgess, Candidate for District 2

Municipal government must lobby the provincial and federal government to implement programs which directly impact people on the ground. Programs without out plan or input from the boots on the ground do a disservice to what is actually needed. I would push that Municipal politicians pay less to the larger government organizations and better support grassroots initiatives to ensure they are able to successfully meet goals.

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8

To be blunt, it takes far too long for development to go from concept to completion in Kings County. The result is we are faced with a housing supply crisis, like virtually every other municipality in the country, but our approach intensifies the problem. While the principles and goals espoused in the 2024-2027 MOK Economic Development Strategy are a good start; I have spoken to enough developers and seen enough stalled development in my district to realise that there is still work to be done. The municipality must change its stance from a growth gatekeeper to building facilitator. To be clear, I am not saying that we scrap the rules and regulations to start building willy-nilly. That said, we can continue to review and make practical changes to our zoning, permit issuing, inspection, and deed transfer



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 3: What role do you think municipal government can play in addressing those needs?

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8 (continued)

processes that will continue to ensure safe and secure buildings, while protecting our environment, maintaining the character of our neighbourhoods, and preserving agricultural land.

Madonna Spinazola, Candidate for Mayor

Municipal government has a critical role in addressing housing needs by:

- Setting local policies that encourage affordable housing, including zoning reforms and incentives for contractors.
- Collaborating with community organizations and other levels of government to create a coordinated response to homelessness and housing insecurity.
- Ensuring municipal resources and programs are responsive to the needs of marginalized populations, including those facing homelessness.
- Advocating for provincial and federal funding to support affordable housing initiatives in rural communities like ours.

Rob Buchan, Candidate for District 6

As mentioned above, we as Councillors can direct staff to revise policies, bylaws and streamline processes to reduce unnecessary red tape and speed up time lines for development and changes.

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor

- Through a community engagement strategy, council can meet and learn from key community associations, both local and beyond our borders who have been successful in bringing projects to the finish line. This will provide council, as the leaders in this process, with the right information for to be considered in their review of regulations within our current growth centres.
- Council through its Chief Administrative Officer, can pass a motion to review the Land Use Bylaw to amend regulations for Growth Centres, ensuring opportunities for the development of affordable housing are maximized.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 3: What role do you think municipal government can play in addressing those needs?

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor (continued)

- Create effective policy and a standing committee of council to guide ongoing work aimed at increasing the supply of affordable housing units.

In other words, council, under bold leadership regarding affordable housing, can clearly articulate the results we expect staff recommendations to achieve. We can, and must, be a willing partner, some of my suggestions include:

- Ensure modular homes are made compliant with appropriate zones within our Land Use Bylaw. (Built in a factory setting these can reduce construction costs, decrease construction time, and add energy efficiencies. The economy of scale related to producing multiple units of a similar type contributes to affordability).
- Find the right pathway to the long-term lease of surplus government-owned land (municipal, provincial, and federal) to non-profits and/or developers because removing the cost of purchasing land will decrease the end cost for housing.
- Building all homes to a high energy efficiency standard to lessen heating and cooling costs for the long-term.
- Create a strategy that will see development through the lens of creating communities versus “just housing.”

Mary Ritchie, Candidate for District 5

The Municipal government is Key in addressing these issues, as the need to be more of an educational based department, and not a "monopolizing the information" base department. They NEED to actively assist and lead the development applicants, so there is not this huge bottle necking that is currently happening at that level of government. They need to be accountable for the information and control over projects, and not use their authority against the very people that are paying their wages and they need to be open to discussing and developing good plans for the people that they are supposed to be there to help.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 4: If elected, what are you willing to do to ensure that your council addresses the issue of housing in your community?

Paul Dixon, Candidate for District 6

Municipal Government does not have the funding required to put buildings in the ground but as a Councillor I am in full support of eliminating red tape and working with other levels of Government towards solutions.

Kevin Davison, Candidate for District 8

I have, and I will again, be talking about housing. We need to keep updated on the movement of housing with the province as well. I would like to see some of the steps of development moved through quicker and give tax breaks for those that are actively building to help with incredibly high costs.

Ryan Levy, Candidate for District 9

I would champion any initiative that would help my constituents to gain access to permanent housing. There are many families being forced to make generational homes out of existing single family dwellings. Allowing more secondary homes will help alleviate the stress on our older generation being forced to take in their children and grandchildren out of necessity. Our parents and grandparents deserve better. Our younger generation deserve access to homes

Lexie Burgess, Candidate for District 2

I've been a very outspoken about the housing issues in our community. I've personally experienced the insecurity of renting and never knowing when you may be homeless. I think council needs to better follow the needs of the community and the advice of the provincials who work in this realm daily to develop policy which can better impact and make measurable changes.

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8

As the campaign has evolved, fortunately, the issue of housing and growth has remained front and centre. By and large, there seems to be consensus amongst candidates that there is the opportunity and the will to make meaningful changes to policies and programs to address the issue. After the campaign is over, I fully intend to continue to advocate at every opportunity I have – both in committee of the



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 4: If elected, what are you willing to do to ensure that your council addresses the issue of housing in your community?

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8 (continued)

whole and key committees (like audit and finance, Diversity Kings County, and the planning advisory committee).

I will also continue my community activism and engagement, to ensure that I remain aware of both long-standing and emerging issues on the front line. For example, I took advantage of the first opportunity offered to the public to tour Tiny Meadows Shelter Village, in Kentville. I intend to follow that project closely to see what lessons can be learned.

Finally, I will use my platform as an elected official to advocate and draw attention to the issue. Whether it is speaking to the press, addressing a chamber of commerce, or chatting with constituents at the coffee shop – I always make time for open dialogue on this critical issue.

Madonna Spinazola, Candidate for Mayor

I will actively bring housing to the forefront of council discussions and advocate for the allocation of resources toward affordable housing projects. I will work to establish a Municipal housing advisory committee that includes community representatives, local organizations, and housing advocates to ensure that our decisions reflect the needs of the people most affected by housing challenges.

Rob Buchan, Candidate for District 6

I believe the current Council has been working toward these resolves and I will continue to ensure this priority remains on our strategic plan for our term, and staff is making tangible progress on these revisions, which can be measured through reduced time and successful execution of development agreements, more as right opportunities to add ADU's, suites, or income properties.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 4: If elected, what are you willing to do to ensure that your council addresses the issue of housing in your community?

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor

In Summary:

- Consult.
- Set ambitious timelines for results.
- Invest through leasing of land, grants to non-profit housing organizations.
- Create a standing committee on affordable housing to guide community engagement and ongoing work.

Mary Ritchie, Candidate for District 5

I am already addressing the issues of homelessness, and whether you elect me or not, that will not change. I am currently working with private individuals looking to open a homeless shelter in the local area. Further, I am actively participating in a tiny home project for affordable housing on vacant lands already owned by the government. I will continue to encourage all my fellow councillors to support these developments, while trying to make rent cost affordable for both the renter, and the property owners. If you don't have both .. One can't afford to rent, and the other can't afford to own the property to rent. That is a too way street, and the municipal government can influence those changes to help both, by making access to zoning smoother, planning development smoother, and better use of their spending, to help people that need it, and not waste our taxes on things aren't needed, like a \$100,000 Pergola on the front of the municipal building. We can help in the way of subsidizing rent in the short term, but we need to find a real solution, that is a win win for everyone.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Note: Only those who completed the online survey could answer this question.

Question 5: Which of the opportunities for municipalities to address housing needs in your community would you be committed to supporting as a member of Council?

Vacant Property Registration

Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Vacant Property Taxes

Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Incentives for Renting Out

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy

Registration of Tourist Accommodations

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Elimination of Non-Owner-Occupied Tourist Accommodations

Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy

Landlord Licensing/Registration

Kevin Davison
Lexie Burgess

Developing a housing plan/strategy

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Initiatives to support energy efficiency for homeowners and renters

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Note: Only those who completed the online survey could answer this question.

Question 6: Which actions will you commit to doing, as a member of Council, with respect to supporting community housing needs?

Adopting a Municipal affordable housing plan that increases the supply of safe, affordable housing that meets peoples' needs

Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Championing the role of Municipal Government in addressing issues related to housing

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Ensuring local policies reflect the vision of Federal and Provincial housing policies

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Engaging with local agencies, NGO's and stakeholders in creating a community driven action plan

Paul Dixon
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Ensuring local agencies are heard by funders and Government stakeholders

Paul Dixon
Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess

Ensuring local businesses are supported in the effort to make a living wage the baseline for all employee compensation

Kevin Davison
Ryan Levy
Lexie Burgess



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Note: Only those who completed the online survey could answer this question.

Question 7: If you have identified other opportunities for action on housing, please share them with us here.

Paul Dixon, Candidate for District 6

We need to work with the Provincial Government to provide better Mental Health Support as a link to supporting local organizations within the community.

Kevin Davison, Candidate for District 8

We are in a crisis and we must, as a municipal government assist in getting housing started sooner and making it easier for developers to have tax breaks. In addition, stay in top of making sure, seniors and first time owners and renters are not going broke and unable to afford other amenities.

Lexie Burgess, Candidate for District 2

The current rental subsidy averages are grossly under what people are paid. This paired with the fact people are not bringing home their gross income which is what these programs are based on. There is also substantial waitlists which exacerbate the financial burden of people trying to secure housing. When the cost of living is so unmanageable thinking of having to pay rent of \$2000 or more while waiting to receive a grant is terrifying.

The current heating rebate program needs to be readdressed. \$500 a year does very little to support families. Especially when many of the homes or apartments that are available for rental are outdated and have very little energy efficiency to ensure the dollar value for heating and electrical are spread further.

To piggy back on energy efficiency a lot of the current efficiency programs are not designed for landlords or tenants. Therefore there is little in the way of government support to better make rentals efficient. Windows that are single pane, attics with little insulation and un heated basement create unnecessary drafts which make the money paid to heat homes or power homes go literally out the window.



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 8: What are your questions or comments about housing?

Kevin Davison, Candidate for District 8

We have a lot of work to do and I am willing to work hard to ensure that we have plans in place to combat a major problem that is all too familiar right now. Not enough housing is a major issue that we have to work harder to make happen, quicker, safer and more efficiently.

Christina Sappington, Candidate for District 8

This is less of a comment about housing and more of a thank you. Thank you for reaching out and for your activism, I appreciate it. On a personal level, I am currently attending first aid and mental health training through the Orchard Valley United Church, so I can fully participate in their community outreach program. I believe there is more we can do, individually and collectively, to address the issue. I want to help using all the tools I have available at my disposal. I have an open-door policy, please reach out to me any time:

Christina Sappington Candidate for Council, District 8, Municipality of the County of Kings 782-232-4778 info@christinasappington.ca www.christinasappington.ca

Madonna Spinazola, Candidate for Mayor

How can we “do better” to explore innovative housing models and address the root causes of homelessness, including poverty, mental health, and substance use? I would welcome a discussion with Homeless No More on how we can best target resources to provide long-term solutions, particularly in rural areas where housing challenges often go unnoticed.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my views, and I look forward to working together to address housing and homelessness challenges in Kings County. In 2013, I established the “Housing First Association” in Kings County and my team and I did a final report which can be viewed here:

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/HFA%20Final%20Report%202013.2015%20%281%29.pdf>



Municipality of the County of Kings: Candidate Responses

Question 8: What are your questions or comments about housing?

Rob Buchan, Candidate for District 6

I would like to understand from your perspective (the youth portal and similar valuable organizations throughout Kings County) how we as Council can better support your challenges and what opportunities there may be to partner on projects and lobbying various levels of government together to continue the important work of the Homeless No More initiative.

Pauline Raven, Candidate for Mayor

- It is important that sustainable materials and energy efficiency not be neglected to decrease costs of supply.
- It is important that affordable housing is well-managed post construction. Rental housing must be well-maintained to assure positive relationships between residents and owners (associations and developers). Creating isolated streets and/or communities where residency will be dominated by individuals and/or families living in low-income circumstances has not provided secure housing in the past. Examples of this can be seen at various locations managed through the Regional Housing Authority).
- Housing cooperatives should be considered.