

BACKGROUND: *Putting People First: A Housing Strategy for Prince Edward Island*

Prince Edward Island is in a housing crisis.

Just six years ago, PEI's vacancy rate was 7.1%. Now, it is reduced to 0.3%. People are facing unprecedented housing insecurity issues. We have unaffordable and insecure housing options for a large portion of our population. Some are finding themselves living in unsafe and inappropriate housing. Winter is coming. Islanders deserve to live in dignity, not tents.

Putting People First is a housing strategy developed by the caucus of the Official Opposition of Prince Edward Island. Built using a three pillared approach, this strategy offers a thoughtful, meaningful and comprehensive response to solving PEI's housing crisis. We believe implementing these measures over the next 12 months will help our province to cope with and grow out of the housing crisis.

The Three Pillars

1. Legislation and Regulation

In order to solve the housing crisis, there needs to be amendments made to existing legislation or an introduction of new legislation to address the current reality of PEI's housing situation.

- Amend or replace the *Rental of Residential Property Act* to meet the needs of Islanders;
- Regulate short-term rentals in order to protect long-term rental housing while allowing Islanders the ability to earn additional income;
- Register web-based short-term rental platforms;
- Enforce inclusionary zoning to create a permanent stock of affordable housing in every new housing development.

2. Build and Invest

Barriers to projects designed to address PEI's housing crisis need to be removed.

- Fund homeless and emergency shelters across the province;
- Fund feasibility studies and planning for new development on public land;
- Provide seed funding for affordable housing developments;
- Provide renovation incentives to maintain existing long-term rental properties.

3. Support and Services

In order for any strategy to succeed, there must be meaningful and measurable supports that enable its success.

- Establish a rental registry to support and assist Islanders needing housing, and to provide relevant data that will guide the work of government in providing safe, affordable and appropriate housing;
- Establish independent Landlord and Tenant Associations that provide support and guidance for both landlords and tenants regarding their rights and responsibilities;
- Grow and support the labour force to meet the demand for developing new housing projects;
- Enhance the Housing Hub with delegated authority and responsibility.

Cost to Deliver

Working in tandem with existing emergency housing measures, this housing strategy will require an additional \$9.4M in dedicated funding. Given the magnitude of PEI's housing crisis, this is a rather small amount for solving this unprecedented emergency. Full details of costs associated with this strategy are attached to this backgrounder as an appendix.