



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

3975 Road 111, Stratford, On N5A 6S5 | Phone: 519-801-9889 | Email: council@stratfordcares.org

Homelessness, Housing, Mental Health and Community Supports

Stratford Cares Citizens Council

Stratford Cares Citizens Council is inviting candidates for Stratford City Council and Mayor to share their own perspectives, priorities and understanding of issues affecting residents experiencing homelessness, housing instability, mental health challenges, addiction and barriers to support.

To encourage independent responses, this questionnaire is intentionally provided separately from our Community Brief. Candidates are asked to answer based on their own knowledge, experience, values and proposed priorities. The same questions will be provided to all candidates, and responses may be shared publicly to help residents understand where candidates stand on these issues.

Candidate Information

Candidate Name Amy Brodhagen

Position Sought Stratford City Councillor

Date October 1, 2026

Please type your response beneath each question.

1. What do you believe are the most significant gaps in Stratford's current response to homelessness and housing instability, and what role should the City play in addressing them?

Stratford needs a clear, coordinated response for people experiencing homelessness, particularly during extreme weather.

People experiencing homelessness need more than a place to sleep, they need to know their community has not forgotten them. The City should establish a clear winter response plan with local service providers and community organizations **before** extreme weather hits. This should identify available warming spaces,

emergency shelter capacity, transportation and other essential supports, with clear communication about where people can go for help.

I also support exploring additional temporary warming and shelter options during extreme weather, while continuing to focus on longer-term supportive housing and prevention.

2. What do you believe Stratford is doing well - and where do you believe improvements are needed - in supporting youth experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, trauma, substance use or other barriers?

Stratford has many community partners and non-profits providing important services and supports, and our community has a strong history of showing up for one another.

Where I see room for improvement is communication and collaboration. There are services available that many people simply don't know about, and we can do a better job connecting organizations and making those supports easier to find.

I also believe our youth need places where they can go, connect and feel a sense of belonging. When I was a teenager in Stratford, we had places like the Bunker and Day 10 Café. Those spaces mattered and gave us somewhere to go, connect and be part of our community.

Today's youth connect differently, and we need to meet them where they are. That could include esports, creative technology, music, digital arts and other activities that bring young people together in a safe, welcoming space. I'd also like to see more free or affordable opportunities through the arts, alternative sports and recreation. The goal isn't to pull young people away from technology, it's to create opportunities for them to connect, build friendships and feel like they belong.

3. What do you believe are the greatest barriers facing women experiencing homelessness, intimate partner violence, addiction or other vulnerabilities in Stratford, and what changes, if any, would you advocate for?

Trust and access to support can be significant barriers for women experiencing homelessness, intimate partner violence, addiction or other vulnerabilities.

I also think that, as a smaller community, some issues can be less visible than they really are. We need better awareness and better information so that residents understand what supports are available and where gaps exist.

I would support the City working with service providers to better understand the local data and identify gaps in services, as well as a safety assessment of key public areas to look at lighting, visibility, emergency access and other safety concerns. I would also like to explore whether emergency phones or other emergency communication options could be appropriate in larger public areas and parking lots.

My mindset is simple: if you see something, say something; if you can do something, do it.

4. What supports do you believe are currently missing or inadequate for adult men experiencing homelessness, addiction or mental health challenges in Stratford? What would you prioritize?

I would prioritize year-round shelter and drop-in supports, transitional housing, mentorship, employment training and support that helps people move toward stable housing and independence.

Working in the mental health space, I also see how stigma around men's mental health can become a significant barrier to asking for help. We need to make it easier for men to access support before they reach a crisis point.

I would also support partnerships that connect people with mental health, addiction, employment and housing services rather than expecting one organization to meet every need.

5. How should the City respond when behaviours associated with mental health, addiction, trauma or other complex needs put a person's housing at risk?

The goal should be to help stabilize the person and prevent homelessness wherever possible, rather than waiting until someone loses their housing.

The City should have clear emergency pathways and strong communication with service partners so that people can be connected to the right supports quickly. That means knowing who to contact, what services are available and what happens when someone is in crisis.

I also believe Mental Health First Aid training can help staff and community members recognize when someone is struggling and respond appropriately.

6. If elected, what specific actions related to homelessness, housing instability, mental health and addiction would you prioritize during your term?

First, a clear action plan for extreme weather. Stratford should have a coordinated plan in place before winter, including warming spaces, emergency shelter capacity, transportation, communication and clear pathways to support.

Second, a housing strategy focused on affordability, not just growth. I support higher-density, mixed-use development that creates complete communities while protecting green space and planning for the infrastructure needed to support growth. That strategy should also include policies that support renters and encourage more attainable rental housing.

Third, measurable results. City funding for housing initiatives should be tied to clear goals and outcomes, while making use of existing properties and buildings wherever possible. The City should also actively pursue provincial and federal funding and partnerships to expand housing options.

7. What do you believe is the appropriate role of the City of Stratford compared with the responsibilities of the provincial and federal governments, Perth County and community agencies?

I believe the City should act as a hub and connector, bringing the right people and organizations to the table and making sure efforts are coordinated.

The City should use the expertise that already exists in our community rather than trying to do everything itself. That means working with Perth County, provincial and federal governments, healthcare and social service providers, housing organizations and community agencies.

At the same time, the City has a responsibility to advocate for Stratford residents and make sure their needs and experiences are part of those conversations.

8. What would meaningful accountability and measurable progress on these issues look like to you over the next term of Council?

Meaningful progress means being able to point to specific actions, timelines and results, not just plans.

Over the next term, I would want to see a published action plan for extreme weather, increased access to emergency and transitional shelter, realistic and accessible hours for the Connection Centre, and clearer pathways between people experiencing homelessness and the services available to them.

I would also want the City to report publicly on progress: what actions have been completed, what remains outstanding, what funding has been secured, and where gaps continue to exist.

And I want residents to be part of that accountability. Increasing civic engagement and making it easier for people to understand how they can participate in municipal decisions is an important part of making residents feel heard.