

THERESA GRANT

WARD 4 ACTION PLAN

IT'S TIME FOR REAL CHANGE

Candidate for Oshawa City Council - Ward 4

Our community, our future - let's build it together.

Vote October 26, 2026

theresagrants.ca

A Message from Theresa

The youngest of three children, I was raised in an Irish Catholic household in Toronto. Growing up in the 1960s and 70s was a wonderful time in my life - until Christmas 1977.

On Boxing Day, I lost my beautiful mother to breast cancer. She was just 48 years old. I was 13. That was hard, and it was an experience that shaped the person I would become.

I married young and had two children. I know the struggle of being a young family trying to raise children, pay the bills and get ahead in a world that seems to get more expensive by the day.

After years of struggle, I went back to school at the age of 40 and earned a two-year college diploma in Social Services. I did that while working full-time, raising my children, running a household and volunteering with Victim Services through the Durham Regional Police Service.

My 13 years of municipal government experience have served me well. I have learned how municipal government operates, how things get done and how to help the public navigate the municipal system.

I believe that once elected, a councillor needs to understand something very clearly: you work for the people of your ward. You are there to be their collective voice at City Hall and to vote according to the will of the people you were elected to represent - even when that means voting against what you may personally want. That can be hard, but that is the job.

My Promise to You

You will always have a way to reach me. I want to hear what is working, what isn't working and what you believe needs to change. Your councillor should never be out of reach.

Sincerely,
Theresa Grant

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Downtown Oshawa: Stabilize, Recover, Rebuild

Downtown Oshawa was once a vibrant hub of activity, and it can be again. A healthy downtown is the heart of the city: it shapes first impressions, attracts business, creates jobs, supports entrepreneurs, generates tax revenue and provides residents with a place to gather.

The current situation is not working for residents, businesses or many vulnerable people living in crisis. My plan is to change the approach rather than continue managing the same conditions.

Immediate triage

- Bring the City, Durham Region, appropriate health and social-service partners, downtown businesses and community agencies together around one coordinated response.
- Identify repeat problem locations and areas where public disorder or concentrations of services are affecting businesses and public access.
- Triage people according to need: serious mental illness, homelessness caused by hard times, addiction, seniors who have lost housing and other individual circumstances.

Service coordination

- Create a central Transition & Recovery point where needs can be registered and people connected to the correct service.
- Advocate for relocation, dispersal or redesign of some services where concentration is producing disorder rather than recovery.
- Connect people to real pathways for health care, treatment, housing, education, skills and employment.

Enforcement

Laying around on our streets and in doorways has to stop. Public urination and defecation has to stop. Being an addict does not exempt anyone from the law. Enforcement and compassion can exist together.

Economic recovery

- Meet with downtown business and property owners regularly and work on strategy together.
- Restore clean, usable public spaces and improve the sense of safety.
- Bring residents and customers back through business attraction, events and improved public spaces.

The goal: a vibrant hub of commerce, culture, business, eateries and entertainment.

A Real Pathway to Real Outcomes

1. TRIAGE FIRST

The first step is immediate triage. We need to identify why each person is in crisis rather than treating everyone experiencing homelessness as though they have the same needs. Someone experiencing serious mental illness requires a different response from someone struggling with addiction, a senior who can no longer afford housing, or someone who has simply fallen on hard times.

2. TRANSITION & RECOVERY CENTRE

A centralized Transition & Recovery Centre would provide an initial point of contact where people can be triaged, their needs registered and the appropriate pathway identified. Existing organizations and services would then be coordinated around the individual instead of expecting a person in crisis to navigate a complicated system alone.

3. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP CLINICS - VOLUNTEER PROFESSIONALS

I want to bring together working and retired doctors, nurses, social workers, PSWs, teachers, counsellors and other qualified professionals willing to volunteer a small amount of their time and expertise. Imagine five doctors each volunteering two hours a week, alongside other working and retired professionals contributing what they can. Together, those volunteered hours can create meaningful access to services while tapping into an extraordinary amount of professional knowledge already in our community.

- Basic health assessment and follow-up.
- Mental-health and addiction referrals.
- Help with forms, identification and benefits.
- Education and employment navigation.
- Connection to housing and community supports.

4. HOUSING MATCH SERVICE

Working with established organizations such as the John Howard Society and other appropriate partners, explore a registry connecting suitable individuals with available rooms and other housing opportunities. Homeowners willing to participate could receive appropriate incentives or supports, with screening and safeguards built in.

Transformational Homes: Six Residents, One Year

5. TRANSFORMATIONAL HOMES

For people who are ready to change their lives, Transformational Homes would provide a structured, rules-based environment for six residents per home for a one-year program.

During that year, each resident would work on the areas they individually need in order to move forward:

- Rehabilitation and continuing recovery support where needed.
- Physical and mental health care, with the goal of achieving a clean bill of health where possible.
- Education, upgrading or training appropriate to the individual.
- Practical life skills needed to live independently.
- Employment skills, job readiness and development of real employment potential.
- Responsibility, routine and the skills required to successfully live in the community.

The objective

This is not about warehousing people. The purpose of the one-year program is transformation. At the end of that year, the goal is for residents to leave with improved health, education and skills, employment potential, practical life skills and a realistic ability to live independently.

6. REINTEGRATION

The end goal is not simply getting someone off the street for a night. It is helping that person reach a point where they can become a healthy, stable and contributing member of the community again.

**Health + Education + Life Skills + Employment Potential =
Reintegration**

This Plan Has Already Started

This is not simply an election idea.

I have been reaching out over the last year, having the conversations needed to identify community partners, professional volunteers and organizations that can help turn this concept into a workable model.

The groundwork has already begun, and I will continue bringing the right people together to move this plan forward.

Why community participation matters

The Community Partnership Clinic concept is built around the enormous pool of experience already living and working in our community. Retired professionals are an especially important part of this. A retired doctor, nurse, social worker, PSW, teacher, counsellor or other professional may no longer want a full-time workload but may be willing to volunteer a few hours of expertise.

Working professionals can participate as well. The idea is to spread the commitment among many people so no individual carries the entire burden.

Partnership rather than duplication

The City does not need to recreate services that qualified organizations already provide. The goal is to identify gaps, coordinate existing resources, recruit community expertise and build partnerships that move people through a pathway toward an outcome.

Measure the outcome

- How many people entered a pathway?
- How many completed treatment or training?
- How many secured stable housing?
- How many entered employment or education?
- How many returned to homelessness after support?

Homeless Seniors: Prevention First, Rapid Help When Needed

Older adults can become homeless for reasons very different from chronic street homelessness: loss of a spouse, eviction, rising rent, inadequate fixed income, illness, loss of savings or a sudden change in family support.

Before a senior loses housing

- Create a clear Senior Housing Navigation pathway so residents and families know where to call first.
- Connect seniors quickly with Durham Region housing supports, benefits, rent assistance where available, legal or tenant resources and community agencies.
- Explore landlord mediation or other early intervention when a tenancy may be salvageable.
- Include appropriate seniors in a screened Housing Match Service where safe shared accommodation is suitable.

When a senior is already homeless

- Prioritize rapid assessment of health, mobility, income, identification and housing needs.
- Seek age-appropriate temporary accommodation rather than leaving vulnerable older adults to navigate a general system alone.
- Create one coordinated case plan with the agencies involved so the senior is not repeatedly starting over.

What success looks like

A senior is prevented from losing housing when possible; when homelessness occurs, the system moves quickly toward safe, stable accommodation rather than allowing the situation to become chronic.

No senior should become homeless in Oshawa without every reasonable effort being made to prevent it.

Property Taxes, Budget & Accountability

Residents deserve value for every property tax dollar they pay. Good financial management means spending smarter and understanding what Council can actually control.

My budget test

- Is the project necessary?
- Is this the right time?
- Can the same outcome be achieved more cost-effectively?
- Can the work be phased?
- Are provincial or federal grants available?
- Can partnerships reduce the cost to Oshawa taxpayers?
- Does the project deliver measurable value?

What I will push for

- Review major spending before approving new expenditures.
- Support competitive procurement and contract reviews to ensure value.
- Protect infrastructure through long-term asset management rather than expensive emergency repairs.
- Regularly communicate budget decisions to residents in plain language.
- Review existing programs for efficiency without eliminating valuable services without evidence.

Every property tax dollar should be treated with the same care residents use when managing their household budgets.

Broadening the Tax Base: The Long-Term Affordability Plan

Oshawa residents cannot continue absorbing tax increases year after year. Controlling spending matters, but long-term tax stability also requires economic growth so homeowners are not carrying an ever-increasing share of municipal costs.

Grow commercial and industrial assessment

When more commercial and industrial properties contribute to municipal revenue, the cost of services is shared across a stronger tax base. My focus is therefore not only on what City Hall spends, but on strengthening the economic base that helps pay for it.

How

- Support downtown recovery so existing businesses can survive and vacant commercial space becomes more attractive to investment.
- Promote available commercial space and encourage appropriate redevelopment.
- Advocate for faster, more predictable municipal processes within the City's authority.
- Strengthen partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, the Chamber, Durham Region and the private sector.
- Market Oshawa's skilled workforce, transportation access and post-secondary talent to employers and entrepreneurs.
- Pursue grants and strategic capital investments where the business case and taxpayer value are clear.

Business incentives

Any incentive should demonstrate clear public value, be transparent and support long-term economic growth. I would evaluate proposals carefully to ensure the broader community benefits, not simply one business or sector.

A stronger commercial and employment base means less pressure on homeowners over the long term.

Property Crime & Community Safety: The Detailed Plan

Property crime affects safety, insurance costs, small businesses and confidence in a neighbourhood. Policing is important, but there are also practical municipal actions Council can take.

1. Build the plan on accurate local data

- Request regular Ward 4 reporting from Durham Regional Police on break-and-enters, thefts, vandalism and repeat hot spots.
- Combine police data, resident reports and City service calls to identify patterns by location, time and type of offence.
- Create a Ward 4 working table with DRPS, City staff, bylaw, landlords, businesses and neighbourhood representatives.
- Publish a simple progress report so residents can see what was done and whether conditions improved.

2. Target repeat hot spots

- Ask DRPS to prioritize visible patrols and focused enforcement in repeatedly affected areas, while respecting that DRPS directs police operations.
- Coordinate bylaw, property standards, parks, roads, lighting and operations staff so recurring physical problems are corrected quickly.

3. Improve lighting, sightlines and public spaces

- Conduct safety audits in high-incident areas for broken lights, dark walkways, overgrown vegetation, obstructed sightlines, damaged fencing and poorly maintained property.
- Prioritize City-owned lighting and infrastructure repairs in documented hot spots.
- Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in parks, parking areas, pathways and public spaces.

4. Make reporting easier

- Promote police online and non-emergency reporting so incidents are recorded.
- Provide a clear guide explaining when to call 911, police non-emergency, Service Oshawa or bylaw enforcement.

Property Crime: Prevention, Partnerships & Accountability

5. Help residents and small businesses prevent crime

- Provide practical property-safety information for homes, apartment buildings, garages, parking areas and storefronts.
- Hold neighbourhood safety sessions with DRPS on locks, lighting, cameras, packages, bicycle storage, vehicle security and preserving evidence.
- Where justified by documented hot spots, evaluate tightly controlled, time-limited safety initiatives with clear eligibility, limits and evaluation before expansion.

6. Address repeat offending and root causes

- Advocate through Durham Region and the Province for better coordination among police, courts, probation, mental-health, addiction, housing and outreach services.
- Support interventions that connect high-risk individuals to treatment, housing, employment and case management while maintaining consequences for criminal behaviour.
- Press senior governments to fund responsibilities that do not belong on the local property-tax base.

Municipal authority

City Council does not direct police operations. It can advocate through the appropriate police governance channels, approve municipal budgets, improve infrastructure, strengthen bylaws and work collaboratively with police and community organizations.

How I will judge success

I will look for changes in repeat hot spots, reported property crime, resident confidence, physical conditions in problem areas and whether the actions being used are producing measurable results.

There is no single solution. Safety improves when policing, municipal planning, enforcement, maintenance and neighbourhood involvement work together.

Small Business: Work With Owners, Not Around Them

Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy. Supporting business is about more than incentives. It means ensuring our downtown is welcoming, maintaining infrastructure, reviewing unnecessary barriers and making sure City Hall listens to the people actually operating businesses.

The plan

- Meet regularly with local business owners to understand challenges and identify practical solutions.
- Track recurring issues such as parking, construction disruption, licensing, safety and property standards, and identify which department or agency is responsible for follow-up.
- Support downtown revitalization to increase foot traffic and customer confidence.
- Promote available commercial space and encourage appropriate redevelopment.
- Advocate for faster, more predictable municipal processes within the City's authority.
- Encourage partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations and the private sector.
- Support community events that bring residents into commercial districts.
- Work with Durham Region and the Chamber of Commerce on coordinated economic-development strategies.

Why this matters

Cleaning up the downtown is not separate from economic development. A safe, active and attractive core supports existing businesses, improves first impressions and makes future investment more likely.

What success looks like

Fewer vacant storefronts, stronger existing businesses, new investment, more jobs and a broader tax base.

Existing businesses should feel City Hall is working with them, not simply regulating them.

Seniors: Safety, Affordability & Connection

Seniors helped build our community and should be able to remain active, connected and independent for as long as possible.

Everyday accessibility

- Pay attention to sidewalks, crossings, benches, lighting, snow clearing and access to municipal facilities.
- Ensure City information is available in clear, readable formats and through more than one communication channel.

Affordability

- Consider the impact of tax and fee decisions on residents living on fixed incomes.
- Protect reasonable access to affordable recreation and community programming.

Connection and navigation

- Make it easier to find transportation, food-security, recreation, housing and social-support information.
- Work with senior-serving organizations instead of duplicating services they already provide well.

Housing instability

The homeless-seniors pathway in this Action Plan focuses on prevention and rapid navigation. The purpose is to intervene before a housing problem becomes a street-homelessness crisis whenever possible.

Seniors should know where to turn before a problem becomes an emergency.

Infrastructure, Housing & Responsible Growth

Growth must be balanced with the responsibility to maintain what taxpayers already own. Deferring maintenance today often creates a larger bill tomorrow.

Asset-first decision making

- Use asset-condition information to identify roads, sidewalks, parks and facilities approaching critical repair points.
- Compare the cost of timely maintenance with the cost of full replacement after failure.
- Build long-term operating and maintenance costs into decisions on new projects.

Housing and growth

- Support housing options that meet community needs while ensuring infrastructure planning is tied to new development.
- Advocate for timely road, transit and utility upgrades.
- Protect parks and public spaces while accommodating appropriate growth.
- Encourage redevelopment of appropriate underused lands before unnecessary expansion.
- Work with developers, residents, Durham Region and the Province so growth is planned rather than reactive.

Funding

Infrastructure can be financed through capital budgets, development charges where permitted by law, reserves, grants and long-term asset management planning. I will seek senior-government funding for major infrastructure projects rather than placing the full burden on current property taxpayers.

Needs before wants

Major projects should have a clear need, a realistic business case, public benefit and an explanation of what other priorities may be delayed or displaced by the spending.

Oshawa needs homes people can afford and infrastructure residents can rely on.

My Commitment to Ward 4

A detailed plan only matters if residents can see whether it is moving forward. My commitment is to bring these actions to the council table, ask the difficult questions, work with the partners who hold the necessary authority and report back to Ward 4.

What I will keep doing

- Continue the conversations already underway around the Transition & Recovery Centre, professional volunteers, Housing Match Service and Transformational Homes.
- Meet with residents, seniors and business owners and bring their concerns into municipal decision-making.
- Distinguish clearly between what Oshawa City Council controls and what requires Durham Region, provincial or federal action.
- Pursue grants, partnerships and outside funding where they reduce pressure on Oshawa taxpayers.
- Measure results rather than judging success by announcements.

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Candidate for Oshawa City Council - Ward 4

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Voting

Internet voting: October 13-26, 2026

Voting Day: Monday, October 26, 2026

Contact the candidate directly for a conversation or meeting.