

Climate Action | Questionnaire

The climate crisis – and its associated environmental, social and economic ramifications – is among the most pressing issues of our time. The design, construction, and operation of our built environment accounts for nearly 40% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, and according to the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, the health of the built environment and the relationships it nurtures or negates is the most critical factor in determining an individual's health status. As shapers of the build environment, and active participants in the construction industry, we must acknowledge our collective responsibility to not only respond to this crisis, but to act.

We acknowledge that climate action is an important contributor to overall planetary health and health equity. It is our belief that climate action should be a jointly devised and coordinated effort, that encompasses all individuals, practices and society. The questions within this survey are meant to help identify tools, strategies and resources that can inform a shared action plan amongst the architectural community. The questions also aim to identify knowledge gaps in order to better understand the state of our practices today, so that we can build our collective capacity.

The questionnaire is broken into three large categories:

- Our Work, focusing on the practice of architecture;
- Our Offices, focused on business practices and management;
- and Our Associations, focused on the role of regulators and advocate bodies.

In this first round of information gathering, we are inviting TSA Members as well as any signatory of Canadian Architects Declare from across Canada, to complete this questionnaire. We encourage those in leadership positions to use these questions as a means to engage in group discussions within your practices.

You can save your answers at any time by clicking submit in the last page of this survey. You will then receive a link that allows you to edit your answers at any time, including completing any answers that you left empty when you first submitted.

We ask that you complete the questionnaire by Friday, July 31, 2020. All data will then be aggregated and results shared collectively, but with individual answers and attributions remaining confidential.

On behalf of the Toronto Society of Architects and Architects Declare, we thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Megan Torza, Chair, Toronto Society of Architects
Jennifer Cutbill, Architects Declare

* Required

1. Email address *

This is an initiative of the Toronto Society of Architects in collaboration with Architects Declare.



Our Work

There are multiple approaches to sustainable / resilient / regenerative design that use different tools, metrics and processes. The following section looks to better understand current approaches to sustainability used by architects and designers in their projects, and to identify knowledge gaps in the profession. There may be unfamiliar terminology within this section – this is all part of us better understanding where the profession is at! The TSA has placed a number of resources on our website to help you better understand the different approaches, strategies and terminologies highlighted in this section.

Approaching Sustainable Design

2. Do you employ design strategies to mitigate negative impacts of any of the following in your projects? Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Greenhouse Gases (i.e. carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride)
- Material Waste
- Material Toxicity
- Loss of Human Capital (i.e. inequitable labour practices)
- Loss of Natural Capital (i.e. the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms)

3. What role, if any, does resiliency planning and strategies play in your current work? "Resilience" in this context refers to a project's ability to both prevent damage and to recover from damage caused by the adverse impacts of climate change (ex. the provision of a back-up generator and/or off-grid power generation to address the threat of a power outage).

Mark only one oval.

- Big role
- Some role
- Little role
- No role

4. What role, if any, does regenerative design or regenerative development play in your current work? "Regenerative" in this context refers to the integration of processes that restore, renew or revitalize their own sources of energy and materials (ex. a building designed to be self-sufficient in its water use by harvesting rainwater, treating and recycling its wastewater, and recharging groundwater reservoirs with storm-water runoff that cannot be used as a source of drinking water). "Regenerative development" means a more holistically integrative place-based approach focused on capacity-building and value-creation; leveraging projects as catalysts for building the evolving capacity and prosperity of the communities they serve.

Mark only one oval.

- Big role
- Some role
- Little role
- No role

5. What role, if any, do nature-based solutions play in your current work? "Nature-based solutions" in this context refers to the use of living systems for tackling environmental challenges (ex. using a green roof to absorb stormwater, increase biodiversity, regulate internal heat loads, grow food, etc).

Mark only one oval.

- Big role
- Some role
- Little role
- No role

6. What other approaches to sustainable design do you incorporate in your work (i.e. indigenous wisdom, local ecological knowledge)?

Measuring and Reporting Performance

7. Do you measure the "as-designed" performance of your buildings for any of the following?

Check all that apply.

- Energy
- Water
- Carbon
- None of the above
- Other

8. Do you measure the "as-built" performance of your buildings for any of the following?

Check all that apply.

- Energy
- Water
- Carbon
- None of the above
- Other

9. If you selected "Other" in response to either question above, please indicate what other performance metrics you measure "as-designed" or "as-built" in your projects.

10. Do you conduct post occupancy evaluations (POEs)?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

11. Do you report or share your performance to audiences outside of your practice?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Public and Professional Education and Engagement

12. In the context of climate change, do you feel you have the tools to advocate for the following (check all where an answer of "yes" is appropriate):

Check all that apply.

- Mitigation: Improved envelope efficiency (in current climate)
- Mitigation: Improved HVAC efficiency (in current climate)
- Mitigation: Improved holistic efficiency (using future climate models)
- Mitigation-Adaptation: Improved resilience (from passive-survivability, to longer term sheltering in place)
- Resilience-Regeneration: Improved health (regenerative co-benefits) for people + place (including the rights of Indigenous peoples and the health of living systems)

13. What topics or skills pertaining to whole systems sustainability (high performance design, resilience and regeneration) do you wish you could learn more about? Please choose your "top 5".

Check all that apply.

- Mitigation - Energy Use
- Mitigation - Operational Carbon
- Mitigation - Embodied Carbon
- High Performance Envelopes / Passivehouse
- High / Integrated Performance Retrofits
- Renewable Energy Integration
- Water Balance
- Scenario Planning
- Adaptation / Resilience Planning
- Regenerative Design
- Regenerative Development
- Design for Disassembly / Deconstruction
- Material Health / Toxicity
- Health Impact Assessments
- Whole Building Life Cycle Assessment
- Rating / Certifications Systems
- Biomimicry
- Circular / Regenerative Economy
- Indigenous Wisdom / Local Ecological Knowledge

Other: _____

14. What topics or skills pertaining to whole systems sustainability (high performance design, resilience and regeneration) do you wish your clients or the general public could learn more about? Please choose your "top 5".

Check all that apply.

- Mitigation - Energy Use
- Mitigation - Operational Carbon
- Mitigation - Embodied Carbon
- High Performance Envelopes / Passivehouse
- High / Integrated Performance Retrofits
- Renewable Energy Integration
- Water Balance
- Scenario Planning
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- Regenerative Design
- Regenerative Development
- Design for Disassembly / Deconstruction
- Material Health / Toxicity
- Health Impact Assessments
- Whole Building Life Cycle Assessment
- Rating / Certifications Systems
- Biomimicry
- Circular / Regenerative Economy
- Indigenous Wisdom / Local Ecological Knowledge

Other: _____

15. In designing and advocating for whole systems sustainability, what do you see as your biggest challenge(s)?

Mark only one oval.

- Gaining technical skills (in building science, for example);
- Gaining business acumen in understanding the costs in the short-and-long term;
- Ability to persuasively communicate the value of a more sustainable choice to clients / the general public;
- All three.

16. How comfortable do you feel making the distinction between various returns on investment to your clients - e.g. the value of energy savings, value of carbon savings, and this distinction between them related to short-and-long term values for different contexts?

Mark only one oval.

- Very comfortable
- Passable
- Not comfortable

**Our
Offices**

As business people, we have the opportunity to influence our workplaces with respect to sustainable best practices, and we wanted to understand more about what each of us are doing to improve our respective in-house policies and procedures in relation to climate action.

As firms, we are able to have a voice as 'industry leaders'. Our associations play a key role in this space, but there are also things we can do individually and / or as collectives.

17. Please take a moment to list any initiatives you've undertaken in your own offices to address the climate crisis: topics might range from waste-diversion practices, sustainable transportation policies, work-from-home policies, workspace design policies, etc.

18. What measures have you found the most impactful? And why?

19. Are there additional measures you wish to undertake but are not currently supported in doing so by your clients / collaborators?

20. As a practice what have you done to raise awareness / take immediate action towards the rapid, future-focused systemic changes required to combat climate change?

Check all that apply.

- Written letters of advocacy to authorities having jurisdiction, members of government, etc.
- Worked with manufacturers / regulators to advocate for changes in supply chains/practices
- Developing / upgrading action plans within my local professional community
- Developing / upgrading accountability frameworks within my local professional community
- Shared learnings using open source platforms
- Divestment in non-supportive policies / practices / products

Other: _____

21. For those interested in taking (more of) the above actions, what support(s) would you need to do so?

Our Associations

Whether by regulation or voluntary membership, the architecture, design and construction industry is home to a number of communal organisations which bring us together. We want to better understand the role we expect these associations and organisations to play in addressing issues of whole systems sustainability and climate action.

Our Regulators and Regulations

22. What role do you feel your provincial regulator should play in supporting you to achieve sustainable design excellence in your work?

23. What changes to the building code and other regulations do you feel should be made to support greater sustainable design outcomes?

24. What regulatory changes have been the most impactful to your practice thus far, or seem most impactful based on what you have seen in other jurisdictions?

Our Advocates and Community Organisations

25. What role(s) do you feel organisations like the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), the Toronto Society of Architects (TSA) and / or grassroots efforts (like Architects Declare) could fill to better support you in achieving sustainable design excellence in your work?

26. What resources or initiatives do you feel the TSA / others could provide their members to better support sustainable design excellence and professional proficiency on related climate issues?

Celebrate and Reward Whole-System Sustainability / Regenerative Development

27. What requirements (i.e. code changes) or incentives (i.e. awards programs / government incentives) might help to increase sustainable design performance in buildings?

28. What incentives might be most effective - for clients? For the general public?

Tell us about your office

29. How big is your office - how many employees / staff do you have? *

Mark only one oval.

- 0-5
- 6-15
- 16-30
- 31-50
- 51-80
- 81-150
- 151-500
- More than 500

30. What are your areas of practice? Click all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Architecture
- Urban Design
- Interior Design
- Landscape Architecture
- Specification Writer

Other: _____

31. Are the majority of your projects for public or private-sector clients? *

Mark only one oval.

- Public (Federal, Provincial or Municipal governments or agencies)
- Private (developers, corporations or individuals)

32. Where do you practice? What is your urban/rural context? *

Mark only one oval.

- Urban - Large City (over 900,000 person population)
- Urban - Mid-Sized City (between 300,000 and 300,000 person population)
- Urban - Small City (between 100,000 and 299,999 person population)
- Small Town or Village
- Rural

33. In what province or territory is your practice licensed? Click all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

Thank
You!

Thank you for completing our Climate Action Questionnaire and helping shape our climate action plan.

What happens next? All data collected from this questionnaire will be aggregated and results shared collectively this summer through our communication channels (website, bulletin and social media). Individual answers and attributions remain confidential. Results of the questionnaire will then inform our next steps, including TSA programming and resources.

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