

# Allan Bray

Councillor Candidate in the Town of Barrie, Ward 6  
Simcoe Region

*The following answers were provided by the candidate in response to [a letter sent by the Toronto Society of Architects on September 20, 2022](#) outlining three questions related to issues of the built environment. Answers have been copied and pasted into this page for clarity and ease of access, but all answers are verbatim and no changes or edits have been made.*

**Q1: Housing is a fundamental human right, and yet an increasing number of residents across the Greater Toronto Area are struggling to pay rent or find an affordable place to live. What policies and actions do you believe need to be implemented to address this crisis?**

**A:** Unquestionably, the housing market has gotten completely out of hand - effectively locking out a large segment of our society and dooming another segment to crushing mortgages. Modifying bylaws to allow safe, built-to-code secondary suites in existing houses is an important step. Higher density housing is a clear necessity, but I believe that for any such projects there needs to be an eye towards harmonious integration into neighbourhoods to combat NIMBY-ism, which to me means a rigorous architectural review of any such planned projects by the municipality before approval. High-rise apartment buildings are the most economic use of limited land, and should figure prominently in future development.

**Q2: The design, construction and operation of our built environment accounts for nearly 40% of energy related carbon emissions, contributing to the ongoing climate crisis affecting us today. What do you believe needs to be prioritised to reduce carbon emissions within the built environment?**

**A:** The production of portland cement is not only extremely energy-intensive, it also evolves carbon dioxide as part of the calcination process. As a result, concrete, one of the most fundamental building materials, contributes significantly to the carbon emissions associated with construction of our built environment, to the tune of around 0.9 kg CO<sub>2</sub> emitted for every kg of portland cement produced. So, to the extent that is possible, efforts should be made to reduce concrete use. Substitution of materials in cement should be encouraged.

Looking at what can be done in a built environment, we need to make communities walkable. Similarly, we need connected networks of bike paths that are protected from automobile traffic. Where the size of the city makes it

possible, public transit needs to be introduced and operated efficiently to maximize ridership (I'm looking at you, Barrie!). While we can't undo what's already been done, we can improve on what we can and plan to do much better. Overall, reducing dependency on cars as much as possible is necessary.

**Q3: In towns and cities, so much of life happens in the shared public spaces—in our parks, libraries and streets. How can we ensure these civic spaces achieve design excellence in their initial conception and construction, and that they are properly maintained so they may continue to serve future generations?**

**A:** I think the city has an obligation to create a grand vision based on community consultation and evidence-based solutions for current and anticipated challenges. Further to this, the city needs to create an actionable plan, with clearly defined tasks, responsibilities and completion dates. Without such a plan, chances of achieving the grand vision are slim and accountability is murky at best. In the plan, the necessary services to maintain our shared public spaces need to be reflected so that they are incorporated in the city's long-term budget. The City of Barrie has a detailed plan, which I fully support, although the actionable steps are unclear in some cases. For example, it states that there should be segregated bike lanes on all arterial roads - but so far I have been unable to find evidence of any plan to actually create a segregated bike lane on Ferndale drive S / Veteran's drive, an existing arterial road in Ward 6.