

## TSA – Toronto Society of Architects

1. 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?

Ontario increased and expanded its non-resident speculation tax and the Bank of Canada raised interest rates. While this had a cooling effect on the housing market, these measures will not be enough to make housing affordable. Perhaps reintroducing temporary rent control would be effective. Additionally, requiring developers to include low-income, affordable housing, rental components and intensification, in order to obtain building permits and approvals, would be a positive move. What does need to be addressed, in Canada, is the corruption, money laundering and scams, occurring in the real estate market. Canada has also failed to regulate and penalize the parties who enable and facilitate this situation. This factor is on a scale large enough to drive up real estate prices, limit rental properties and contribute to foreign absentee ownership. Fraudulent speculation is neither good for the country, nor the neighbourhood.

2. 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?

All levels of government should be leading the charge with working from home. Promoting and encouraging this philosophy, with industry and commerce, would have a substantial positive impact to the environment, greatly reducing our carbon footprint. In fact, I had a recent article published, about this topic, in the Toronto Star, OpEd Page A16, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022. Eliminating facilities that unnecessarily warehouse people and repurposing existing ones would help immensely and could even help to address the housing affordability crisis. Green roofs, green buildings, gardens, roadside / median greening (with indigenous plants, wildflowers and even vegetables and herbs), would help to reduce effects of extreme weather, as well as protecting wildlife and even helping to feed people. Engaging community groups assists in achieving this goal. Building design must also begin to address the impact to migrating birds and other effects they impose on the overall ecosystem. Raising standards, embracing new, ecologically-friendly products, promoting new technologies for building industry products, particularly in a country such as Canada, with our inclement and often harsh weather conditions, would enhance the R-value, or thermal resistance, reducing energy consumption.

3. 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?

We need to conduct more public consultation. We also need to develop sites more closely associated with nature, back to the grassroots of the practices of our indigenous peoples, in order to remain part of nature and not separate from it. In particular, we need to foster an environment that preserves, protects and promotes the welfare of species at risk, by using native plants, such as milkweed, to encourage reproduction of the Monarch Butterfly, which is in danger of extinction. Additionally, many public spaces do not seem to be built with comfort, usability and accessibility as priorities. Seating, weather barriers, walkways, bicycle paths and stands, wheelchair / walker routes, washroom facilities, water bottle refilling stations and areas of both sunshine and shade, do not often appear in abundance, if at all. Although maintenance usually falls to the local municipality, adoption (such as occurs with roadways), public outreach and community engagement may help with some of these tasks. The use, as much as possible, of low maintenance, ecologically friendly appointments, would reduce maintenance requirements.