

Ilona Matthews

Deputy Mayor Candidate in the Town of Wasaga,
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: Part of the solution to this problem lies with the provincial and federal governments - wages need to be increased, prices need to be controlled and rent controls must be reinstated, because it seems that there is no ceiling on rents, hence they are way out of control. Municipally, we need to arrange with developers to set aside a minimum of 10% of homes being built as rent-to-own or geared to income. Co-ops are also a great solution to more affordable housing.

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: When it comes to developers, we should work with those who are willing to build with green technology such as the use of solar power, heat pumps, instant hot water heaters, etc. For already existing buildings, grants are available for green retrofitting. We must prioritize what building materials we use to ensure that they are sustainable.

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: To ensure this, we must employ architects who are well-versed in design when creating shared public spaces. Municipalities should be developing such policy that ensures proper maintenance of these spaces.