

# Thomas Yanuziello

Councillor Candidate in Etobicoke, Ward 2  
City of Toronto

*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:** There is a lot more at stake in the housing affordability crisis than people realize. Not only are an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness, but both our public and private services are starting to collapse due to staffing shortages because the jobs don't pay enough to cover rent in Toronto. Even highly skilled professionals are choosing to leave Toronto in favour of cities where they can afford to buy homes and raise families.

I have signed the Right to Housing TO pledge and am endorsed by More Neighbours TO. I will push for full implementation of the platform published by MNTO which is summarized by 5 main points:

1. Legalize housing for all
2. Make rules that make sense
3. Build affordable at every opportunity
4. Ensure consultations reflect communities
5. Tax fairly & sustainably

As wonderful as this plan is, it's shameful that it had to be created by a group of volunteers and advocates because our current mayor and council have failed to do their job for so long.

By contrast, the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania formed a dedicated affordable housing task force in 2015 who research and offer recommendations to Council on maintaining and improving affordability of housing in their city. So in addition to fixing our immediate crisis by working together with MNTO, I will motion for a dedicated affordable housing task force to be formed for the city of Toronto.

**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:** Fortunately, the same solution for our housing crisis also happens to be the best solution for reducing our carbon emissions. Densification of housing provides opportunities to form 15-minute communities, where home, work, play, and everything you need in your daily life is nearby. By reducing the distances people need to travel daily, we reduce their emissions.

Another community design standard which will help tackle our emissions is Complete Streets. Providing proper access and safety to our road spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users separated from private passenger vehicles invites more people to select those options and fewer to drive. This also has tremendous benefits to public health and the local economy.

The next largest source of emissions we can tackle through the built environment is heating. The technology is here and it's cheaper than fossil fuels. The developers just need to be properly incentivized to change their habits through better building codes and possibly subsidies. While Toronto has officially endorsed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, not much has been done to stop expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and the Province seems eager to build new gas plants. We need to send a clear message to the province that no new fossil fuel infrastructure will be tolerated either within our borders or to supply our energy needs.

**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:** Toronto's public spaces are suffering from a lack of equitable distribution, with more funding and resources being funneled into wealthier neighbourhoods. We need to set city-wide standards that apply on a smaller scale to ensure that everyone benefits.

There is a 3-30-300 rule that has been adopted by Saanich, British Columbia, which specifies that everyone should be able to:

- 3) See 3 trees from your home
- 30) Have 30% tree canopy coverage in your neighborhood
- 300) Walk to a park within 300 meters

This type of guideline creates equitable access to greenspace for everyone across the entire city.

There are several city-owned and operated facilities that are being underutilized. Providing funding for public community programs in these spaces would dollar-for-dollar provide savings from their impact on reducing crime and improving public health.

Toronto's Vision Zero has been woefully inadequate at protecting the safety of our streets. Proper design standards

exist and have been used widely across many cities, like Copenhagen. The city of Siero, Spain has even received an award for achieving Vision Zero for 11 years in a row. Toronto needs to make Complete Streets the new standard city-wide when resurfacing roads, as well as accelerating the transition for the locations that are identified as the most dangerous.

To ensure excellence of design, the city should adopt Chicago's public art policy. This would require maintaining a list of Toronto's best local artists to incorporate art installations into every new development, showcasing the best our city has to offer and providing opportunities to elevate BIPOC artists.

Part of what makes Toronto unique on the global stage is our ravines, yet their protection and maintenance receive no funding from the city. In cooperation with local Indigenous peoples and the TRCA, we need to establish a practice of responsible stewardship of these very important natural resources, removing invasive species and improving biodiversity.