

Tony Phekoo

Councillor Candidate in the Town of New Tecumseth, Ward 5
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: -Look to federal government programs which can assist first time home buyers to share the cost of buying a home
-look at ways to deregulate zoning to make it easier to build affordable housing
-Construction costs have increased. Look at ways to get it lower.
-Get public support behind public housing
-lobby the government to increase investment in affordable and social housing by government.
-Provide tax incentives to low income home buyers
-Make rentals more affordable.
-Increase the rent to own options available

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 first step of any strategy begins with a commitment to change. It is essential to obtain the most accurate information available in order to make informed decisions. This would allow us to enact preventive maintenance. We would then be able to set priorities to enact maintenance plans in order to do that which need to be done first. This approach would enhance structural refurbishment in a successful manner to ensure greater durability. With accurate information, the best and most pertinent decisions can be made to avoid unnecessary demolitions. Another option is to move towards high

quality carbon-friendly materials, products and processes during the design and construction phase. The built environment is growing . By making embodied carbon reduction a priority today, builders, architects, planners and city leaders can reduce the environmental impact of new construction and create a healthier community for generations to come. Planners should also advocate for climate sensitive buildings and projects. Governments should invest in tools to assess building carbon footprints and compare design scenarios to identify the best options. Local leaders can develop programs and policies to support and incentivize reducing the carbon footprint of the built environment.

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: There are a number of steps architects can take to make significant upfront impacts in the design and construction process.

- 1) Reuse buildings instead of constructing new ones. Renovation and reuse projects typically save between 50 and 75 percent of the embodied carbon emissions compared to constructing a new building.
- 2) Specify low-carbon concrete mixes. Even though emissions per ton are not relatively high, its weight and prevalence usually make concrete the biggest source of embodied carbon in virtually any project. Ensure structural engineers design lower carbon concrete mixes by using fly ash, slag, calcined clays, or even lower-strength concrete where feasible.
- 3) Limit carbon-intensive materials. For products with high carbon footprints like aluminum, plastics, and foam insulation, thoughtful use is essential.
- 4) Choose lower carbon alternatives. You can utilize a wood structure instead of steel and concrete, or wood siding instead of vinyl, you can reduce the embodied carbon in a project.