

Toronto Society of Architects Questions – 2022

Alejandra Bravo for Ward 9 - Davenport

- 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?**

Almost half of Torontonians are renters – but they're often left behind when it comes to local policy and rights. With rents skyrocketing to unaffordable levels, renters are squeezed at every turn. In addition to creating more affordable rental units across our city, Alejandra is committed to addressing the ongoing housing crisis to ensure affordable, access and stability in housing for all. She will advocate to end vacancy decontrol and work with residents and Davenport's MPP to pressure the Ontario government to ensure that all units are rent-controlled and the new-building loophole for rent control is closed.

Alejandra will push to utilize City-owned land to build new affordable housing communities in partnership with non-profits, housing co-ops, and community land trusts, with dedicated funding to support deeply affordable rent-geared-to-income units.

Alejandra supports making it easier to build housing supply with multiplexes, stacked towns, laneway housing and garden suites. There are ways to make our community more vibrant by welcoming new neighbours through affordable housing options that can cut down on sprawl and make our city more sustainable.

Other policies and actions that Alejandra is committed to implementing include:

- Increasing investment and accelerating the City's Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) program to provide funding for non-profit housing providers to purchase, renovate and operate existing rental buildings for people with low to moderate incomes;
- Work with non-profit and co-operative housing providers to build sector capacity for expansion and new development and support accelerating approvals;
- Double the City's annual funding for the Toronto Rent Bank, helping nearly 2,000 more households per year to avoid eviction and maintain their housing and increase investment in the Housing Stabilization Fund to help those households on social assistance find and keep safe, secure and stable secure housing;
- Combine rent supplements with existing City housing initiatives to create homes that are truly affordable for Toronto's lowest income earners;
- Increase the vacant homes tax from 1% to 3%, in line with Vancouver's vacancy tax that would generate an additional \$100 million to invest in affordable housing; and

- Advocate for enforcement of short-term rentals regulations, crack down on ghost hotels and ensure revenue from registrations is invested back into housing programs.

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?

Cities are at the forefront of the climate crisis. Toronto's Council must take bold, immediate action to cut carbon pollution, build a sustainable city, and help people and communities adapt to the changing climate.

Toronto's visionary climate strategy, TransformTO, will cut emissions to net zero by 2040. But it is not funded. Alejandra will vote to fully-fund Toronto's climate action plan.

More than 50% of Toronto's emissions come from buildings. To meet our climate goals, we must make retrofitting buildings easier. Alejandra will support scaling up and expanding programs like the Home Energy Loan Program, the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) Program and High-Rise Retrofit Improvement Support (Hi-RIS) Program.

Toronto is the City's biggest landlord; our public housing has fallen into disrepair while the waitlist grows by the thousands. Alejandra will fight for tenants living in Toronto Community Housing by investing in repairs and revitalization, putting tenants' voices first. This includes investments in energy retrofits to improve quality of life and reduce energy consumption.

Alejandra supports making it easier to build 'gentle density' like multiplexes, stacked towns, laneway housing and garden suites. We can make our neighbourhoods more vibrant by welcoming new neighbours through affordable housing options that cut down on sprawl and make our city more sustainable.

In addition to the direct energy costs of homes and the built environment, building communities that are friendly to transit and active transportation is essential to tackling the climate crisis. Alejandra will invest in public transit and has committed to stopping years of increases in fares and declining service. Alejandra will fight for better cycling infrastructure, including more separated lanes and cycle tracks.

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?

Alejandra believes that creating shared spaces must be central to the development process. In Davenport development is underway in neighbourhoods already dealing with serious road issues and some of the lowest levels of greenspace per capita in Toronto. Alejandra believes fixing those problems cannot be an afterthought, but must be integrated into development before thousands of new residents move into the area. The goal should be to create neighbourhoods that are livable for people, not just where people live.

Public space design must be democratically driven and meet the needs of the community. This means not just giving residents some input into the final look of pathways and playgrounds, but a real dialogue about how shared spaces can best serve residents, both now and into the future.

Finally, investing in shared spaces goes beyond design and construction, but requires ongoing investment to keep them vital. Residents must have ongoing support from the City to use and program spaces creatively to ensure they continue to reflect the wants and needs of the community to live in a vital and vibrant neighbourhood. The City must also move past its pattern of building new structures and spaces without committing the resources to maintain them. The best-designed water fountain or public washroom is of no use to anyone if they are broken or closed and only serves to drive a wedge of frustration between residents and the Government that serves them.

To learn more about Alejandra Bravo and her vision, please visit www.bravodavenport.ca