

# Jack Yan

Candidate for Mayor of Toronto  
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:** Toronto is facing a housing supply issue. A significant relaxation of zoning bylaws is required to solve the issue. Currently developers are forced to buy up small chunks of expensive land that are outside of the Yellow Belt (effectively zoned for single family homes through the R (residential) designation and height restrictions (~10 metres)), and thus the only way to achieve a satisfactory ROI is to build high and build expensive. Relaxing zoning bylaws to me means promoting mixed use by designating high demand areas CR (Commercial Residential) and increase the height restriction to ~35 metres, which would allow developers to build mid rise buildings with a retail footprint on the ground floor. Through my policies, developers would get the chance to build more homes, alleviating the supply crunch, and ultimately lead to more affordable homes. This policy would start with high demand areas served by the TTC.

**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 municipal government, to the best of its ability, should encourage green power generation. As it relates to housing, the municipal government may encourage the use of weatherproof products to ensure a more efficient home. However, if green designs excessively increase costs, we should not hesitate to abandon this goal as ultimately greenhouse gas emissions come from the source of power generation, not how homes are built. As an example, a poorly insulated house running an electric heater powered by wind turbines does not significantly contribute to global warming.

**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:** Dedicated funds may be established for specific properties, not unlike an endowment. With regards to general public spaces in Toronto, the initial design stage should give more consideration towards the cost of long-term upkeep to ensure the property's longevity and increase solicitations for public proposals from private architects and developers to keep innovations high and costs low.