

Kevin Rupasinghe

Councillor Candidate in the City of Toronto, Ward 20
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: Increase funding for the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) program so that Toronto can better keep up with the pace of renovations and prevent the loss of affordable housing

Use City-owned land to build more affordable housing at every opportunity

- a. Work with community and builders to build neighbourhoods together
- b. Incentivize builders to create family-sized units, affordable or below-market-rate housing, and to do it quickly
- c. Strengthen the planning department at City Hall to help speed up proposals and permits, and eliminate unnecessary reviews and revisions
- d. Invest in existing Toronto Community Housing and shelters to improve conditions and maintain them going forward

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: Scale up deep retrofit programs for all buildings including critical investments in projects that green buildings and increase the number of safe and deeply affordable housing units, including the City's Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) Program and High-Rise Retrofit Improvement Support (Hi-RIS) Program

- a. Promote good city building and design practices for public sector including parks, street furniture, transit stations, libraries, and community centres.
- b. Develop incentives to transition natural gas out of new and existing buildings

- c.** Identify & incentivize less carbon-intensive building materials (e.g. reduce concrete dependence)
- d.** Electrify TTC bus fleet
- e.** Promote multi-modal transportation options to minimize construction & maintenance of car-dependent infrastructure

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: Ensure dedicated and sustainable funding in city budget, so programs and facilities can plan for future, ensuring consistent staffing and support for communities across the city

- a.** Ensure that all city policy is reviewed through an environmental lens
- b.** Elect champions to City Council who rely on the same public spaces as many other residents so they understand first-hand the value of these spaces