

Naomi Davison

Regional Councillor Candidate in the Twon of Georgina
York 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: People need somewhere to live. The cost of housing, particularly in the GTA, has become out of reach for the average working individual. The problem isn't just about rising costs, but is also systemic. Those who cannot afford home ownership are often paying more in rent than they would for a mortgage, because of the inability to save for a sizeable down payment. High rent payments make it impossible to save, and the cycle continues. We need policies that would help break this cycle. Habitat for Humanity has a program that brings home ownership to select families every year in Ontario. We need to advocate for a program on a larger scale, that would help more people in our communities out of the rental cycle, and instead, into ownership and building equity. To accomplish this, we need to advocate for a different style of home financing, that allows for the building of equity without a down payment. We also need to advocate for building different forms of housing, that are attainable for those just starting out. All levels of government must be involved.

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: Building design needs to transition from quantity to quality. Where there are better, more environmentally sustainable options for building, these need to be implemented. Improvements can be integrated as requirements into the Ontario Building Code, and training for updated methods and materials can be provided by government programs. Further, all development should be created with green space in mind. We must leave sufficient area for trees, and landscaped green spaces, including parks, walkways and active transportation corridors. We can build

with the natural environment in mind, and enjoy the benefits of it for years to come.

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: We have all witnessed the excitement of new construction of a facility or public space. When new construction is contemplated, the continued maintenance of that new construction must be included in the plans. If an asset cannot be easily maintained, the design should be adjusted accordingly. Designers must be put to the task of creating both beauty and longevity. Future needs should be considered, to allow for adapting spaces to adjust with changing times.