

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?

We need to build more housing to bring the prices down, and I am running because I am so frustrated that the planning system itself is preventing this.

As architects, we are painfully aware of some of the pinch points. We need faster approval processes, bigger as-of-right zoning envelopes that match the economics of construction, and changes to the building code. What if, for example, there all main streets were rezoned to accommodate six storey wood frame as-of-right? OAA has estimated that it costs a condo development \$2,600per month per unit to hold a property. 1 month approval process?

Most of us know that the approval processes are complex. As you all are aware, before the city went digital, we were submitting 48 copies of documents that included an increasing number of reports. 48 different reviewers commented and the results are given back to us with no sense of priority. It's a difficult set of requests to satisfy.

Councillors are not innocent in all of this. I watched a councillor add the construction waste report requirement to the Toronto Green Building standard, with a well-meaning constituent at his elbow, reasoning that the province already required it, so duplication hurt could not hurt. We need councillors who will push in the opposite direction.

Councillors are also not innocent when it comes to public meetings. Under the planning act, zoning is a public process while SPA is not. But as we know councillors of all political flavours call "information meetings" at the site plan stage. This is how they build their bases, on the backs of new renters and homeowners.

A shout out to the small group of architects, you know who you are, who got the OAA to back an appeal of the HZB because, through definitions, the HZB downzoned big swaths of the city and decreased the as-of-right envelope. The OLT agreed, but has the city done anything? No.

Recall the bad old days when building permit approvals could take 2 years. Through re-organisation, the city reduced this to the statutory 30 days, more or less. With courage, persistence and knowledge, the city can reorganize planning, and as a by-product we can free up planners for more important tasks.

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?

Toronto does not have a practical plan to meet the reductions we need to stabilize climate change to 1.5 deg.

They are suggesting that we can meet targets through energy efficiency. But we need a 50% reduction in 8 years. Really deep energy retrofits deliver 60% on average. And architects know, it's a good idea to move out if you are gutting the walls and insulating. Can you imagine moving out of all buildings in Toronto in the next eight years?

The key is to get off natural gas. In the next eight years 50% of our gas equipment will die and while building owners already have their chequebooks out, they should buy a heat pump. A study by the Toronto 2030 District (co-founded by the OAA), found that the savings barely pay the cost of deep energy retrofits. Fuel switching alone is the best approach, unless you are already gutting the building for other reasons, then adding an energy retrofit is little additional cost and it makes sense. However, gutting a building is cost effective once every 30-40 years, not once every eight years.

Consider the Ontario Association of Architect's headquarters. The OAA was struggling with getting to Zero Carbon while maintaining the interiors. Once we realized that we are not the organization we were in the 1990s, and we needed to gut the building and re-organize, things fell into place. Yes, staff moved out. Yes, it cost a lot. But the renovation met multiple goals: functionality, efficiency, comfort, increased occupancy. Since we were gutting it anyways, it was the right time to do a deep retrofit. The OAA building is now all electric. In January, 2022, the total energy bill was \$66.90.

This is admirable, but for most buildings we need to keep it simple: start with electrification, slowly build efficiency.

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?

One, you have to care about the experience of public space and give city departments the mandate to address it. Consider Yorkdale Subway station. When built it had a beautiful neon art installation. Gone. And the beautiful terrazzo floors are hacked up for various new services that could have been installed in a more respectful way. The TTC needs to be better.

Two, you need the expertise to oversee maintenance, repairs and inhouse capital projects, and to monitor changes to art that is included in site plan agreements.

Finally, we need a comprehensive heritage plan focussing on significant buildings that can be renovated to serve present needs. And we need incentives that match the costs of doing it.

Dare I suggest? Toronto should have a Chief Architect