

Steven Lee

Councillor Candidate in the City of Brampton, Wards 1, 5
Peel 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: Addressing the housing crisis was one of the primary motivations to get involved in this year's election for me. First, I want to say that all levels of government need to apply a series of policies to address the housing crisis. Municipalities must do their part to address the issue. In the GTA, including Brampton, housing supply has not sufficiently kept up with demand. In Brampton we must look to redevelopment to provide more housing. I want to rezone sections of Brampton to introduce gentle intensification. Depending on the neighbourhood and the condition of available infrastructure, single-family detached only areas will be zoned to include duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. This will encourage small-scale developers to gradually increase the density of neighbourhoods without radically transforming them and causing disruptions. In corridors in the city we need to zone for small scale apartments. Brampton has a dire shortage of rental stock. We need to help legalize more of the secondary units in the city and make sure those living in them live with dignity, safety, and comfort. We can create more intense levels of development around transit and improve and expand transit to make it more reasonable to move away from the auto-oriented development that characterizes Brampton.

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: One of the big topics rarely addressed in the field of climate change solutions is urban form and urban solutions. If we merely swap our fossil fuel vehicles for electric ones, we will still be facing immense difficulties. The shape of our cities and neighbourhoods is a critical area to address to reduce GHG emissions and make our cities more

sustainable and healthier. I would introduce mixed zoning in neighbourhoods across the city to give options for local shopping and employment. Pedestrian-friendly streets and architecture should be mandated across the city to begin to encourage active transportation. Ideally, I would like Brampton to embrace traditional urbanism commonly seen in cities before the Second World War, which offered transit-friendly, walkable neighbourhoods that were far more sustainable.

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: I think a major flaw in the design of public spaces is that they forget the human element. For whatever reason the designers of spaces neglect how human beings will want to use them and how they will interact and feel about them, or they prioritize cars and neglect the experience of the people. I look at things like big public parks in Brampton and community centres and they are primarily accessible by car, putting the actual centre far from the road and forcing a long trek through a parking lot. For our green spaces, I think we have to consider making them resilient for climate change. This summer saw many of our parks become far less pleasant due to the dry conditions. Planting trees and creating more shade is necessary, as well as naturalizing the spaces so weather fluctuations have less of an impact. Overall, I want the human scale to dominate in our discussions about public spaces. Finally, we need to not let this public spaces and civic buildings fall into disrepair and ruin. The last council has neglected our public spaces to the misfortune of all residents. We need public employees to better serve these resources, and get community involved the management of their local spaces.