

# Manju Sekhri

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Halton 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:** At a municipal level, there are key areas that council can do to help address the housing crisis:

- Ensure new builds are aligned with the local demographics in terms of their financial profile and mobility constraints. Such as cooperatives, wide array of apartments/condos/town-homes.
- Change zoning laws to improve densification of single-family neighbourhoods
- Change zoning to allow for mixed-use and reduce/eliminate the "car-tax" for many. Add to that is reducing the cost of public transit to make transit to amenities/work more affordable. These savings can be transferred to housing rent/payments.
- Ensure zoning for affordable, rent-controlled residences.

**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:** Densification of existing neighbourhoods in major city centres (e.g., Toronto, Etobicoke, Hamilton) so that we leverage existing public infrastructure. This reduces pressure for outer neighbourhoods and further need for sprawl/new builds

- Densification of existing neighbourhoods over greenfield development into farmland/Greenbelt.
- Find opportunities to create community feels in major city centres that offers green space and

- improved air quality, access to amenities for families so that they don't have to move to other neighbourhoods to meet these basic human needs. Trees, parks, libraries, major road arteries, etc.
- Mixed zoning so that we reduce our car-dependency and amenities are accessible via other forms of active transportation/public transport.

**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:** Major city centres in western Europe lead the way in innovative construction/use of common and shared space. For example, Amsterdam. They abound in ideas of how to achieve this here, we just need to understand, listen and adapt these concepts here.

- We have a unique opportunity in many towns in Ontario to leapfrog old ways of urban design and planning to achieve these right here in our backyard. It takes political will to move us in that direction, away from single-zone stylized development that breaks up potential community space into individualized parcels of land.