

Q1 CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate Name:

Cheryl Lewis-Thurab

Ward:

25, Scarborough-Rouge Park

Municipality:

Scarborough

Q2 UPDATE ZONING BY-LAWS Outdated zoning by-laws are a barrier to building the right types of homes to keep up with demand. According to the Building Industry and Land Development Association, in order to keep up with demand, 50,000 new homes need to be built each year (only 38,000 were built in 2017). It is forecasted that 115,000 new residents per year will call the GTA their home. Decades old zoning restrictions primarily allow for detached homes, with a few exceptions of high-rise towers along major transit corridors, but there are not many options offered in-between, the so-called “missing middle.” The lack of choice in housing types is a serious issue. Municipal policies need to be more flexible so that home buyers can choose from the full spectrum of options, especially the “missing middle” – home types that bridge the gap between detached houses and condominium apartments. If elected, will you push for updating municipal zoning by-laws and policies in Toronto that will allow and encourage more medium density housing?

YES,

Comments (please specify):

Lack of affordable housing, as well as a variety of housing types is a huge issue in Toronto. If elected, I will support updating municipal zoning by-law policies, as it relates to medium density housing.

Toronto Housing Issues Candidate Survey

Q3 REFORM MLTTThe Municipal Land Transfer Tax in Toronto is one of the most significant factors restricting supply and choice for home buyers. The average Toronto home buyer faces over \$26,000 in combined (provincial and local) land transfer taxes. Rather than pay this kind of money, many choose to stay put instead of selling their home and moving. According to the C.D. Howe Institute, the Toronto MLTT reduces existing homes available for purchase by 16% every year. That means less choice for other home buyers. Currently, the City allows a rebate for first-time buyers to a maximum of \$4,475, which equals the amount of MLTT on a \$400,000 home, significantly lower than the current average priced home in Toronto (currently \$785,223). In addition, the MLTT tax rates have not been adjusted for inflation since the tax was introduced ten years ago. Since that time, home prices have increased by 102%, meaning home buyers have been forced to pay more and more in LTT. If elected, will you be willing to explore reform or adjustments to the Municipal Land Transfer Tax in Toronto, such as increasing the first-time buyer rebate and indexing the tax rates to inflation, so that it stops distorting the City's housing market?

Comments (please specify):

While it is important for the government to collect taxes through various revenue streams, if elected I will be willing to explore reform, or adjustments to the Municipal Land Transfer Tax in Toronto.

Q4 REMOVE HOUSING SUPPLY RED TAPRed tape and delays caused by municipal approval processes slow down the creation of new housing (projects are delayed by up to 3–4 years according to the Building Industry and Land Development Association) and add costs that reduce affordability (around \$168,000 to a single-family house in GTA according to the C.D. Howe Institute). We need to find ways to streamline this process and make it more efficient so that we can get more housing supply into the market quicker, which, in turn, will provide more choice and affordability for home buyers and renters. If elected, would you support cutting approval times and other red tape barriers that limit the building of new housing in Toronto?

UNSURE,

Comments (please specify):

Efficiency is very important to me. If elected, I will be happy to review the current wait times and other red tape involved in creating longer wait times for approval, with a view to cutting any excessive wait times.

Q5 BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE Even when new housing developments are approved, they are often delayed by the need for municipal infrastructure to service the new area or building. Without roads or sewers, construction cannot even begin, hence adding another barrier to bringing more housing supply to the market. Municipalities often lack the funding or staff to expand services. Infrastructure investment funding comes from the provincial and federal governments. A recent report from the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis found that the federal government has fallen behind on its commitment to invest in Ontario's infrastructure, like transit and transportation. Inadequate transit and transportation, coupled with a sluggish economy, will have a negative effect on real estate in Toronto. Infrastructure investment in Ontario peaked eight years ago when 4.2% of GDP was spent; however, it has since diminished, with a decade-low occurring in 2016 when only 2.4% of GDP was invested. If elected, would you push for more investment in critical infrastructure, such as transportation, to facilitate growth and housing by finding creative ways to secure funding from the provincial and federal governments?

YES,

Comments (please specify):

It is important that municipal infrastructure keeps up with the rate of housing. For this reason I will support greater investment in critical infrastructure by the various levels of government. As a resident of Scarborough-Rouge Park, I understand the issue regarding lack of efficient transit. The Rouge is a fast growing area, yet we do not have an efficient and connected transit system to service the needs of this community.