

Q1 CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate Name:

Nick Ward

Ward:

University Rosedale - Ward 11

Municipality:

Toronto

Q2 UPDATE ZONING BY-LAWS Outdated zoning by-laws are a barrier to building the right types of homes to keep up with demand.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):

I support updating municipal zoning and policies to allow medium density housing. The current zoning laws are too broad and rigid for our City. They ignore the granular needs of our neighbourhood. In other words, because large areas are zoned for very specific and very narrow use types... It forces developers to seek site-by-site plan amendments. This is the worst of both worlds - It undermines long term planning for the City and for the Real Estate Industry.

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?

YES,

Comments (please specify):

Obviously, this is a challenging balance to meet - The City only has limited revenue streams and needs to be solvent. That said, there are clear areas of imbalance and unfairness. An additional reason that you have not mentioned (but that I believe is also a significant reason to look at reform) - The City's over-reliance on real estate development fees and transfer taxes leaves it vulnerable to market changes... This adds a further level of "distortion"

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?

YES,

Comments (please specify):

The internal bureaucracy of City Hall adds expense, a lack of predictability and a lack of community responsiveness to the process. Interestingly, this is an area where (in principle) resident's associations and developers see things very similarly. The bureaucratic process is so byzantine, expensive and inconsistent that local communities, developers (and Councillors) are prevented from finding common ground.

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):

Absolutely... Yes! A Councillor's duty is to advocate for her City at all levels of government. The current practice of squabbling on ideological grounds is irresponsible, unprofessional, unproductive and reckless. We may disagree with the Federal and Provincial governments, but we must respect their roles. This is not just good governance, it's smart business. The City needs their support.