



Candidates for City Council University-Rosedale, Ward 11

Robin Buxton Potts



Could you tell us about your campaigns and vision for ward 11?

For the last three years, I have been working for former councilor Kristyn Wong-Tam and was her chief of staff for about two years. Previous to that, I worked for other city councilors – Adam Vaughan, Joe Cressy, and interim councilor Ceta Ramkhalawansingh. I spent the last decade of my life committed to city-building, city governance, making things safer, building affordable housing, making services function, helping redesign parts, building bike lanes... I'm born and raised in the city, and I love it. And when the opportunity presented itself with Mike Layton leaving, I just had this concern that all three downtown councilors were about to brand

new, and there is just so much experience and institutional knowledge that we're losing by losing the three downtown progressive councilors. I love talking to people, hearing their ideas, and it's been really nice to go outside with my dog. Yeah, just really enjoying getting back out to the community especially after so many months and years of online calls.

Housing: The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1421 in the Fall of 2020, which is a 13% increase from 2 years prior. How are you planning to support low-income youth and ensure buildings meet the RentTO's safety standards?

It's a huge challenge. I am incredibly lucky that I lived in a housing co-op that my family started in 1994 and so I have affordable housing – finally – after ten years of... I moved about 12 times in ten years because of all kinds of things: renovations, people moving, rent increases being outside my budget..... So, I understand deeply the fear that people are experiencing. I was devastated to hear that students are being forced to live in shelters right now because there's such a lack in housing. I would say it's what got me into politics in the first place. There's a few things that I think the city can do right away, part of which is to legalize rooming houses. I was disappointed that we couldn't pass that legislation in the last term... But making sure it's possible for people who choose this kind of housing that – it is safe, that the city can go in and make sure that people are being treated with dignity and respect while also maintaining that affordable housing – is the key piece at making sure that we can build that across the city, so that students in Scarborough, Etobicoke and North York also have that access to rooming houses. The city should be building dense, quick, deeply affordable housing on city land. We have an opportunity that are surplus land. There are parking lots everywhere, we should be making it easier to build those units and build them fast. They should remain in city controls so we can contain the rents on them and really make sure that we are focusing those for students, seniors and people on the affordable housing waitlist. It's incomprehensible to me that we are not taking this crisis seriously with the urgency that I



think it needs. There are some other things like changing the zoning in single family homes to allow for multi-tenant units. I know that when I was in university, I lived in houses throughout the Annex and slept where one single family home was split into multiple units. And over time, a lot of the housing has been converted back into single family homes, which is legal in the city's planning process but going the other way isn't. (For instance) you're someone who's lived in the annex your entire life, but you're retired, and you want to stay in your home, but you can't necessarily afford or need that amount of space. You can't convert that back into two units and that kind of dense apartment housing in these neighborhoods where you don't have to do big builds is great for affordability, it's great for climate. So, those are just some of the things that the city could change quickly to help make a big dent in the housing crisis.

Transit: Transit costs are exceedingly more difficult for students to pay in the face of rising inflation and the existing barriers of low incomes. What solutions do envision students and individuals with low incomes will be able to sustainably afford access to public transit?

We need to be working towards a free transit model. I don't think we can afford to do that overnight. We saw what happened when TTC lost all of its ridership through the pandemic. We're still only at about 60% ridership and because in Toronto we are the highest – like 70% of the operating costs of TTC come from our fare box. We don't have a good solution for paying the services that we need other than with transit fares, and so we need to be working towards that as a policy goal. That's something that I would absolutely support. I would rather see a metro pass – which you're gonna pay a hundred... what is about 70 dollars a month now – you would have a capping system. So unlimited – like you use your presto card (because they're not much of a pass anymore) up until a certain amount like a hundred dollars and then everything you do from there is free, right? And so you're not forced to do a prepaid system that maybe you don't use the entire monthly allocation, Right? Like, I found myself all the time: Okay, does it make more sense for me to buy the pass upfront the beginning of the month, and then hope that I use it enough to justify the cost? or risk doing it on a trip-by-trip basis and then accidentally paying way more than I would have. You don't need to make that hard for people. I'd like to hear about integration between GO Transit and the TTC. We shouldn't be asking people to pay twice for that system. We know how many people can use – in from Mississauga, Brampton or wherever – because they can't afford to live in the city, so making it possible for people to get that to class in the city without having to double pay transit is a really big one. So, the city is part of our climate action plan which has a goal of making every trip under five kilometers, either done by transit, walking or cycling. And to do that, we need to make transit a better system. We need better investment from the provincial and federal governments, and we need to make it more efficient, cleaner and safer for people to choose transit and that can't be done on the backs of the people already using.

Mental Health: According to a National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey in 2019, 52% of students reported feeling depressed and 60% experienced anxiety. During the pandemic's heightened global uncertainty, we have seen a striking increase in the number of students seeking mental health care compared to previous year. Post-secondary institutions are struggling in their efforts to provide adequate mental health support for their students. What changes do you think the municipal government can or should make to help support students' mental health?



I have been upfront that I've had my own mental health anxiety, depression, addiction struggles. What was working for me, I should say, it's really finding community spaces and being able to work together. And I think one of the things that we lost in the pandemic, was those spaces where everyone could just kind of be together, work towards a common goal. In municipal governance, we call those third spaces, so it's not home or work or school which are the first and secondary spaces. But places like community centers, churches, parks, libraries are really good ones – the places where you can just go and be with people and learn from each other where there isn't a cost associated with it. When I was a student and didn't have the disposable income that I needed to participate, I really retreated into my own depression, “I can't go out with my friends because I don't have any money” and the anxiety and stress of that. Having better community spaces, whether that's open spaces in new developments, more community centers with better access, better libraries – you know, we call it like an open place – where there's not a set of places where people can go for free to be together. Universities and the city can help create those spaces. I just think that that allows for people to get the support that they need without it being prescribed by a bunch of people who think they know better.

Policing: As media depicts increases in crime rates in the City of Toronto, do you intend to put more emphasis during your tenure as Councillor on increasing police enforcement (expanding funding of police for example) or a turn towards rehabilitative and preventative measures (more special mental health response units and expanded poverty alleviation measures)?

We are looking at alternatives to policing and really pushing for the alternative pilot program that's working right now for mental health – calls to bring in crisis response teams instead of policing. I want to challenge the idea that crime rates are up, certain crime rates are definitely up in certain neighborhoods, but as a whole crime is down in the city. Violent crime is down in lots of areas. The calls that are up, are things like vandalism, car break-ins, overdose calls... things like that, where I think the link to poverty and survival for people is really clear. Preventative measures, where you're making sure people have safe places to go inside and to use safe supply, would reduce the number of calls that police are getting for those kinds of things. And (police) would be able to focus on some of the more violent crimes where I think people really do feel the need for ongoing policing. There's no evidence to me that suggests more funding is the answer for that into our traditional policing system. I really like to see those investments made, again, in a preventative way for housing, healthcare, addiction support, communities' spaces, employment resources. All those kinds of things that help people feel connected to their community in a way that's not criminative.



Diane Saxe



Could you tell us about your campaigns and vision for ward 11?

I am an environmental and energy lawyer. I have deep local roots in Ward 11, University-Rosedale, and I am running to fight for a better city, especially for young people.

Housing: The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1421 in the Fall of 2020, which is a 13% increase from 2 years prior. How are you planning to support low-income youth and ensure buildings meet the RentTO's safety standards?

How do we deal with Rental safety standards?

That's the question of education and enforcement. The city by-law officers have to be responsive if people have complaints to go out and respond. So that there are actual consequences for landlords who don't comply, there are many really good landlords, and some that are terrible. And it's the job of enforcement to push the ones who won't do it voluntarily. One of the jobs of a councilor is to make sure that

constituents do have access to city services including enforcement. I used to be a prosecutor, so I'm at a very strong interest in proper enforcement of the law and I also was one of the trainers who set up the enforcement branch for the ministry of environment. So I speak the language of enforcement and I'm sure that I'll be able to work with city staff to get more attention to important issues of enforcement. Back to your first question, one of the critical issues we have is a lack of adequate supply of housing in University-Rosedale. It's a really popular area, lots of people want to live here, and a high quality of life. There are tens of thousands more people coming to developments that are already approved and a huge number of new developers all still being approved. This is one of the busiest areas of the city for new development there. Something like 270 development applications were active last week just alone just in University-Rosedale. So, on the one hand, new supply will help – there's a thousand demand and supply. If we don't have enough supply and we've got very strong demand, prices go up. So increases in supply should help. We also need a lot more flexibility in the sizes and types of dorming units.



This is the kind of thing that we can see over and over again. You get a lot of the houses in University-Rosedale are owned by older families or widows alone, and they would like to have some more income, and they would be happy to create some rental spaces in their buildings if it was allowed. Up until now, it hasn't been allowed, it should be allowed. And, of course, with more rental spaces there's a lot more spaces where students can go, which increases supply and should reduce the pressure. I had some students tell me just this week that they offered \$200 a month over asking on the rent for an apartment near the university because they needed someplace close by and they still didn't get the apartment, because there is just so much demand. So, allowing rapid creation of rental units will help and focusing on how do we get a lot more supply quickly. Well designed, close to transit, environmentally responsible construction... all those things, but we need to have a lot more housing because supply will help. Sometimes even if we have more supply, that's not enough. The city of Toronto has a portable housing benefit and we need to see that expanded so that more people can get some support with rent. And of course, we need the city to speak up to the provincial government because the provincial government is primarily responsible. They pay far too little to people who need public assistance, like ODSP and disability support. Anybody in Ontario works, is basically on a starvation amount. The province dumped housing and welfare onto the city without giving many resources to do it with. They've created this problem, when we need to speak up for them, to take more of that responsibility back. They're the ones with the tax revenue, not the city,

Transit: Transit costs are exceedingly more difficult for students to pay in the face of rising inflation and the existing barriers of low incomes. What solutions do envision students and individuals with low incomes will be able to sustainably afford access to public transit? Public transit is absolutely critical to the present and future of the city. TTC riders put out a platform which I've signed on to. One of them is that the city needs to provide some financial support to the TTC during this temporary period of lower ridership associated with COVID so that we don't have to keep cutting services, and I absolutely agree with that. The second thing that they call for is an extension of the fair pass discount system. Not sure if you've been familiar with that. So it provides discounted TTC fares for low-income communities and should be expanded and funded. It was proposed, but not funded in the 2023 budget and should be because that helps build a fairer city and also keeps our carbon footprint and our pollution down. A third thing that I think will help because the discount in fare pass doesn't go very far. So I call specifically for free transit for people in public assistance, who absolutely can't afford to buy tickets, and also for high school students. Eventually I'd love to see free transit for everybody. But these are two really good groups to start with. The city of Kingston has shown how effective it is to provide free transit for high school students. When you know, people are just coming into early adulthood, learning how they're going to get around their city. Especially for lower income youth, having free transit gives them the freedom of the city. When they couldn't otherwise afford to travel across the city and discover other places, attend events, and meet people and go to activities. But if they have transit free as high school students, they learn how to get around and how to live their lives that way. It sets a lifelong pattern that is good for them and good for the city. It's not that expensive and we could absolutely do it. It's craziness that it should be cheaper to drive and park than to take

the TTC, that should never be true.

And another thing I would say for people is that even cheaper than transit is to bike. So, you know, it costs nothing to ride a bike basically. So lots of people would cycle more if we had safe places for people to cycle and we're getting a little better at it but we're really slow, especially compared to most of the cities of the world who have recognized that one of the cheapest ways to make mobility better is to provide bike lanes. Bike lanes aren't just for bikes, you know, they're for scooters and electric scooters, and segways... anything that involves wheels, but not a 2,000 pound metal box around you. We need to have a safe place there. It's not safe for wheeled mobility to be on the sidewalk, but in a lot of places, there's no safe place on the road either. We need to make that interim space and we know from research around the world that that reduces death rates, improves air quality, makes the city easier to get around and more pleasant for almost everybody and it's good for local businesses. Somebody going by a car doesn't stop to shop, very rarely, but people who are walking by or cycling by, they stop a lot. So we can have more vibrant, 15 minute neighborhoods and again, that reduces the cost of living. If you can get what you need where you are by walking or biking or something that doesn't cost you anything, that reduces your cost of living quite a lot. We know that nearly half of the poorest 10% of Torontonians own a car because they don't have a safe way to get around any other way. And that's an enormous financial burden on people with limited needs. Getting rid of a car is the fastest way of giving yourself a big raise. That's only possible if we provide good transit, good bike infrastructure and a lot of places we need to improve the sidewalks.

Mental Health: According to a National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey in 2019, 52% of students reported feeling depressed and 60% experienced anxiety. During the pandemic's heightened global uncertainty, we have seen a striking increase in the number of students seeking mental health care compared to previous year. Post-secondary institutions are struggling in their efforts to provide adequate mental health support for their students. What changes do you think the municipal government can or should make to help support students' mental health?

You're absolutely right that mental health is an urgent crisis here and around the world and we unfortunately can expect it to get worse as the climate crisis accelerates. Research around the world has shown that young people in particular are suffering, understandably and correctly, from climate grief and anxiety. It really wears people down. In Ontario in particular, mental health services are dramatically underfunded by the provincial government, which is why even before the pandemic, there were 28,000 children and youth waiting and waiting and waiting to get mental health care. The city can't replace all the things that the provincial government is not doing, but the city definitely can help. One thing that is important is community, wellness hubs, places where young people can go and get mental health support they're looking for, get help finding a job, get help finding a place to live. I mean, those are big stressors on mental health – If you don't have a job and can't find a place to live. And I think there's also been some really good research around the world about the advantages of peer support – young people that support each other can do so fairly inexpensively. The people who learn the skills do better as a result and the people who



received the help do better as a result. So that's one of the things the city can help with.

And we're going to talk about housing, how important that is and the number of things the city can do to improve housing. A third thing that we know is very important for both mental and physical health is access to good quality food and access to nature. Those are both things that the city can't completely fix but can help. So having more green spaces in the crowded parts of this city – Rosedale has lots of green space – but other parts of the world do not and absolutely could have them. That helps clean the air, clean the water and helps with mental health. And in terms of good, local food. I mean, food is becoming much more expensive, probably going to be even more expensive. Both the war in Ukraine and climate change are increasing the cost of food around the world, and that's not going away anytime soon. So, finding more opportunities to grow food in the city. That's good for food security and the quality of the food, and it's also good for mental health. Action feels better than anxiety and being able to do something hands on to grow food, or pick food or prepare food or community kitchen. A lot of gardens support local food programs. Those are all good for mental and physical health in ways that are good for the city going forward. These are long-term problems. Not just one offs and we're going to need to think about them from a long-term point of view. One other thing I wanted to mention is opportunities to get hands-on experience doing green retrofits, energy efficiency, renewable energy. There's a great model in Manitoba and did you know that more than half of the licensed geothermal installers in Manitoba or indigenous people who used to not be able to get a job? And that's from a program started by a company called Aki energy. They did it without any government handouts, but they really focused on training people who otherwise were needing emergency services, suffering, and couldn't find a way out. By giving them supportive training so that they could acquire skills in energy efficiency, and installing renewable energy. And that's allowed them to, you know, become pillars of their community, they can support their families and they can reduce the energy costs of their community by making the buildings more efficient and it's been able to also save a lot of money to the city by reducing the demands on frontline services.

Policing: As media depicts increases in crime rates in the City of Toronto, do you intend to put more emphasis during your tenure as Councillor on increasing police enforcement (expanding funding of police for example) or a turn towards rehabilitative and preventative measures (more special mental health response units and expanded poverty alleviation measures)?

Prevention is always better. It's cheaper. It means less suffering and we know that a very high percentage of the calls the police have to go on involve mental health, addiction, family violence. And having a guy with a gun and body armor show up is not usually the best response. It's very expensive and not a very effective way to respond. So as you know, in the provincial campaign, when I was running his decimeter, the green party, we had pillars – housing, climate, and mental health. And so we did a lot of really detailed research into what works and what doesn't. One of the things that does work is to have mental health crisis response teams – do everything that they can do instead of having the police be the primary response for mental health. That is a way that research suggests allows us to avoid wasting



this time of skilled police officers, avoid unnecessary conflicts and deaths, avoid unnecessary suffering for the individuals. Because very often, these mental health crisis response teams are much better than the police at de-escalation – reducing the severity of an incidence, talking people down, helping them find supportive housing or access to services in a way that avoids a big problem. So there was this terrible case a few years ago where this young man was disturbed and got on a bus with a knife and when he was alone on the bus – everybody else was gone – the police shot him and killed him. And there was an extensive investigation by Justice Iacobucci who made a long list of recommendations that the city can do better. I would start with that list and see. Okay, where are we? What else can we do? We don't have to keep making the same mistakes.

Norm Di Pasquale



Housing: The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1421 in the Fall of 2020, which is a 13% increase from 2 years prior. How are you planning to support low-income youth and ensure buildings meet the RentTO's safety standards?

Problems with affordability stem from decades of neglect from all levels of government and allowing the continued commodification of housing. Housing is a human right, not a means to make a fortune. I know I cannot change the way capitalism has shaped our housing, but I can take the following actions to make housing more affordable immediately, including a stronger vacant homes tax that will make more units available, a stronger position on short term rentals which will bring more units back on the market, and hiring additional staff in Municipal Licensing and Standards to enforce these rules, and ensure all buildings are going to meet RentSafe's safety standards. These policies

exist, they just need to be enforced and strengthened. This can happen quickly.

Over the mid-to-long term, we need to prioritize affordable housing in every city-led development and on public land. and assist non-profit builders with navigating the approval process. End exclusionary zoning and award additional density to allow for more affordable housing. Combine rent supplements with existing City housing initiatives to create homes that are truly affordable for Toronto's lowest income earners. Fight to preserve and then expand the City's stock of affordable housing. Work on progressively expanding Toronto's Multi-Unit Residential Acquisitions Program to keep more rental properties affordable forever, and continue to support the quicker implementation of Inclusionary Zoning. Ultimately, build as much affordable and supportive housing as possible, to ensure everyone has their human right to housing respected.

Further, if we can expand the City's eviction prevention programs, rent supports and housing stabilization supports to enable tenants to remain in their homes and challenge bad faith evictions, we



can work to ensure more people are able to stay in their homes and protected from bad landlords.

Transit: Transit costs are exceedingly more difficult for students to pay in the face of rising inflation and the existing barriers of low incomes. What solutions do envision students and individuals with low incomes will be able to sustainably afford access to public transit?

The City's Fair Fare Pass should continue to be expanded and funded. This will provide people with sustainable access to public transit. For students specifically, the cost of a transit pass should be covered by their place of study, from high school to post-secondary.

Mental Health: According to a National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey in 2019, 52% of students reported feeling depressed and 60% experienced anxiety. During the pandemic's heightened global uncertainty, we have seen a striking increase in the number of students seeking mental health care compared to previous year.

Post-secondary institutions are struggling in their efforts to provide adequate mental health support for their students. What changes do you think the municipal government can or should make to help support students' mental health?

The City of Toronto can leverage its role as one of the largest and most integral Public Health authorities in Ontario to attract and acquire services to assist people in need of mental health care. Where the province has failed to support residents to treat the various symptoms of distress they are living with, the City can create a network that can support and direct youth looking for help to the services the City has put in place to help serve. This is not a new concept. It is one that we currently have undertaken to support those in need during the pandemic, and can strengthen and increase its capacity through dedicated staff and funding to make people aware of this important health service.

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The fact crime seems to be increasing while the police budget continues to grow does not suggest that the answer to what is ailing us is the lack of police. It speaks to the fact that we have mistakenly prioritized enforcement over spending precious resources on tackling the root causes of crime: poverty. Reallocating resources from the police budget toward services that address poverty is integral to resolving issues related to oppression, safety, and general public health. Tackling intergenerational poverty must be a priority for Toronto. In the immediate future, we need to expand the City's Community Crisis Response Program to provide an alternative to the police attending all distress calls, while expanding the City's involvement in connecting residents with mental health, and other health services to support their unique needs.



Adam Golding



Could you tell us about your campaigns and vision for ward 11?

I lived in Ward 11 for 28 years. I was born here at Mount Sinai Hospital. I also went to school at U of T, I grew up in Berry, but ever since then I've been down here and I've spent the first year of my life down here. As I mentioned I've been involved in different kinds of political efforts – worked for the MVP last year, and a lot of things have been going wrong recently. And, you know, I've spent years focusing more on music after doing future learning and stuff like that. But a lot of things happen that seem to give me no option, but to get back involved in politics.. There's two groups that are basically putting together picks against Team Tory – the Socialist Alliance and Progress Toronto. I'm one of the co-founders of the Socialist Alliance and we're waiting to see who Progress Toronto picks, but basically that's the lay of the land – to get Team Tory out of there and everyone keep your eyes peeled for any additional picks coming from those groups.

Housing: The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1421 in the Fall of 2020, which is a 13% increase from 2 years prior. How are you planning to support low-income youth and ensure buildings meet the RentTO's safety standards?

Safety standards are important but they have to be made relative in line to the base of affordability. I'll give you a kind of concerning example – I've been going regularly to a meeting held by Chris Glover MPP, Spadina-Fort York about homelessness and presentation was given there from someone who explained a whole project that was worked out to put tiny homes in parking lots. They had worked them out to whatever they thought was safe and that it was at a cost that they could do it. And part of the reason for doing this is to decentralize services and shelter beds, so that you don't have a spiking crime when you get



past a certain threshold, certain density. So, they want to spread it out, like “Hey, we can do it. This is cheap enough...” but the building code actually made it impossible because they say “Well, this is a lot safer than sleeping outside and it's also safe for our communities because it reduces crime, but it doesn't meet the building code” which means they get fined... whatever the details are. There's red tape problems, in some cases could mean that somebody dies. They were worried about insurance costs or those structures burning down. John Tory used to and probably still says things like “ these structures are not safe” and he says that in absolute terms. He doesn't say safe compared to what – they are unsafe compared to his condo and they are safe compared to sleeping outside. The thing is, he's not talking about safety to the people sleeping in them. If you ask for fire extinguishers, you wouldn't get them from the fire department. Why? Because it doesn't eliminate the liability, they're afraid of their insurance premiums going up. It's an unpriced externality and it's cheaper for the city for someone to die in the cold than for them to survive a tiny shelter fire. We do expand safety standards to include saying that this building has no walls and no roof and no floor, well, that violates all the building codes. You need to basically have it relativised in that way, because we can make things less safe by trying to make them more safe by using these weird standards which means “Okay, you get no housing and all that because it's not safe”, which is ridiculous. Most people would rather have an unsafe house than no house at all.

Transit: Transit costs are exceedingly more difficult for students to pay in the face of rising inflation and the existing barriers of low incomes. What solutions do envision students and individuals with low incomes will be able to sustainably afford access to public transit?

Transit should become free at point of use as fast as politically possible. I'm not sure if that takes one year or four years... really depends on what turns out to be a relationship between the provincial and municipal governments. But transit free at the point of use is better for climate and it's better for equality as you're mentioning, for poorer students to get around, and it's better for privacy. I started a hashtag years ago called hashtag BoycottPresto. Please don't use Presto – systems like Presto are used to track illegal immigrants, this has already been confirmed in Vancouver. Please use Presto data without a warrant: a Presto employee looked up a woman's data to ask her out on a date, which was unwelcome, you can read that story in my paper. Even if you have an anonymous card they could track you just by your trip patterns and they want to put target ads in the subway as well, which is also a privacy issue. If you don't have to spend money on fare inspectors and Presto boxes. You should pay for transit basically on people's income tax or any kind of similar method. And it's much better than a carbon tax. Carbon tax disproportionately affects the poor. You know, giving free transit to people proportionately helps the poor and it will reduce carbon emissions, increase privacy and also reduce congestion on the road. So it's a win-win for everyone in the long run, you just have to get the bubble rolling.

Mental Health: According to a National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey in 2019, 52% of students reported feeling depressed and 60% experienced anxiety. During the pandemic's heightened global uncertainty, we have seen a striking increase in the number of students seeking mental health care compared to previous year. Post-secondary institutions are struggling in their efforts to provide adequate mental



health support for their students. What changes do you think the municipal government can or should make to help support students' mental health?

You're absolutely right about mental health affecting students and especially at U of T. It's a very, very stressful place and I saw a lot of people's mental health really severely affected during their time there. I saw people run themselves down with sleep deprivation and then they have the symptoms of sleep deprivation which match the symptoms of ADHD, and they would be prescribed stimulants which would make their sleep deprivation worse. When I was a student government, over half of the execs were on speed and these drugs produce compliance as well. I think this goes back to what I mentioned earlier about regular work week but then I thought it was pretty difficult to regulate the work week of a U of T student, right? How could you fine the University for working over hours because that's the thing, people want to put in those extra hours to be competitive. So it's very difficult in that environment when you're basically at the top school in the country and everybody wants to win. What you really need to do is make more teaching positions. So if you improve the student teacher ratio, this is not just a municipal thing unfortunately, but this is going back to work rate and learning rate. Our learning rate would be much higher if we had more teachers, like no brainer, right? So, we should have the administrators and double the teachers to start and see how that goes. And I think everybody would be a lot more sane because for one thing there would be more jobs to go around. So people wouldn't be fighting their close comrades and friends and peers. You know, because they expanded education, they expanded the bureaucracy in enrollment, they didn't expand professor positions, You know? That is a compliance thing and it drives everybody crazy, you know how Noam Chomsky remarked how student debt is a disciplinary technique. Basically, we need free education. We need more jobs for professors, and we hopefully need a better work week for students. When I was a student president, I made events to help people relax, basically social events at the end of the week because people just needed to get out more. That's one thing student governments can do, that's not really a municipal government thing. Although, you know, maybe the municipal government should check out – his is half serious – but just come in and say U of T you need to relax or the city's going to make you relax by throwing you a party. Okay, you know, I just thought of that now. I can't say that's a bad idea either, but as long as it's not too expensive,

Policing: As media depicts increases in crime rates in the City of Toronto, do you intend to put more emphasis during your tenure as Councillor on increasing police enforcement (expanding funding of police for example) or a turn towards rehabilitative and preventative measures (more special mental health response units and expanded poverty alleviation measures)?

Very strongly towards defunding the police by 50%. I'm not a complete abolitionist. There have been police in my family, polices have saved my mother's life. I believe you can't have a hundred percent defund platform and be feminist, but all of the socials alliance candidates are running on a 50% defund platform. And we will be trying to add more candidates to our alliance, but only if they support a 50% defund platform. As I mentioned earlier, I was personally arrested and injured by the police at Lampart 2 – a lot of people were. The police spent probably over 50 million dollars on encampment enforcement with the city manager's



office with former cops. We have to fire Tracey Cook and not reelect John Burnside in part because they are former cops with an authoritarian mindset, which affects their policy. That's why we didn't take a human rights approach – we took the violent approach towards encampments. The police should only work on violent crime. There should be no police spending on anything which isn't about violent crime. And most of the spending should go in toward improving response time. We have a huge problem with authoritarians that we have to defund the police by 50%. We need radical reforms as well. First I'm going to say we need community oversight where we can vote on things as a people. We need to be able to vote down their spending, even if it's all dependent on violent crime. The community should be able to vote on priorities, to say “actually, this kind of crime is what we want you to focus on... we're worried about random street violence or we're worried about gun violence...” Like what is the priority and what should not even be on that list is people sleeping in a park. That should not be the police's job because here the police always have guns. So by definition, if you use cops for something like that, you're sending a gun to a night fight, it's predictably creating violence. The city manager's office should have known that the city contains people with a moral compass who would have resisted what they're doing. But they're just so far gone that they didn't even see that coming. So we've got a real problem with policing in the city, and the cops need to be cut in half, especially if we can cut the council in half.

Axel Arvizu



Could you tell us about your campaigns and vision for ward 11?

I am an entrepreneur. I managed a couple of companies that I started in Toronto in the manufacturing and building sectors, but I think most importantly, I'm a candidate for Toronto city councillor in the University-Rosedale Ward 11 for the next municipal elections. What I can say about my campaign. My campaign is basically getting out there and talking and listening to people. I think my number one job is to listen to people and my promise is to always make time to do that, no matter what time of day. What I want in this is, I want to see ward 11 as a place where I can raise my kids. So I just had a one year old and to have a sense of community and safety and just a brighter city.



Housing: The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1421 in the Fall of 2020, which is a 13% increase from 2 years prior. How are you planning to support low-income youth and ensure buildings meet the RentTO's safety standards?

Funny story: just before the pandemic hit, I had plane tickets to move to Calgary because Toronto was so unaffordable and we just had no expectations of staying in Toronto. Our generation is facing a housing crisis. We need to build inventory. I plan to advocate for, and work with building departments to ease, for example, basement apartment conversions. It's almost impossible to do that at the moment in the city of Toronto, without violating some type of building codes. I also plan to improve alternative housing options such as laneways, garden suites – which is what I do for a living. My intention is that families can stay together and these can help cool down the renters and or sellers' market conditions.

I know it's not under the municipal branch, but we need to take a look at, and fix the backlog at the landlord tenant board. I've heard and I know first hand investors and owners are scared to put their houses or apartments on the market because they are afraid that they might get a bad tenant. And there's no remedies. There's no course of action that they have and takes more than a year to get a hearing and it goes both ways. The landlord and tenant boards should also represent and protect renters, which you're not able to get a hearing. I plan to put caps on rent increases, I think they're important. I think greed is overtaking this nation. Any resources that we can have to subsidize housing should be allocated to people that need it the most. Toronto community housing needs to get their acts together, stories that you hear of organized crime running in some of these buildings and the city of Toronto is not able to evict them. The rent safe program should be applicable to more rental units and not just some of them. At the moment, I think it's redundant, confusing and inefficient to only include a few units and not all of them.

Transit: Transit costs are exceedingly more difficult for students to pay in the face of rising inflation and the existing barriers of low incomes. What solutions do envision students and individuals with low incomes will be able to sustainably afford access to public transit?

I am passionate about transit, you know, along with other motor transportations like biking. But times that I traveled to London, Tokyo, Copenhagen, I saw the infrastructure, the subway lines, the way people don't actually need a car to move from a place that is really far and commuting to the city. I want to continue the transit expansion and I believe in the amalgamation of services with VIA rail and Metro links: increase service for transit riders, increase subsidies to the TTC – we're one of the least subsidized transit cities in the world. And I want to make sure that we finish those LRT lines and subway lines and stay in budget. I want to increase my commitment to growth to the city in the sense of transportation and need being more accessible. I believe it also will alleviate some of the housing crisis, as you know, maybe living in Mississauga or New Market would be like living in Brooklyn, New York, and you just commute into Toronto. I want to get to a point that if you live in Toronto, it will not be necessary for you to own a vehicle.

Mental Health: According to a National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey in 2019, 52% of students reported feeling depressed and 60% experienced anxiety. During



the pandemic's heightened global uncertainty, we have seen a striking increase in the number of students seeking mental health care compared to previous year.

Post-secondary institutions are struggling in their efforts to provide adequate mental health support for their students. What changes do you think the municipal government can or should make to help support students' mental health?

The healthcare system is very challenging because the whole healthcare system needs to be revamped. We need better access to healthcare, better quality of healthcare, better value of healthcare. We need not to privatize all of these. All of these while the age structure of our population is changing, I want to make sure that resources are allocated more to mental health and facilitate access to people that need it, including young people. As municipalities go, and I know how the healthcare polls and their provincial jurisdiction – there's little we can do. But my plan is to work with the universities, work with non-profit organizations, and try to hear organizations that can help alleviate some of these traffics that the hospitals are receiving and offer mental health to our communities.

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I know we heard a lot about defunding the police as of lately. I am not a fan of the phrase "defunding the police" because we surely need some kind of authority so that we don't turn into Gotham City. The way I like to put it is that we have come to over-rely on police enforcement where common sense would tell us that police involvement is not necessary and in some instances, it makes things worse. You know, do we need armed officers taking accident reports, guiding traffic at an intersection, or at a construction site... and on and on goes the list of the duties of the police force that aren't really necessary. However, I am pro diminishing the scope of the police responsibilities and shifting some of those responsibilities to better equipped teams that need those needs. It also means investing in mental healthcare, housing, community programs. So that's where I stand in terms of policing.

Pierre Therrien



Could you tell us about your campaigns and vision for ward 11?

I'm a retired authorized nuclear operator. In a previous life I controlled Ontario's reactors. I really think that our society is ready for more of a technocratic approach. I think we face a lot of problems and in order to resolve them correctly, a more technocratic approach will simply resolve our problems.



The first one being climate change. I've got an idea of how to control climate change rather than where we stand today – being victims of it. We're currently discarding all of our CO₂ wasted into the biosphere. There's a whole bunch of different ways to do it but what I suggest is that we put a value on the CO₂ removal and relate that to the carbon tax. So, for every tonne of CO₂ oil producers dump into the air, I want to write a law to force them to remove two tonnes plus the rebate. So, the current deal with the carbon tax is we make it so that it doesn't cost the poor anything by using rebates. By making the carbon tax a tax on the rich only, this method of controlling climate change will not cost the poor anything. I want to bring this new idea into our society and the thinking that goes along with this – this is the same thinking that we'll bring free transit. And from my point of view, our society has suffered a great deal because of the COVID crisis. I think our society has changed a lot and people are beginning to think that our quality of life is more important than just all running around like we do. I think that the way to achieve that is to eliminate most of the expressways in the city and bury them as well. The federal government – since Canada now is the strongest country economically in the G7 – is in a very good state financially to assume the cost of new debt, to pay for all of that. So, I think there's enough resources to bury the garden, bury the dawn valley and just the burden on that.

Housing: The average monthly cost for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1421 in the Fall of 2020, which is a 13% increase from 2 years prior. How are you planning to support low-income youth and ensure buildings meet the RentTO's safety standards?

The real estate industry is at the beginning of a very large transition. And unfortunately, what's going on with our financial systems is that there's a problem with the money supply and it's mostly due to what's going on in the United States. They've simply printed too much money and this is going to cause a series of problems over the next coming months. It's going to move all of the values from our assets. The bubbles are going to burst: stocks, phones, real estate... but it's the real estate picture that affects what you're talking about. So what's going to happen now is it looks like real estate is going to drop off of a cliff. The value of real estate is going to be reduced very rapidly. But the problem is Canada has a monstrous immigration policy and this policy is needed in order to create and maintain the strength of Canada's economic resources. I don't think we should change this immigration policy. I know this is a long way to explain the story, but with real estate market collapsing and the demand for new housing continuing to go on, economically, all of our large construction housing projects are going to come to a stop. So what I would suggest is that at this point in time, as the crisis really begins to unfold, we need many ways to see how it works. I'm going to advocate that the government finish many of these condo structures, especially in the downtown core and break around here. These construction projects can be taken over, and I think that there is a serious problem with the size of all of these condos that we're building – they're too far too small. So I would increase the standards for these new condos. I would suggest governments are going to have to take over the construction projects and I think that we need to increase the minimum size standards. Anyway, by maintaining construction while this economic crisis unfolds over the next year or two, we need to be quick on our feet and bring much more construction of new units into play. Much more larger units and make a lot more smaller units for students, right? This action by making the supply of apartments



exceed the demand should put us in a position to make housing inexpensive. That's how I see this unfolded.

Transit: Transit costs are exceedingly more difficult for students to pay in the face of rising inflation and the existing barriers of low incomes. What solutions do envision students and individuals with low incomes will be able to sustainably afford access to public transit?

The transit fee is currently a tax on the poor. It's a tax on students especially and it should not be so. It should be free for students. There shouldn't be a cost for students or the poor or the rich for that matter, to go on the subway. Another thing I'm planning on doing that would help students a lot is, I think the time is now for high speed inner-city rail. And so my belief is that – it may cost a hundred billion dollars – but what I think we should do is to put in high speed TGV style from Quebec City all the way to Windsor and Sarnia. It should span the entire commercial district in that area and service all. And I think that funding for that can come in the same way – government infrastructure money, federal government infrastructure money to pay for it. And then that way students who are living in downtown Montreal who want to go to U of T should be able to get here in commuting time on a high-speed train like that. If we put in high speed rail in Ontario and Quebec to serve our needs correctly, then it'll open up people and students can go to school where they want without having to leave home. And that's what

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if I become counselor, then my goal is to move up to provincial politics immediately. So the liberal leadership is up to wraps here in Ontario. What I think about that issue about our health system is that it is terribly underfunded. And I think that a large part of the problem with our health system is that we're paying too many insurance companies. There's too much private health care making its way into our healthcare system. I think that provincially or federally funded healthcare is the cheapest healthcare you can get. And I think that by reducing the costs of healthcare, we're not going to spend less money on health care. We need to devote these resources. We can save on issues like health care. I don't think we should be dependent on charity to fund heart, cardio- or cancer research. I don't think we should have a mental health care system, where there's a line-up. If you're concerned, if you're sad and you want to be able to talk, I think you should be able to talk with the mental health professionals with relative ease. There should be no lineups and how could it cost anything anymore? I think mental healthcare should be integrated into the health system. I've seen people around they suffer from mental health and I've seen that I've seen the availability of service being clear obstacles to getting the help.



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The solution to that is you just have to decriminalize all drugs and offer them at retail sales to whoever is engaged to get them. I think the war on drugs is a war on your own people. And this has been shown to be true many times. And what's happening here is that we've created a system of drug supply, where lethal drug doses are being sold and the people don't know when you're going to be taking a lethal dose of drugs. So you're funding a drug supply that is lethal meanwhile the criminals that are controlling the drug supply. The criminals are keeping the police busy continuously, while they try and find, which one is the real perpetrator? Who the hell is the dealer here? Right? So by eliminating the criminal activity, by just simply taking it away, that is what the police chiefs think will reduce the cost of policing. This is a way to defund the police – the police will no longer be dealing continuously with drug gangs and homeless people. This will lead us down the path to a more sensible society where people are no longer so scared. That comes out in the end where I say we need to reduce populism in our society. Populism is a political idea where the politicians make ordinary people feel like as if the elites are somehow discriminating against them. It turns the idea in people's minds that leads to hatred of the rich. I think that populism is something we need to speak out against and that and again this is my idea about creating a more technocratic society where we act in our own best interests.