

Responses

Summary

Written responses to questions: Syeda Jaana Ali, James Dann, Jennie Worden
Would like to meet: Syeda Jaana Ali, James Dann, Nate Erskine-Smith Adam Smith, Jeff Wahl
Auto responses: Olivia Chow, Chris Alexander, Natalie Johnson
No response: Brad Bradford, Kevin Morrison, Austin Vieira, Devin Wilkins
No email available and no letters sent: Karsten Riedel. Mohammad Shabani

Details

Mayor (major candidates)

Chris Alexander, received Sept 13, 2026

Thank you for your questions. This is a topic Chris - who is a history student - cares deeply about.

This week has a number of debates Chris needs to prepare for. Please allow him a few days to get back to you.

Warm regards,

Hedvig

Hedvig Alexander

Chris Alexander for Mayor

Olivia Chow, received Sept 13, 2026

Thank you for getting in touch with the Olivia Chow campaign. Your message has been received, and we are working to respond as quickly as possible.

Councillor Candidates for Beaches – East York, Ward 19

Syeda Jaana Ali, sent Wed, Sep 16, 2026

Dear Members of the Board,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter and for the important work that the Beach and East Toronto Historical Society has undertaken for more than five decades to preserve, promote, and celebrate the rich history and heritage of our community.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my views on these important issues.

As someone who lives in and cares deeply about Beaches–East York, I believe our history, cultural landmarks, and neighbourhood character are valuable community assets that deserve thoughtful protection. At the same time, I recognize that our city must address housing affordability and accommodate sustainable growth. These objectives should not be viewed as competing priorities.

Rather, we must pursue development that respects and integrates the heritage and character that make our communities unique.

My Vision for Protecting Heritage Character

I believe heritage conservation should be incorporated early in the planning process, not considered as an afterthought. Preserving significant buildings, streetscapes, and cultural landmarks helps maintain the identity of our neighbourhoods and strengthens community pride and belonging. Where feasible, adaptive reuse and integration of heritage elements into new developments should be encouraged.

Advocating for Stronger Heritage Protection

If elected, I will work with residents, heritage organizations, City Planning staff, and fellow Council members to advocate for stronger and more proactive heritage identification and protection measures. This includes ensuring that properties with recognized heritage value are assessed in a timely manner and that communities have meaningful input before significant decisions are made.

Lessons from Recent Heritage Losses

The concerns surrounding properties on Main Street, Gerrard Street East, and Kingston Road highlight the importance of early action, transparency, and community engagement. While every situation is unique, these experiences demonstrate the need for a more responsive process that identifies heritage opportunities and risks before redevelopment applications reach an advanced stage.

Community Participation

Residents and community organizations such as TBETHS possess valuable local knowledge and historical expertise. I support creating more opportunities for meaningful consultation and collaboration throughout the planning process. Community voices should be heard early and often when decisions are being made that affect the character of our neighbourhoods.

Future Redevelopment Priorities

My priority is to promote responsible growth that balances housing needs, economic development, and heritage preservation. New development should contribute positively to the community, respect existing neighbourhood character where appropriate, and incorporate design excellence that reflects the history and identity of Beaches–East York.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives of TBETHS to discuss these matters in greater detail and to learn more about your priorities and concerns. Partnerships between community organizations, residents, and elected representatives are essential to ensuring that growth strengthens rather than diminishes the character of our neighbourhoods.

Thank you again for reaching out and for your ongoing commitment to preserving the history and heritage of Toronto's east end.

Sincerely,

Syeda Jaana Ali
Candidate, Ward 19 Beaches–East York

James Dann. sent Sun, Sep 20, 2026

Dear friends at The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society,

Thank you for reaching out, and for everything the Society has done to protect our history since 1974. This one is close to my heart. I've spent 25 years at the City of Toronto looking after our parks, waterfront and public spaces, so I've seen firsthand both how much our heritage shapes daily life here and how easily it is lost when the City moves too slowly.

On protecting our heritage character:

I reject the idea that heritage and housing have to be at war. That is a false choice. Beaches-East York can welcome the growth our city needs and protect the character that makes people want to live here, if the planning is done right. My vision is a ward where new development fits the neighbourhoods it joins, and where the places that tell our story are identified and protected before they are at risk, not after they are gone.

On advocating for stronger protection at City Hall:

I would push for proactive heritage protection rather than reactive scrambles. That means getting at-risk properties reviewed and, where warranted, designated ahead of provincial deadlines, not waiting until a demolition application forces the issue. I know how the City works from the inside, including how planning and permitting actually move, and I would use that to make the process faster and more predictable for residents, for the Society, and for builders.

On the lessons from our recent losses:

The hardest lesson from the recent losses on Main Street, Gerrard Street and Kingston Road is that the cost is almost always delay. When the community raises a flag and the City takes years to act, we lose both the building and the trust. I would hold Heritage Planning accountable to respond to community-identified properties on a real timeline, and treat a flag from an organization like yours as the early warning it is, not a low-priority file.

On the role of residents and community organizations:

Groups like yours are the ward's memory and its early-warning system, and you should have a direct line to your councillor. I would bring the Society in early, before decisions are made, so that resident knowledge actually reaches the planners and the Preservation Board, and I would help residents understand the tools available to them, from listing and designation to speaking up at the right moment.

On redevelopment that respects our character:

My priorities are straightforward: new buildings should respect the scale, materials and rhythm of the streets they join; heritage elements should be identified early and built into projects rather than bolted on or bulldozed; and the community should be at the table from the start. Done right, we get more homes and keep the character that makes this place ours.

I would genuinely welcome the chance to sit down with the Society to hear your priorities in more detail, and we will reach out to find a time that works. Thank you again for all you do to keep our history alive.

Warm regards,
James Dann

Nate Erskine-Smit, received October 4, 2026

Hi there,

I would be happy to meet to discuss heritage and development, and how the two can go together.

Nate

Natalie Johnson

Thank you so much for your email and the opportunity to respond. I'll send this to Natalie for review and response.

Kindly,

Diana

Adam Smith, sent Fri, Sep 18, 2026

I am very pleased to hear from you, heritage preservation is extremely important to me. I am already on your email list from Glenn Chadwick (I know him and his wife Birgit personally), and you should know I've already been calling out the city for not protecting our heritage buildings, in particular [I deputed on 143-147 Main St](#) calling out that precise point.

I can give you a fulsome written response, but I would love to meet with your group. Please let me know some dates and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Adam Smith

Jeff Wahl, sent Thu, Sep 17, 2026

Thank you for your email. I'd be thrilled to meet with a representative. My schedule works best as follows...Thank you again and I look forward to hearing from you

Jennie Worden, sent Wed. Sept 30, 2016

Thank you so much for reaching out, and for all your passionate and hard work celebrating and preserving the history and heritage of the southern part of Ward 19. I've used your resources in creating my Jane's Walk: Toronto's Summer Playground, from Then until Now, and I have tremendous respect for the work TBETHS has put into learning and teaching about our neighbourhoods over time.

I really appreciate that you've acknowledged, forthrightly, that Ward 19 will continue to experience growth and development, and that our city cannot stay the same and still meet its housing needs. Our neighbourhoods cannot stay frozen in time; however, as we move forward, we need to make sure we understand what gives them their identity and what stories they hold, protect the places and features

that tell these stories, and thoughtfully make room for the coming generations.

The recent experiences on Main Street and Gerrard Street East tell me that we need a City Councillor who will be much more proactive in working with City Hall to identify and evaluate properties and clear backlogs of properties up for evaluation and possible designation.

We need to know what matters before we're facing down bulldozers.

So here's my Heritage and Growth Action Plan:

Within the first two years in office my office will:

- Work with TBETHS and other local historical and community groups to identify priority heritage resources at risk across the ward.
- Have Heritage Planning review the properties against the current provincial criteria and identify which properties might warrant designation.
- Map heritage and growth together, at the neighbourhood level, so we're not treating them as separate and opposed exercises.
- Establish a protocol so that community-led identification of a potentially significant property gets a timely response from Heritage Planning.
- Publish the status of priority properties on a dashboard so that residents know whether the City has done anything and what it has done.
- Ensure a more meaningful role for community organizations before, rather than after, planning decisions.

We shouldn't have to choose between the city we inherited and the city we hope to build.

Sincerely,

Jennie