

SHAKER

JAMAL

FOR CITY

COUNCILLOR

WARD 9

DAVENPORT

VOTE SHAKER!

MY NAME IS SHAKER JAMAL AND I AM THE NEW PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATE FOR CITY COUNCILLOR IN WARD 9, DAVENPORT.

Across Toronto, a new generation of councillors with fresh, new ideas are stepping forward in the name of public service — and I represent the new wave in Davenport. We need a councillor at City Hall with a progressive vision rooted in sensible public policy. We need someone with the know-how to tackle the most pressing policy issues facing our ward. I am that person.

Over the past six months, I've spoken to residents, business owners and community leaders across Davenport about the kind of city we want to live in. People believe Toronto is a great city with great potential, but rightly feel that we are paying a premium for discount services. Our city government is failing Davenport in the most basic of ways: public washrooms are closed, water fountains don't work, public pools are shuttered, streets are riddled with potholes, and housing for renters and homeowners is unaffordable without any sign of relief.

I believe in public service and have invested years supporting people in governmental and non-governmental roles. I've helped those living paycheck to paycheck keep a roof over their head as an Urban Fellow for the City of Toronto. I've developed resources to protect our frontline healthcare workers at Public Health Ontario. Currently, I dedicate my time to helping folks get a fair shake on the job as a Representative for the Steelworkers Union. And now, I want to make City Hall work better for the residents of Davenport.

With a new generation of city councillors taking root throughout the city, I truly believe our ward and our city can achieve great things. We can tackle affordable housing with new ways to invest in our future. We can make transit free for those who need it most, like our seniors, students and youth. We can unclog our gridlock and repair our streets. It takes belief in a fairer Toronto, and the long-term vision and practical policy to make it real.

On the following pages, you'll discover my vision for Davenport and for Toronto, and how to create the change our community needs. We don't have time to wait. I hope you'll join me.



Yours truly,

Shaker Jamal

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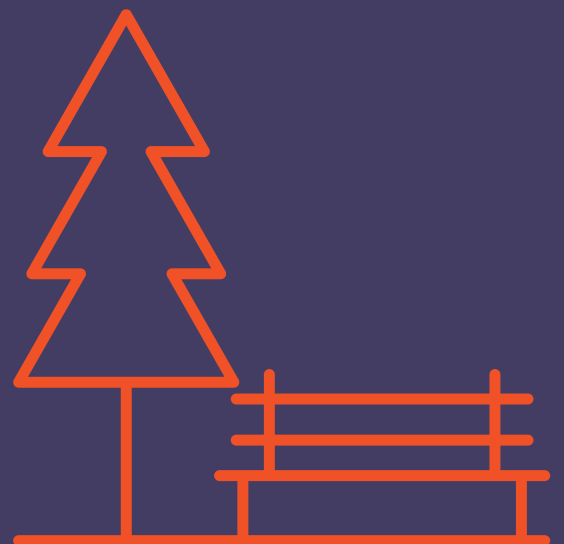
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INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE AND GREEN COMMUNITIES



HOUSING

Affordable housing is not simply a political issue for me — it's personal. As a kid, I spent part of my childhood in government housing. More recently, at the outset of the pandemic, my brother and I were forced out of our home of six years, a rental on Armstrong Avenue, when the house we lived in sold for \$2 million.

Toronto's housing mess is the product of many factors, just a few of which include years of speculative investing driven by low interest rates, decades of bad policy decisions by all levels of government, exclusionary zoning, and bureaucratic red tape unnecessarily delaying the development of new housing.

That's why as City Councillor, my priorities will include:

1. Commit to true affordability

The City's Housing Now initiative, the plan to develop city-owned land into affordable housing, has a target of 30% affordable units and no commitments to rent control. Affordable is defined as 30% of CMHC's average market rent (which works out to \$1,666 for 2-bedroom apartments as of Oct. 2021 — and is even higher today). We need more ambitious targets and a more realistic understanding of affordability.

I will work ensure city-owned land developments must include at least 50% of units that are affordable and rent controlled.

2. Build the missing middle

It's no secret that Toronto needs more variety in housing options, including low-and mid-rise developments, especially throughout the yellow belt. We increasingly have a city living in extremes — just 30-storey towers or single family detached homes — that makes it challenging to build diverse, connected communities. That's why **I will revise zoning policies in the yellow belt to expand opportunities for missing middle housing forms** that contribute to our vibrant neighbourhoods, ranging from duplexes to low-rise walk-up apartments.

3. Support growth with infrastructure

As your councillor, I will work to bring much needed density to Davenport. When I speak with long-time residents about new developments, they welcome new neighbours but are worried about the pressure on infrastructure and amenities. I get it — the city has not invested in the transit, utilities, community centres and greenspaces our growing neighbourhoods need. That's why **I will advocate for the creation of a Chief Development Officer**, a person who will transform and mobilize the City's existing resources to stimulate rapid, thoughtful development.

4. Cut red tape

The red tape at city hall is stifling. In fact, it is not uncommon for developments to take 8–10 years to complete. Approvals alone can take 3 years. For every extra year it takes for new housing supply to become available, prices go up. That's why **I will invest more resources into the City's Planning Department and revise the city's convoluted planning process.** This includes advancing the pilot project Concept2Keys (C2K) and working with stakeholders to tackle unnecessary delays at the City, by ensuring all departments take a housing-first approach.

5. Tackle NIMBYism

Right now, one person and \$300 is all you need to slow down development of new housing in the city. This is aggravated by the fact that councilors too often succumb to the pressures of a vocal minority who want to stall how we build a more progressive city. That is why **I will raise the threshold to stall developments to be much higher.**

6. Expand non-profit, co-op housing

For-profit, private ownership is not the only way people can access the housing they need. Non-profit models, like co-ops, have long been part of Toronto's heritage and can provide stable, high-quality housing to a wide variety of people. That's why **I will push for more city-backed co-op developments,** so that people of every income level can access secure housing, not just those who qualify for a \$1-million+ mortgage.

7. Raise taxes on vacant homes

During the recent boom, speculators purchased thousands of Toronto's houses, and leaving some empty while we experience a housing crisis. The City's vacant home tax needs to be drastically increased to dissuade greedy speculators. Therefore, **I will lobby to have the vacant home tax tripled from 1% to 3%.**

8. Issue housing bonds

Now is the time to put the city's AA credit to use. **I propose the City of Toronto issue \$1 billion in housing (only) bonds.** Portland, a city one quarter the size of Toronto, recently issued \$211 million (USD) in housing bonds to build thousands of affordable units. There is no reason why Toronto can't follow a similar model. 40% of the housing built with these housing bonds will be co-ops. The remaining 60% will be a mix of purpose-built rentals and homes for sale at 70% of the average purchase price, available only to those with incomes less than \$85,000 (the median income in Toronto).

9. Advocate for independent oversight

It's clear we need a new social contract on housing, one that ensures that our right to housing here in Toronto is upheld. That's why **I will lobby to create an independent Housing Commissioner.** The Commissioner will be responsible for independently assessing the implementation of the Housing Bonds, Toronto's Housing Charter and the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.

VIBRANT PARKS AND PUBLIC PLACES

Whether running along the Railpath, picnicking in Dufferin Grove park, shooting hoops in Earls court, or simply going for a walk down Bloor West, Davenport's outdoor areas are the best part of enjoying life in Toronto.

During the pandemic, they became a lifeline for many of us. As a cooped-up Torontonion, parent, and dog owner, my family and I cherish these public spaces, and deeply appreciate the amazing leadership from dedicated groups of local residents, businesses, artists and activists. We need to ensure that City Hall plays its part in funding and maintaining our public parks. Unfortunately, much of Ward 9 is designated as areas in need of parkland, and almost all the ward is projected to see a decrease in parkland supply between 2016–2033.

Therefore, my goals are to:

1. Enhance the West Toronto Railpath

The Railpath is one of Davenport's most used and beloved outdoor recreational areas. However, we can make it better and safer for everyone in our community. **I will advocate to have dedicated cyclist and non-cyclist lanes installed throughout the Rail Path**, similar to those on the Waterfront. I will also work with our Parks and Recreation department to have the path widened where possible. And, finally, I will formalize the makeshift dog park to create a dedicated, safer space for everyone in our community, including our furry friends.

2. Develop more multi-use trails

In Davenport, there are several opportunities to develop multi-use trails like the Railpath adjacent to rail and hydro infrastructure. As Councillor **I will push to have those opportunities studied and developed by the City.**

3. Build trust in how we socialize in parks

For many, our green public spaces are the only outdoor spaces available — to socialize with friends, to unwind after work and to have informal gatherings that help us feel connected to one another. The punitive way that our City treats responsible adults points to a lack of trust between City Hall and the citizens of our ward. **I will advocate for Toronto parks to have dedicated areas where alcohol consumption is liberalized.**

4. Create "complete streets"

The City of Toronto has an existing plan to create complete streets in other wards of Toronto, including dedicated lanes for more modes of transportation, more green spaces and more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. **I want to see the complete streets plan extended to Davenport**, so that we can create streets that are safe, beautiful and accommodate a variety of ways of getting around that is inviting for people of all ages and abilities.

5. Ensure access to public washrooms and water fountains

It is unfathomable that in a city as rich as Toronto we can not provide people with access to public washrooms and water fountains. That's why **I will push the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Department to open all shuttered public washrooms and fix all water fountains.** So, that folks can go about this great city and not have to worry about the basics!

CHILD CARE

As an Afghan whose mom was a teacher in Kandahar, and who witnessed millions of young girls deprived of an education, access to public education hits close to my heart. I believe that at the foundation of every healthy society are locally-based, high-quality public education centres.

That's why I will:

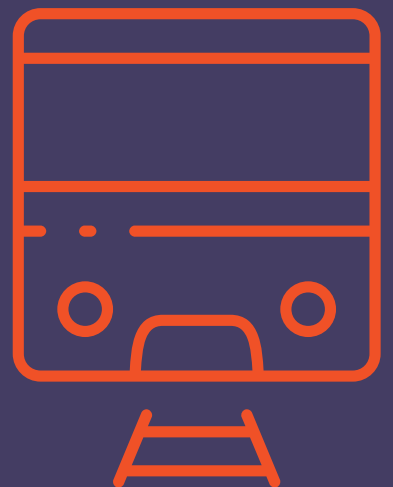
1. Create sustainable childcare solutions

The federal and provincial government have recently agreed to fund \$10/day childcare. Having solid long-term funding is incredibly helpful, but municipalities hold a higher degree of responsibility and accountability than they have been structured for up until this point. The City has a huge role to play in how these programs roll out in lived and experienced ways, and families need relevant, reliable solutions that they can count on. That's why **I will lobby for the study and creation of more City-run childcare spaces** that respond to the evolving needs of families, so that high-quality childcare is more accessible to everyone in our city who needs it.

2. Pay childcare workers a living wage

The City will require new strategic thinking and long-term planning skills to make sure we can achieve not just greater cost savings for families, but more reliable service and higher quality employment for childcare workers. As a major employer, the City has a role to play in ensuring our public childcare system provides stable, family-supporting jobs. **I will advocate for raising the wages for childcare workers** to ensure we treat workers fairly, ensure high-quality care for the next generation and create more reliable service for parents juggling caretaking with employment.

GETTING DAVENPORT AND TORONTO MOVING



IMPROVING THE TTC

There are few services more equalizing in our city than accessible, affordable and well-run public transit. Growing up, public transit was how I got to school and saw my friends, and continues to be part of my commute and how I explore our great city.

I know what it's like to cram onto a subway train at rush hour, or to wait twenty minutes in the rain for the 29 Dufferin bus only to watch it pass you by, full to the brim. Next to housing, improving how people get around is one of the most pressing issues facing City Council.

That's why my priorities are to:

1. Improve service on the 29 Dufferin

We need more reliable service along Dufferin, one of our most populated bus routes in the city. **I will advocate for the creation of transit priority lanes on Dufferin Street** to improve the speed and reliability of the 29 Dufferin to better meet rider needs. TTC data shows that such a lane could improve speed and reliability by 16.5 per cent, which could make the difference between getting to work late, or on time.

2. Make transit free for seniors, students and youth.

Currently, transit is only free for kids 0–12. While that's a great start, it's not good enough. Our seniors are living off of minuscule pensions and old age security payments from the government. They need relief. Also, why is transit free for a 12 year old, but not a 13, 14, or 15 year old. Our youth whether they are going to their part time jobs or school need access to transit.

A BIKE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY AND CITY

Since I moved to Toronto, I've become a cycle commuter. Cycling makes our city healthier, greener and less congested. Here in Davenport, our community is full of bike commuters, advocates and bike-friendly businesses. Yet, like much of Toronto, our cycling infrastructure is lacking.

That's why I will:

1. Create safer routes

Every arterial road should be safe for cyclists or have a parallel route nearby. **I plan to advocate to increase our dedicated bike lanes by 100 km** to ensure that cyclists can safely navigate our city.

2. Improve bike parking

A key part of the ride is how safe your bike is when you get to your destination. Our parking infrastructure is sorely lacking for bikes. By focusing on major routes such as Bloor, Dufferin and Dundas West, **I will push for the installation of more frequent, secure bike parking solutions** that are practical and enhance our street life.

3. Expand our cycling network

Accessing green spaces is one of the best parts of cycling in our city. **I plan to expand access from the Bloor line**, by connecting Runnymede West station to existing bike lanes around Six Points in Etobicoke, connecting riders to numerous parks, businesses and homes along the way. **I also plan to connect the northern ends of the Metrolinx Greenway and the hydro corridor Greenline** (Caledonia Park Rd. between Dupont and Davenport) to the southern end of the Kay Gardiner Beltline Trail and future Caledonia LRT and GO station, to improve commuter access to our fast-growing communities.

CAR TRAFFIC

A healthy city is one that prioritizes cycling and public transit. However, the reality is many continue to drive, and will for the foreseeable future. That being said, there are numerous ways in which we can unclog the streets in Davenport to the benefit of drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and the environment.

As Councillor, I will push to:

1. Fix residential street parking

The sheer number of people who have complained to me about parking on their streets is staggering. First, the switching of parking sides serves no one. When is the last time you saw a street sweeper on your street? Second, for residents to be ticketed because they forgot to switch sides on their own street when they have a permit is unjust. Life is expensive enough as it is. To ticket people for such a trivial thing is unnecessary. That's why **I will recommend that the policy to switch sides on residential streets be removed** and for on-street parking policies to be reviewed by a task force. This system is broken and needs to be fixed.

2. Electrify our corridors

Electric cars are the future of driving and we need to incentivize their uptake as much as possible. Recent commitments from other levels of government mean this is an area that will receive more investment in the coming years, and we must coordinate that at a city level with access that makes switching to electric an easy choice. **I plan to support the development of EV infrastructure**, including publicly available EV charging stations that improve access to making a greener choice.

3. Issue Green Bonds

Toronto currently issues green bonds, but we can expand that program and use those funds to improve our city even further. **I will push to have revenue from green bonds earmarked for green initiatives**, including more EV charging stations in the city, as well as for rebates to residents to purchase electric cars.

4. Re-time our signals

The lights on major streets like Dufferin, St. Clair and Lansdowne are a disaster. How many times have you gone from one red light to another to another? This doesn't have to be the case. Studies have shown that signal re-timing is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve traffic flow along corridors. It can significantly reduce delays and unnecessary stops — thereby improving safety, fuel consumption and emissions. **I will push to have a thorough review of our signal lights** and have them re-timed to better serve our neighbourhoods.

5. Keep traffic moving

It is absurd that certain major thoroughways in Davenport, like St. Clair West, are reduced to one lane only because of parking, especially on the weekends. **I will push to have a study commissioned to unclog streets** like St. Clair West and ensure that people and goods can move more efficiently.

POLICING



RE-FUND OUR COMMUNITIES

Toronto’s approach to policing is broken. Our racialized communities do not feel well served by our police force. Consider this — although Black people make up only 10 percent of Toronto’s population, Black people comprised 22.6 percent of arrests, tickets and cautions last year. Furthermore, we are wasting millions on police spending that can be deployed in ways that better serve our communities and create more safety for all who live here.

That’s why I will:

1. Right-size the police budget

At a staggering \$1.1 billion, Toronto’s police budget is bloated, and needs to be right-sized. For instance, why are we spending nearly \$6 million dollars a year on police horses in Toronto? **I plan to support motions to reduce the police budget** and re-fund our communities. By finding efficiencies in the police budget, we can redirect funds to relevant social services that meet the needs of the city. It’s time to refund our communities: water fountains anyone?

2. Increase funding to the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) pilot project

The TCCS is a non-police response with multidisciplinary teams of trained crisis workers who will respond to non-emergency calls from people experiencing a mental health crisis and requests for wellbeing checks. Since its launch in March 2022, it has shown great success. **I will work hard to have the TCCS mandate formalized and for its budget to be increased**, so that it can be expanded to serve and support all residents across Toronto.

LOCAL DEMOCRACY



REBUILDING TRUST IN OUR CITY

The declining trend in voter turnout is continuing across all levels of government. The recent abysmal turnout in the provincial election is a wake-up call. Whether this is a product of voter apathy, or a product of a lack of trust in government, or pandemic-fatigue remains to be seen; regardless, something is not right and we need to fix it.

That's why I will fight hard to:

1. Enact term limits

For too long, Toronto's City Council has had stagnant representation. No councillor should hold on to their position for decades — if you can't get it done in 8 years (two terms), you can't get it done. We need to ensure our decision makers reflect a variety of generations that inhabit our vibrant city. That's why **I will work to ensure that councillors are limited to two terms of four years each**, including the Mayor.

2. Establish a municipal election taskforce

First-past-the-post voting is not the only way we can elect our decision makers. There are variety of systems, whether that's proportional representation, ranked balloting, or some other way that better reflects the representation our citizens need. **I will push for city council to establish an electoral taskforce** to surface recommendations on how to overhaul our process and ensure everyone's voice is reflected in our municipal government.

3. Allow permanent residents to vote.

In Toronto, a property owner who does not live in the city gets to vote, but a non-citizen permanent resident who lives and works here cannot. This essential element of our city needs to be enfranchised, and **I plan to lobby the provincial government to allow permanent residents to participate in our municipal elections.**

FISCAL HONESTY



NO WISHFUL THINKING HERE

It is wishful thinking to believe that we can improve transit, housing and other crucial services without supporting new revenue streams. Our city is in desperate need of improving its services and in even more need of sustainable revenue that does not penalize residents (for example, over-issuing parking tickets).

That's why as Councillor I will work to:

1. Curb runaway spending on consultants

The city is becoming increasingly addicted to hiring overpriced consultants for everything. The city's spending on consultants has tripled over the past decade! In fact, since 2011 Toronto has spent nearly \$300 million dollars on consultants. The quality of work offered by some of these consultants is questionable at best, and has supported a mandate to slash and burn city services to the detriment of the people who live and work here. **I recommend we reduce the reliance of consultants and move more city work in-house** to be completed by staff members with a vested interest in improving our communities and not their bottom line.

2. Keep city services in-house

The City privatized garbage collection West of Yonge in 2011, to supposedly save us \$8 million a year. Ten years later, we are paying just as much for private garbage collection service as we are for in-house pick-up in the east end. This short-sighted decision takes control out of council's hands and money out of workers' pockets. **I will work to keep city services in house.**

3. Introduce a tobacco tax

Not only are cigarettes harmful to the health of smokers and those around them, they increase the load on our public hospitals as they send hundreds of people to the hospital each year. **I plan to introduce a tobacco tax of 1% at the point of sale** to not only serve as a deterrent to this harmful vice, but to fund life-saving services like expanding our Toronto Community Crisis Service teams.

4. Reintroduce a modified personal vehicle fee

Rob Ford's cancellation of the personal vehicle tax was short-sighted and stripped our city of a valuable revenue stream. It has deprived Toronto of \$50 million dollars in revenue that can fund our city services and ensure we enjoy our city to the fullest. **I will work to have a modified version of vehicle fee reintroduced.** The past tax was a flat \$60. I will have the tax progressively tiered so that middle class Torontonians driving their car to work do not pay the same as bitcoin bros driving Porsches.

5. Introduce an alcohol beverage tax

In conjunction with allowing folks to partake in the park, I believe we can and should raise taxes on alcohol to better fund our services. Cities like Chicago have long levied taxes on the sale of alcohol within their municipalities, and Toronto should do the same. **I will introduce an alcohol beverage tax of 1% to better fund city services.** The revenue will be earmarked for paying for the TTC fares of seniors, students and youth.

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