RESIDENTIAL
BUILDER

A PUBLICATION OF THE
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION
COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

RESCON

AUGUST 2026

INTO THE FUTURE ...

What might building a home look like in 2036?
... PAGE 12

RESCON teams up with partners
... PAGE 14

Register for Housing Summit 6.0
... PAGE 30

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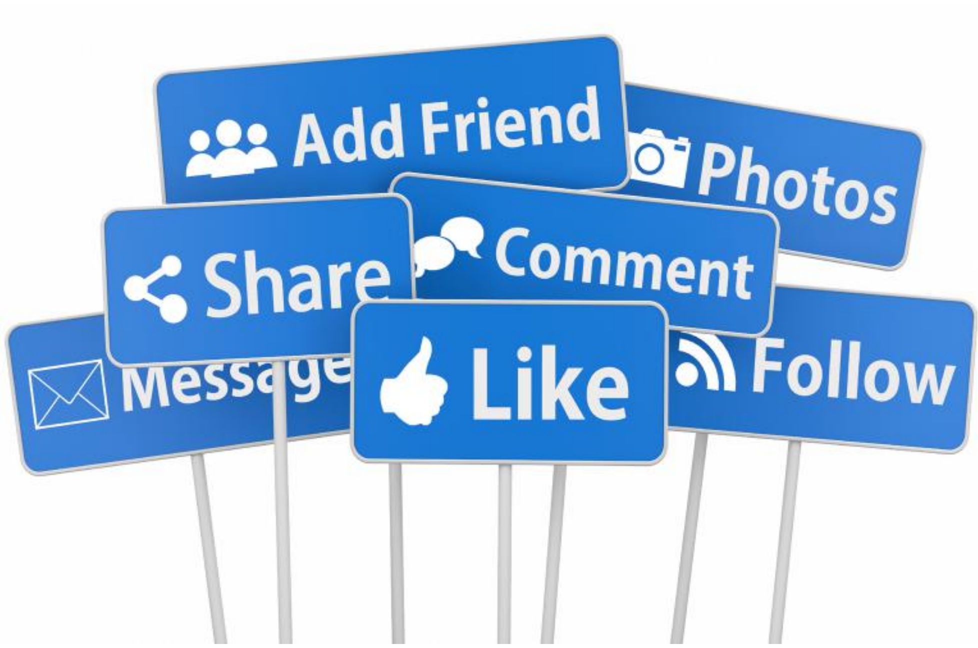

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RESIDENTIAL BUILDER

Official publication of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario

RESCON®
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

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Residential Builder is published 12 times a year by RESCON

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CONTENTS

NEWSLETTER


p.14


p.16


p.18


p.20

Columns

News

Builder Briefs

Guidance released on Enhanced New Housing Rebate

The federal Ministry of Finance has provided updated guidance on the Enhanced New Housing Rebate for all new homebuyers and provided links to relevant forms and more detailed information.

The guidance clarifies who is eligible to apply for the rebate, what the rebate amounts are, and what forms need to be filled out.

As for the processing and payment timing, the information notes that the Canada Revenue Agency will begin processing applications once its system changes are implemented in fall 2026. Applications received before the system is ready will be processed on a first-in, first-out basis.

Applicants are asked to anticipate approximately 120 days for processing. '

An audit or request for additional information may add up to six months, depending on the complexity of the claim.

Click here for the notice.

Report being drafted

RESCON is putting together a report on how to rebalance new housing supply.

The report will feed into our advocacy for legislative change and will be timely with the fall federal budget approaching.

We appreciate any feedback members might have on what needs to change in order to fix the housing supply system.

Reach out to Richard Lyall or Michael Giles if you would like to provide input.

Webinar held on rebates

RESCON hosted a webinar July 13 in collaboration with Aird & Berlis LLP on the federal and provincial government's Harmonized Sales Tax rebate for all new homebuyers.

Click here to watch a recording of the webinar.

De Berardis appointed to advisory body

Paul De Berardis, VP, building standards & engineering at RESCON, has been appointed to a Building Code Advisory Body that is doing a comprehensive review of Ontario's Building Code.

The committee met recently to talk about building code priorities and issues.

The advisory body was formed to identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden, support housing supply and more efficient construction, and maintain public-interest objectives and building performance standards.

Objectives of the group are to validate whether perceived challenges are widespread and significant, gather practical examples and evidence, understand impacts on different sectors and stakeholders, and identify opportunities for simplification, modernization, and innovation.

Priority questions for the group include:

- Which building code requirements add significant cost or delay with limited demonstrated benefit?
- What changes would have the greatest impact on accelerating housing starts and completions?

Other advisory board members are Leo Grellette (chair), Stephen Wong, Mike Seiling and Doug Tarry.

Input sought on building code tweaks

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is seeking public input on Ontario's Building Code review so the government can identify ways to reduce unnecessary costs, delays, complexity, and administrative burden, with a goal to improve clarity and housing construction.

The consultation closes at 11:59 p.m. on Aug. 14, 2026.

Click here for more information.

Click here to submit a comment.

RESCON WILL BE DRIVING MAJOR REFORMS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD

Richard Lyall
President

Housing is fundamental to our economic prosperity and well-being. Yet it is still viewed as an economic 'want' by many.

Where does housing reform go from here? It's the million-dollar question.

The RESCON team has been driving change, and all the major issues have been cracked, but the job is far from done.

Politicians like Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack in Ontario have demonstrated extraordinary leadership on a most difficult portfolio.

But where do we stand now in the broad-based effort to rebalance housing supply and costs with demand?

The following is what we will be driving, recognizing that housing is a core need (along with security and food).

Housing is fundamental to our economic prosperity and well-being. Yet it is still viewed as an economic "want" by many. It isn't and we must stop taxing it and creating barriers to supply as if it were.

Latest figures show that we are still in no danger of hitting the housing supply targets set by governments.

Cutting immigration, meanwhile, is also only a temporary measure due to our aging population and record-low birth rates.

Toronto's fertility rate has fallen to just 1.11 children per woman, well below Canada's already low national rate of 1.25 and far beneath the replacement level of 2.1 needed to sustain population levels.

The house price-to-income ratio, meanwhile, must be reduced, as it has roughly doubled over the past 25 years.

Around the turn of the millennium, a home generally cost about three to four times a household's annual income. By 2021-22, that ratio had climbed to seven to nine times income in many urban markets. Even after higher interest rates cooled prices somewhat, affordability remains dramatically worse than historical norms.

So, what is left that needs to be done?

- **HST** - Recent moves to provide an HST rebate on new housing were welcomed by RESCON. But they are temporary and need to be made permanent. Such a move would boost the housing market.
- **DC reductions** - Again, recently announced measures were welcome, but are also temporary and must be made permanent. Under the joint Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program, participating municipalities receive federal and provincial funding to cut residential development charges by 30 to 50 per cent or more for a three-year period.
- **Building code and regulatory reform** - Ontario has kicked this off, which is very positive, and RESCON will be advocating for reforms. We need to remove arbitrary restrictions so that single staircases are allowed in mid-level apartment buildings, and remove restrictions on floor plate sizes and angular planes of mid-rise buildings. The issues have been raised for years and it's time to just get it done.
- **Modernization and streamlining of approvals** - Builders are still being hammered by inefficient and often-pointless red tape. These are typically services they're paying for to get things built. The monopoly service providers are under little pressure to be efficient, but the costs to consumers are real. We should be a leading jurisdiction in the developed world on this, but we remain near last place. That's unacceptable if we aspire to be leaders.
- **Stress test and foreign buyer restrictions** - These need to be ended with a few considerations. They were introduced to cool demand during the COVID years, but times have changed. The ban is set to expire Jan. 1, 2027. Ottawa should let the restrictions lapse or, better yet, remove them immediately for newly constructed housing.
- **Land transfer taxes** - This is another out-of-control tax which, in Toronto's case, is particularly onerous. The taxes need to be eliminated.

RESCON will be driving these further reforms as hard as we can.

We have a fall budget coming and further legislation - all while the U.S. administration continues to renege on deals that were negotiated in good faith.

We can't compete and attract investment without housing to support it.

HARMONIZATION OF SAFETY STANDARDS IS A PRIORITY THIS YEAR

Andrew Pariser
Vice President

The ministers and their respective civil servants have continued to hold meetings across Canada.

Associations, MLITSD, and other safety groups are continuing to work on safety plans related to the announced harmonization of safety standards across Canada.

The announcements stem from the Trump tariff threats and release of the Team Canada Strong Plan which has spurred continued co-ordination and co-operation between provincial ministers of labour.

The ministers and their respective civil servants have continued to hold meetings across Canada with the goal of harmonizing standards related to both safety and training.

As a quick recap, the One Canada Strategy calls for harmonization of:

- working at heights standards by Jan 1, 2027;
- Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWP) by Jan 1, 2027;
- consultations on hoisting and rigging by Jan 1, 2027;
- consultations on trenching and shoring standards by Jan 1, 2027;
- focus on entry level construction worker and construction supervisor training by May 2027.

With respect to labour mobility, harmonizing safety standards will remove the requirement for duplicate training and improve safety outcomes by harmonizing to the highest standard. For example, the parties have agreed that Ontario's Working at Heights is the most rigorous and will be looking at leaders in both Ontario and British Columbia for rigging and hoisting. Removing just the duplication of working at heights could save (on a large project - 1,000 workers - up to 8,000 hours and anywhere between $1,000 to $1,500 per worker). Compounded across multiple standards and the entire construction industry, the savings and improved safety become incredibly meaningful.

Implementation

As always, the devil is in the details and consultations have already begun on how we adjust to harmonization and ensure the industry is given the time it needs to adopt and ensure workers have the qualifications needed.

At recent meetings, discussions have included the lessons learned during the Working at Heights rollout as well as an appreciation for how large the Ontario construction sector is (over 500,000 and growing).

As we move into the fall and details become firm, RESCON will continue to provide webinars and updates to ensure builders and our trades know exactly what is expected and how to comply.

Labour Supply

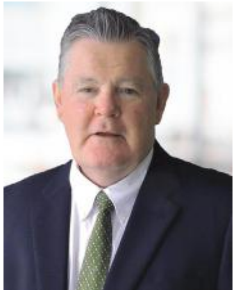
Over the last month, BuildForce released its latest 10-year forecast and Prime Minister Mark Carney launched the Team Canada Strong initiative. The BuildForce report broadly calls for infrastructure, power generation and ICI construction to stay busy with an eventual recovery in the residential construction sector.

The Team Canada Strong plan is a major, $6-billion, cross-Canada initiative with the stated goal of training and recruiting up to 100,000 Red Seal skilled trades workers. The initiative will support major infrastructure announcements, ensuring Canada has the skilled trades needed to build ports, pipelines, mines, data centres and homes Canadians need. Highlights:

- $331 million to modernize red seal apprenticeship training;
- $2 billion to support job placements for young Canadians;
- $3.4 billion to address completion challenges and improve certification timelines;
- $5,000 apprenticeship completion bonus.

These initiatives will have a major impact for all construction businesses in the years to come and RESCON will continue to ensure all members are kept up to date as those developments roll out.

> **"The Team Canada Strong plan is a major, $6-billion, cross-Canada initiative with the stated goal of training and recruiting up to 100,000 Red Seal skilled trades workers.**



HOUSING CONSTRUCTION SLOWDOWN IMPACTS THE ECONOMY

Grant Cameron
Senior Director of Public Affairs

The industry drives a large supply chain for lumber and wood products, concrete, aggregates, steel, aluminum and more.

New housing construction is not just about providing places for people to live - it is one of the most important drivers of Ontario's economy.

The residential construction industry directly employs well over 100,000 workers and more than 200,000 when related industries are included.

These are tradespeople, engineers, architects, planners, suppliers, truck drivers, project managers, and construction professionals.

When housing construction slows, the economic impact is felt quickly through layoffs, reduced apprenticeship opportunities, and lower demand for construction services.

The industry also drives a large supply chain for lumber and wood products, concrete, aggregates, steel, aluminum and more.

The sector injects billions of dollars into the economy annually and functions as a major economic multiplier. Nationally, housing has been described as the backbone of the economy, supporting more than 1.2 million jobs and contributing more than $143 billion in GDP activity.

That's why it's so important to address the current housing crisis. You can't grow the economy without housing.

There have been many positive changes as of late related to the HST and development charges on new housing, green standards, and the building code.

While all steps in the right direction, governments need to keep the ball rolling. There are still plenty of issues to tackle.

RESCON outlined a number of them in recent columns in various publications and in podcasts.

Approvals system

For example, we highlighted the importance of faster approvals and the benefits of a single digitized platform in a column in Real Estate Magazine.

In a column in The Toronto Sun, we outlined why RESCON has joined One Ontario's AI for Housing Coalition and the importance of using technology and artificial intelligence to automate repetitive administrative work and reduce manual document entry that clogs the system.

Learn from Alberta

In a column in Storeys, we noted that Ontario could learn a thing or two from Alberta, which is outperforming the rest of the country when it comes to getting shovels in the ground and homes built.

The province has a system that enables compliant projects to move forward without delay and is reducing costs at the source.

Apprenticeship completions

A report prepared for RESCON noted that, despite billions of dollars in public investment, uptake of construction apprenticeship training programs remains too low in many areas and the number of workers who actually complete training and receiving certification is on the decline.

In a Builder Bites column, we explained why the traditional levers are not working, and in a column in Daily Commercial News we highlighted how a new approach using behavioural analysis could make a difference.

Government-imposed costs

A column in Canadian Forest Industries explained how a decline in homebuilding affects the forestry and wood products industries - and why it's important to boost the residential construction industry, as it directly and indirectly employs a substantial number of workers nationwide.

Podcasts

In an episode of the Colliers Talks Economics podcast, host Adam Jacobs sat down with RESCON president Richard Lyall to unpack the housing situation and delve into whether there's a path forward. Ontario's housing market went from one of the hottest development booms in history to a landscape of stalled projects, cancelled developments and deepening affordability challenges.

Meanwhile, Lyall joined Vanessa Topple on CREBTV for a two-part series on Ontario's Development Charge Reduction Program and explained how technology and faster approvals can help increase the province's housing supply. Click here to watch/listen to the podcast.

TORONTO CANNOT BE PERMITTED TO BECOME A CHARTER CITY

Michael Giles
Director of Government Relations

Can you imagine the City of Toronto with unbridled taxation and spending powers?

The City of Toronto's executive committee (mayor's executive committee) had on its last agenda an item titled Report from the Municipal Autonomy and Effective Local Governance Program Advisory Body.

In short, this is an echo chamber for certain politicians and stakeholders for what is broadly described as "Charter Cities."

I worked in the political sector (federal, provincial, municipal) for over 30 years.

So, in a nutshell, I know how governments work both in principle and in practice. The notion of allowing Toronto to become a Charter City would keep me up at night.

For background, the British North America Act (1867) allowed only for federal and provincial powers. Provinces control "municipal institutions." Municipalities are creatures of the province.

The whole Charter City movement is basically calling for a constitutional amendment to "protect" and outline the powers of municipalities so that a province cannot intervene in municipal decisions. In effect, a list of powers would be outlined, and a provincial government could not cross the line.

It would mean cities could do whatever they wanted in the context of whatever powers were included in their charter.

So, is it a good idea?

My opinion, absolutely not. Quite frankly, municipal governments, Toronto is notable, have repeatedly demonstrated why they shouldn't get this kind of power.

Can you imagine the City of Toronto with unbridled taxation and spending powers?

Consider that Toronto's operating budget increased by over $7 billion in the last 10 years ($11.7 billion in 2016 to $18.9 billion this year). What would it look like with no provincial guardrails on the city, and the ability to tax with reckless abandon?

Premier Doug Ford's government has, thankfully and courageously, intervened with respect to the City of Toronto.

I was at the city when he reduced the size of council by half. It was the right decision.

Councilors, however, subsequently increased their staff budgets to $482,000 in 2018 and by 2026 to $632,000 annually. Case in point.

The premier's decision to axe the city's speed cameras was correct as well.

Despite protestations from city politicians, it is worth noting that speed limits across Toronto were unreasonably reduced to 30 km/h on many streets and 50 km/h on main roads which ended up turning the speed cameras into slot machines for the city in terms of revenue.

The list goes on with respect to City of Toronto decisions from illegally imposed municipal green standards on developments to ill-advised placement of bike lanes all over the place.

A more recent example is Church Street in downtown Toronto where the city pedestrianized the street (no cars) for the summer.

First, the costs of providing security (required) tripled beyond planned levels and is likely much higher and it takes away a major north/south route.

Second, with traffic congestion making the city look like a scene from War of the Worlds, the closure of Church Street will parallel in August with the closure of a major intersection nearby on Yonge Street - no north/south travel there either. Imagine what that congestion will look like?

By the way, Church Street was one of the major thoroughfares where the speed limit was reduced to 30 km/h.

Recall the plan to toll the Don Valley Parkway put forward by a previous Toronto mayor.

This would have turned all parallel north/south routes into nightmares as drivers escaped tolls.

Fortunately, the province stopped this, too.

So, when cries go up about provincial intervention, it's good to recognize that it's desperately needed.

The consolation on this Charter City thing is that it's not going to happen under Premier Ford or the current Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack who, by the way, is unquestionably the best housing minister Ontario has had in generations.

However, this is one to watch because the Charter City proponents are not going away. We'll need to be very vigilant.

BUILDING CODE REVIEW IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDUSTRY INPUT

Dave Henderson
Senior Manager, Technical Services

Ontario has launched one of the most significant reviews of the Ontario Building Code in decades. Through an independent Building Code Short-Term Advisory Body and the release of a public consultation paper, the province is seeking input on how the code can be modernized, simplified and streamlined while maintaining health, safety, accessibility and performance standards.

For Ontario's residential construction industry, this presents a rare opportunity to influence the future of the province's regulatory framework at a time when housing affordability is a pressing concern. The government has signalled that reducing unnecessary costs, delays and administrative requirements are key objectives of this initiative.

Through a comprehensive review, the advisory body's mandate is to identify provisions that are outdated, duplicative, overly prescriptive, unclear, or unnecessarily difficult to apply in practice. The panel has also been directed to explore opportunities to simplify requirements, improve usability and support innovation in building design and construction.

Designers, engineers, architects, builders, trades and building officials have long identified concerns that some code requirements may be unnecessarily complex, difficult to interpret, or are simply outdated.

As regulations and national code harmonization evolved, requirements have become cluttered, creating additional layers of administration and compliance, thus adding cost and delay without necessarily improving the intended outcome.

Overall, this review seeks to determine how regulatory objectives can be achieved in a more efficient and practical manner.

Importantly, the government has made it clear that the review must still maintain or improve public health, safety, accessibility and building performance. So, the goal is to find ways to achieve the objectives with less complexity and greater efficiency, while hopefully expediting the building permit approvals process. In many cases, improvements may not come from changing technical requirements themselves, but from improving clarity, consistency of interpretation and removing administrative red tape.

The success of this review will depend on the quality and breadth of industry participation. As principal code users, builders are uniquely positioned to provide real-world examples of how the process works well and where improvements can be made. Whether the issues pertain to low-rise homes or high-rise condominiums, this is an opportunity to better align regulatory requirements with Ontario's housing supply and affordability objectives.

No subject matter or section is off limits: plumbing, HVAC, energy efficiency, administrative processes, alternative solutions, or national codes harmonization, etc. Industry feedback will help ensure future reforms are practical, achievable and effective.

A hopeful outcome of the consultation is greater clarity to reduce disputes, improve interpretation, and help accelerate project approvals across the province. The consultation specifically seeks examples where compliance requirements may be more complicated than necessary or where they can lead to inconsistent application and enforcement across Ontario's 444 municipalities.

While building code requirements are only one component of the overall housing delivery system, unnecessary regulatory complexity ultimately translates into higher costs borne by consumers.

Another important issue is harmonization with the National Construction Codes. Ontario has historically maintained several province-specific requirements that differ from those used elsewhere in Canada. The advisory body has been asked to consider where additional harmonization could potentially facilitate burden reduction without compromising provincial policy objectives.

For Ontario's homebuilding industry, this review represents far more than a routine consultation exercise. It is a unique opportunity to provide input on the rules that govern how buildings are designed, approved and built.

The government has made it clear that every section of the building code is open for review. Opportunities of this magnitude are rare. If there are requirements adding unnecessary cost, creating delays, restricting innovation, or no longer reflect modern construction practices, now is the time to identify them and propose solutions.

The Advisory Body will use feedback received through the consultation to develop recommendations for the minister of municipal affairs and housing. Industry stakeholders are strongly encouraged to review the consultation materials and submit comments by August 14, 2026.

The decisions made through this process will help shape Ontario's regulatory housing framework for years to come.

WHAT CAN ONTARIO LEARN FROM ALBERTA?

By RESCON
for Storeys
July 6, 2026

By any measure, Alberta is outperforming the rest of the country when it comes to getting shovels in the ground and homes built.

The numbers tell the story. Alberta recorded a surge in housing starts in 2025, rising sharply year over year, while Ontario moved in the opposite direction, with starts falling and expected to decline further.

The lesson for Ontario is clear: we do not need to reinvent the wheel. We need to copy what works.

At the centre of Alberta's success is a willingness to remove barriers that slow construction and drive up costs. That approach has now been codified in the province's Bill 28, the Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, which represents one of the most significant prohousing legislative packages in the country.

The most notable feature of Bill 28 is its embrace of an "automatic yes" framework for development approvals. This concept is simple but powerful. If a project complies with established rules and is considered low risk, it should be approved quickly - or even automatically - rather than being subjected to months or years of bureaucratic delay.

Under the new framework, municipalities are empowered to use automated systems to process development applications and fast-track approvals for straightforward projects. The legislation explicitly supports digital permitting tools and standardized processes that reduce uncertainty and eliminate unnecessary back-and-forth.

This is exactly the kind of reform Ontario desperately needs.

In Ontario, the approvals process has become one of the single greatest barriers to housing supply. A report for the Ontario Association of Architects found that site plan delays alone cost the economy roughly $3.5 billion annually. On average, it takes about 23 months just to navigate the site plan approval stage. These delays translate directly into higher carrying costs, increased financing expenses, and ultimately higher prices for homebuyers.

Alberta has chosen a different path. By creating a system where compliant projects can move forward without delay, the province is reducing costs at the source - and increasing the predictability that builders need to invest. Municipal performance data reinforces the point. In Calgary, development approvals and building permits are processed in a fraction of the time seen in Ontario. Some residential approvals are completed in weeks or a few months, rather than years, and municipalities are required to publicly report timelines and performance metrics.

But faster approvals are only part of the equation. Alberta's broader philosophy is equally important: housing is treated as a priority, and policies are aligned accordingly.

Ontario, by contrast, continues to impose costs that make housing more expensive and harder to build. Chief among these are development charges - fees levied by municipalities to fund infrastructure.

Originally intended to support growth, development charges have ballooned into one of the largest cost components of a new home. In many Ontario communities, they add tens of thousands - or even hundreds of thousands - of dollars to the price of housing. Reducing these charges is essential if Ontario hopes to restore affordability.

There has been progress. The new Development Charge Reduction Program (DCRP) is an important step in the right direction. The program provides up to $8.8 billion in funding over 10 years to support municipalities that reduce development charges by at least 30 to 50 per cent. Funding is tied directly to housing-enabling infrastructure.

This is smart policy because it recognizes that excessive fees are a structural problem, not a temporary one, and it gives municipalities a financial incentive to act. But more must be done. Ontario still faces a system where approvals can take years, where multiple agencies create overlapping requirements, and where regulatory complexity discourages investment. Modernizing development approvals is therefore critical.

That is why RESCON has joined a provincewide coalition led by One Ontario to advance an AI-enabled permitting platform. The goal is to create a single, standardized system that streamlines approvals from start to finish, reduces duplication, and improves transparency. That will make it easier and faster to build housing that already complies with existing regulations.

Presently, Ontario's approvals ecosystem is highly fragmented. Hundreds of disconnected permitting environments operate across the province, each with its own processes, requirements, and data systems.

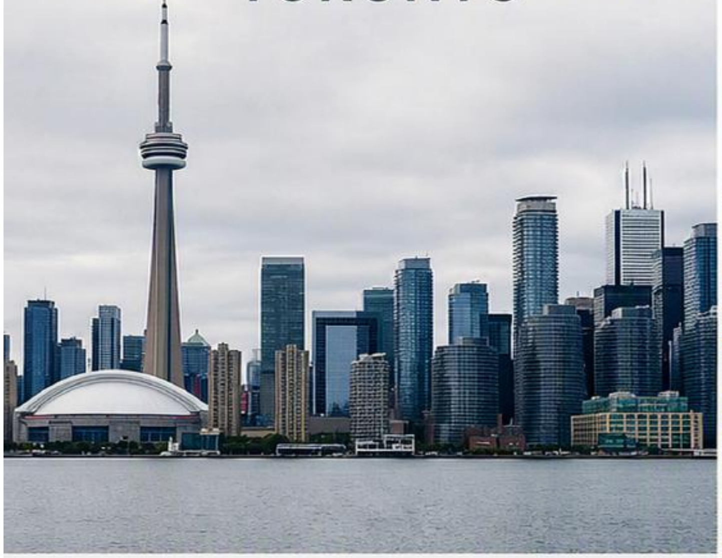
Municipalities adopt technology independently. Agencies maintain separate review frameworks. Applicants are required to navigate a patchwork of platforms and expectations, often repeating the same work multiple times.

Instead of navigating multiple systems, applicants would interact with a single digital dashboard that identifies requirements, prepares submissions, co-ordinates reviews, and tracks projects through to decision. The long-term vision is to have a single, province-wide permitting dashboard.

The importance of modernizing the system cannot be underestimated. Ontario cannot afford to fall further behind. The solutions are on the table. Ontario just needs to embrace them - as Alberta has done. The challenge is finding the political will to act.

ONTARIO

TORONTO



APPROVALS CAN TAKE YEARS

Lengthy approval processes slow down new home construction.

GOVERNMENT COSTS MAKE HOUSING EXPENSIVE

High taxes, fees and development charges add tens of thousands to the cost of a new home.

REGULATORY COMPLEXITY CAUSES DELAYS

Layers of red tape and unclear rules create uncertainty and stall housing supply.

ALBERTA

CALGARY

APPROVALS IN WEEKS OR A FEW MONTHS

Faster, more predictable approvals get shovels in the ground sooner.

PRO-HOUSING LEGISLATION

Policies that encourage building, support builders and increase housing supply.

HOUSING TREATED AS A PRIORITY

A commitment to more homes for Albertans today and tomorrow.

INTO THE FUTURE

What might building a home look like in 2036?

By Arash Shahi, CEO of LandLogic

As an industry, we spend a great deal of time talking about the big changes needed to improve housing delivery. We talk about permitting delays, fragmented data, labour shortages, disconnected systems, AI, and the challenge of building enough homes.

Those are exactly the conversations we should be having.

But we also hear an important question: "That all sounds great for the industry and for the province. But how does it actually benefit me? What does all of this mean for the person trying to build a home?"

It's a fair question. There can sometimes be a disconnect between the conversations happening at an industry level and the day-to-day experience of someone trying to deliver a project.

So, let's take a different approach. Instead of talking about the changes we need, let's imagine we've already made them.

What could building a home actually look like in 2036 if we get this right?

Imagine you're considering a piece of land for development. Today, that process often begins with weeks of research. Information comes from dozens of sources. Planning policies, servicing constraints, environmental features, zoning, heritage considerations, previous applications, infrastructure capacity, market conditions, and development potential all have to be gathered, verified, and interpreted before meaningful decisions can even begin.

In 2036, every property has a verified digital identity.

An authoritative, living record that brings together everything known about the land and its development potential in one place. Each property is anchored by the official land registry and enriched with planning information, servicing capacity, environmental constraints, permits, inspections, and other parcel-level data contributed by the authorities responsible for it. All tied to one trusted record.

No searching. No piecing together information from disconnected systems. Just access.

Within minutes, you understand not only what the regulations say, but what they mean. You can explore different development concepts, understand trade-offs, identify approval risks, estimate servicing requirements, and evaluate different design options before hiring a team of consultants.

The first conversation is no longer, "Where do we find the information?" It's, "What's the best project for this site?"

As the project moves into design, architects and engineers are no longer spending days searching through regulations or manually checking routine requirements. AI continuously identifies potential issues, highlights conflicts, and provides instant feedback as designs evolve.

Technology hasn't replaced professional expertise. It has removed much of the repetitive work that gets in the way of it.

By the time the application reaches the municipality, many of the common issues have already been resolved. Reviewers spend less time confirming whether documents are complete and more time applying their professional judgement where it matters most.

Construction begins with everyone working from the same connected information.

The builder, consultants, trades, inspectors, and owners aren't passing disconnected documents back and forth or wondering whether they're looking at the latest version. The project evolves from a single, connected digital model that follows the building from planning through construction.

And when the family finally moves in, the digital story doesn't end.

The home carries forward its history. Renovations, inspections, permits, ownership records, equipment replacements, warranty information, energy upgrades, and maintenance all become part of its ongoing digital record.

The next renovation doesn't start by rediscovering information that already exists. The next owner inherits more than a house. They inherit its knowledge.

This is what is most exciting about the future of housing. It's not smarter software. It's that

we're finally beginning to connect information across the entire life of a building instead of recreating it every time responsibility changes hands.

Today, every phase of housing delivery starts over. Land acquisition. Design. Permitting. Construction. Operations. In the future, every phase builds on the one before it.

When people ask why conversations about data standards, interoperability, permitting modernization, and AI matter to individuals, this is the answer. They're not ends in themselves. They're the foundation for a housing system that is simpler to navigate, easier to build within, and better for everyone involved - from the first feasibility study to the day someone picks up the keys, and for decades after.

We're still a long way from that future. But for the first time, it's a future we're actually beginning to build. Many of the first steps are already underway.

Municipalities are beginning to explore AI. Researchers are developing common data models. The industry is moving toward connected workflows. And through the work of companies like LandLogic and initiatives like the AI for Housing Coalition, we're starting to build the digital foundations that can connect information across the entire lifecycle of a building.

The technology is only one part of the story. The bigger opportunity is creating a housing system that learns, improves, and becomes more connected with every project we build.

COALITION

RESCON TEAMS UP WITH PARTNERS

By RESCON
for The Toronto Sun
July 10, 2026

Ontario has spent the last several years talking a good game on housing. Queen's Park has pledged billions for housing acceleration, permitting modernization and municipal technology upgrades and it has pushed cities to speed approvals, loosen red tape and get more homes built.

Yet approval timelines have barely budged.

That should alarm the housing sector and anyone who cares about housing affordability, supply or the health of Ontario's residential construction industry. It is also why the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) decided to formally join One Ontario's AI for Housing Coalition.

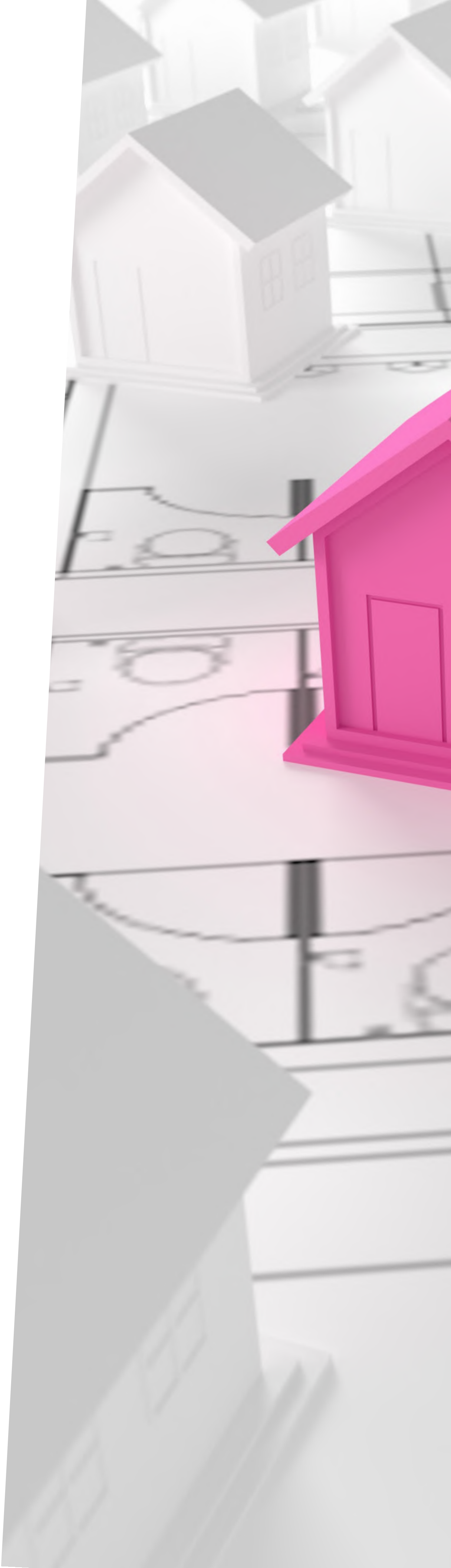
The goal of the coalition goes to the heart of one of the province's biggest self-inflicted housing problems, the fact that Ontario still runs development approvals through a fragmented, inconsistent and often painfully slow patchwork of municipal systems.

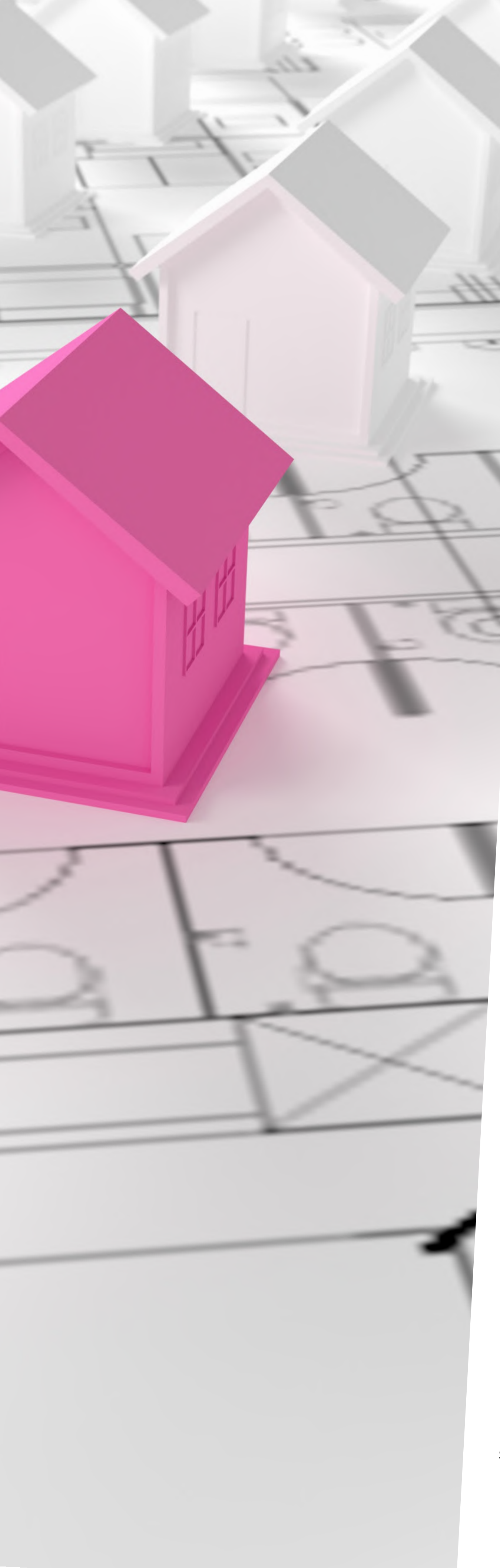
That is the key point behind One Ontario's pitch for a unified, province-wide, AI-enabled permitting platform. The coalition argues that Ontario continues to operate hundreds of disconnected permitting environments, each with its own rules, software, workflows and data standards.

Builders, planners and consultants often have to navigate multiple portals, inconsistent requirements, repeated requests for the same information and endless back-and-forth between departments and agencies. Even when municipalities invest in new software, those systems frequently remain isolated from one another.

Cumbersome planning and permitting processes have become one of the most persistent barriers to getting shovels in the ground. Every delay adds cost, erodes project viability and makes it harder to deliver homes when and where they are needed.

RESCON is not a peripheral voice in this debate. It represents builders, the ones who are most affected by approval bottlenecks. If





> **Delayed approvals mean delayed homes, higher carrying costs, less predictability and fewer projects that pencil out.**

anyone understands what fragmented approvals do to timelines, budgets and housing supply, it is the people trying to move projects through the system every day.

For years, RESCON has warned that the homebuilding sector is operating in one of the toughest environments it has ever faced. In our 2026 Ontario budget submission, we pointed to cumbersome planning approvals, restrictive regulatory policies and weak housing starts as major obstacles to meeting demand.

Delayed approvals mean delayed homes, higher carrying costs, less predictability and fewer projects that pencil out.

By joining the coalition as development partner, RESCON is doing more than lending its logo to a policy cause. It is taking a seat at the table in the design of a proposed solution.

One Ontario's coalition structure is meant to combine three different kinds of expertise. LandLogic provides the technology backbone - the end-to-end AI, data and platform infrastructure required to build and operate the system. RCI Lab brings regulatory intelligence and compliance expertise, with the aim of ensuring the platform's rules, workflows and automation are transparent, explainable and aligned with planning and permitting requirements. RESCON contributes the housing delivery perspective through industry leadership, policy expertise, strategic guidance and government-relations insight to keep the platform grounded in real-world development challenges.

Permitting reform has too often failed in Ontario by tackling only one side of the problem. Governments announce new funding or legislative tweaks. Municipalities buy new software. Industry groups publish reports and plead for action. But without common standards, shared data and a co-ordinated process, the system remains disjointed.

The long-term vision of this coalition is a single permitting dashboard that manages approvals from start to finish. In theory, the platform would identify project requirements, prepare and submit applications, co-ordinate reviews, track progress and guide applicants through decisions.

AI has the potential to automate repetitive administrative work, flag missing requirements early, co-ordinate workflows, surface regulatory issues faster and reduce the maddening amount of manual re-entry and document chasing that clogs the system today.

Technology is not a magic wand. A province-wide platform will not, on its own, solve policy disagreements, staffing shortages or local political resistance to growth. Municipal buy-in will be essential.

But if Ontario is serious about housing supply, it has to be just as serious about approvals infrastructure.

RESCON's decision to join the One Ontario coalition signals that the industry most affected by delays wants to help build something more coherent. If the coalition can help change that, it deserves serious support.

COALITION

MODERNIZING THE PROCESS

Group is dedicated to a unified, province-wide, AI-enabled platform to modernize development approvals.

By RESCON
for Real Estate Magazine Canada
July 17, 2026

Ontario's housing crisis is no longer defined solely by supply targets or affordability metrics. It is increasingly defined by something far less visible but just as consequential: time.

For years, governments at all levels have poured billions of dollars into housing acceleration programs, permitting modernization initiatives, and municipal technology upgrades. The theory was sound.

Faster approvals would unlock new housing supply, reduce costs, and bring predictability to a sector struggling under mounting pressure.

Yet the results tell a different story.

Despite these investments, approval timelines have barely improved. Projects continue to face lengthy, unpredictable review processes. Applications move from one desk to another, often across multiple systems, agencies, and jurisdictions.

Builders, municipalities, and applicants alike remain caught in a web of inefficiencies that delay housing delivery when it is needed most.

The problem is not money. It is structure.

Ontario's approvals ecosystem is like a fragmented maze. Today, hundreds of disconnected permitting environments operate across the province, each with its own processes, requirements, and data systems.

Municipalities adopt technology independently.

Agencies maintain separate review frameworks.

Applicants are required to navigate a patchwork of platforms and expectations, often repeating the same work multiple times.

However, without shared infrastructure - common standards, integrated systems, and co-ordinated workflows - even well-funded modernization efforts struggle to deliver meaningful change.

Technology layered onto fragmentation does not create efficiency. It simply digitizes complexity.

That reality is driving a new approach.

RESCON has joined a coalition led by One Ontario - a non-profit organization dedicated to modernizing real estate development and permitting processes across the province - that is dedicated to a unified, province-wide AI-enabled platform to modernize development approvals.

The platform would enable users to go from idea to permit in one single platform.

AI agents would identify a user's requirements, automatically fill in their applications, and check compliance up front. The agent

would then submit to approval agencies and track progress of the file.

Instead of navigating multiple systems, applicants would interact with a single digital dashboard that identifies requirements, prepares submissions, co-ordinates reviews, and tracks projects through to decision.

By standardizing zoning, planning, and property data, reducing duplicate work, and minimizing back-and-forth between agencies, the platform aims to deliver what years of investment have not: speed, clarity, and predictability.

The long-term vision is to have a single, province-wide permitting dashboard

The initiative makes sense for RESCON, as we represent builders responsible for constructing more than 70 per cent of Ontario's new homes, and who are most directly impacted by permitting delays and approval bottlenecks.

For builders, delays are not abstract policy concerns. They result in real-world costs - added financing expenses, extended project timelines, and increased uncertainty that ultimately flows through to homebuyers and renters.

As a development partner, RESCON will provide strategic guidance, industry insight, and government relations expertise to help shape how the platform is built, scaled, and implemented. We want to make sure that the system is not designed in isolation, but reflects the practical challenges faced every day on the ground.

The coalition itself is deliberately structured to bring together complementary expertise. Technology and platform development are led by partners providing end-to-end AI and data infrastructure.

Regulatory intelligence is contributed by organizations focused on ensuring compliance, transparency, and alignment with existing rules. Industry leadership - anchored by RESCON - ensures that housing delivery outcomes remain central to the effort.

Together, these partners will form a co-ordinated approach to permitting modernization - one that integrates technology, policy, and real-world application.

Ontario does not lack reports, recommendations, or policy frameworks. What it lacks is a shared system that turns those ideas into consistent, scalable outcomes.

The initiative would represent a fundamental shift in how housing projects move from concept to construction. Delays in the approvals process remain one of the most significant barriers to increasing supply.

We cannot wait for the system to change. The stakes are too high. We must work to build the infrastructure to make change possible.

HOUSING CRISIS HAS A RIPPLE EFFECT

By RESCON
for Canadian Forest Industries
July 27, 2026

The forestry and wood products industries in Canada are heavily reliant on residential construction. Housing drives demand for wood products and influences employment and economic activity.

As a result, the fortunes of sawmills, lumber producers, engineered wood manufacturers, panel producers, logging contractors, transportation firms and many rural communities are closely tied to housing activity.

New homes consume enormous amounts of wood and residential construction is the dominant application for many wood products. A typical North American single-family home requires roughly 15,000 to 16,000 board feet of lumber, plus plywood, OSB, trusses and engineered wood products.

When housing starts decline, demand for lumber and wood products falls, panel and engineered wood inventories build up, prices weaken, mills have to reduce shifts, logging firms harvest fewer trees, and transportation and equipment suppliers lose business. You get the picture.

The good news for the forestry and wood products industries is that Canada needs more housing. The problem is that builders are finding it difficult to build homes people can afford. This is due to myriad factors, including land and construction costs, lengthy approval timelines, and government-imposed taxes, fees and levies,

According to the latest analysis from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the nation needs housing starts to nearly double to about 430,000-480,000 homes a year through 2035 to restore affordability to sustainable levels. We're nowhere near that.

The nation will need another 3.5 million housing units above what is already expected to be built by 2030 to restore affordability. That would require Canada's housing stock to exceed 22 million units by 2030, compared with roughly 18-19 million units under current construction trends.

Taxes are killing the market. Although governments cannot control every variable, they do control a significant portion of the tax and fee stack. Lowering the levies is one of the most immediate policy levers available to reduce the price of new housing and improve project viability.

The math is straightforward. If taxes and fees

account for nearly $381,000 on an average Ontario new home, even partial relief can change affordability. A lower purchase price can reduce downpayment requirements, borrowing needs, monthly payments and mortgage stress-test pressure.

Tax reductions are most effective when paired with faster approvals, infrastructure funding certainty and clear project eligibility.

The present housing crisis cannot be solved unless governments reduce the growing burden of taxes, fees and levies on the cost of new homes. In Ontario today, recent research showed that government-imposed charges account for 36 per cent of the purchase price of a new home. The cost is ultimately passed on to homebuyers through higher prices and larger mortgages.

Municipal development charges (DCs), which help fund infrastructure such as roads, water systems, transit and parks, are a big part of the problem.

While this infrastructure is necessary, the model places a disproportionate share of the cost on new homebuyers. In some municipalities, development charges alone can add well over $100,000 to the cost of a home, creating affordability challenges and making many projects financially unviable.

The recently announced Development Charge Reduction Program (DCRP) is an important step in the right direction. Through the Canada-Ontario Partnership to Build, municipalities that reduce development charges by 30 to 50 per cent or more will be eligible for a share of up to $8.8 billion in infrastructure funding over the next decade.

The program will help lower costs, improve project feasibility and support the construction of more homes across Ontario.

However, the DCRP alone will not be enough to restore housing affordability or achieve housing supply targets.

Broader reforms are still needed, including permanent and predictable GST/HST relief on new homes, and further reductions in development charges. Governments should also improve transparency around housing-related taxes and fees and ensure cost savings are passed on to consumers.

Lowering government-imposed costs is not just a housing affordability issue - it’s an economic issue. It would have a ripple effect on the forestry and wood products industries which support hundreds of thousands of jobs, many of them in rural and resource-dependent communities.

What’s good for the residential construction sector is good for those industries as well.

WE ARE AT A CRITICAL POINT IN TIME

By RESCON
for Daily Commercial News
July 17, 2026

Canada is facing a critical moment in how it trains the next generation of skilled trades - and the stakes could not be higher.

The nation is embarking on a sweeping economic reset, and federal and provincial governments are pouring billions into housing infrastructure, defence, energy and trade diversification, as policymakers race to offset the economic disruption caused by U.S. protectionism.

All of these challenges have one thing in common: they require more certified tradespeople.

But, at the precise moment when Canada needs more skilled trades, the system responsible for producing them is falling short. This is happening in spite of significant funding.

For years, governments have responded to labour shortages with a familiar toolkit. More money. More subsidies. More tax credits. More awareness campaigns. And billions of dollars get pumped into apprenticeship and workforce development programs across the country.

Don't get me wrong. This funding is necessary. But despite our best efforts, it isn't working.

An analysis commissioned recently by RESCON reveals a startling fact: apprenticeship completion rates have been stuck at roughly 20 per cent of registrations since 2013. Four out of five people who begin the journey never reach the finish line.

That should set off the alarm bells.

Canada does not primarily have an apprenticeship recruitment problem. Nor does it simply have a funding problem. It has a completion problem.

That distinction matters.

The difference between registering an apprentice and producing a certified journeyperson is the difference between announcing a housing strategy and actually building homes. It is the difference between planning infrastructure projects and having the skilled workforce to complete them.

The economic consequences are enormous. The report notes that low completion rates translate into billions of dollars in lost GDP,

> We have designed apprenticeship systems around economic assumptions while largely ignoring human behaviour.

worker earnings and tax revenues. Meanwhile, recent forecasts suggest Canada could face severe skilled labour shortages in the years ahead.

The question is why. If governments have invested so heavily in training, why are outcomes not improving?

According to authors of the report, the answer lies in a blind spot that has shaped Canadian training policy for decades.

We have designed apprenticeship systems around economic assumptions while largely ignoring human behaviour.

The traditional view is straightforward: provide information, lower costs, expand access and people will participate. But human beings do not always behave like rational economic actors.

People procrastinate. They become overwhelmed by complexity. They doubt themselves. They encounter uncertainty and choose the familiar path. They struggle to balance work, family responsibilities and education. They abandon long-term goals when short-term pressures mount.

The solution?

A system that addresses behavioural factors is a better approach. Behavioural science addresses other tendencies that people have like loss aversion, present bias, cognitive overload and status quo bias.

In real life, they are the reasons apprentices drop out.

For a typical apprentice, training stretches over several years. The reward of certification is distant. In many voluntary trades, workers can earn close to journeyperson wages before completing their certification requirements. From a purely practical perspective, stopping early can appear sensible.

That is not a failure of character. It is a predictable response to a system that inadvertently rewards non-completion.

The same dynamic appears throughout the training journey.

Young people face a bewildering maze of pathways, entrance requirements and career options. Guidance systems often push students toward university even when a skilled trades career may be a better fit. Mid-career workers contemplating a transition into trades must weigh financial obligations, family responsibilities and the uncertainty of starting over again.

Even something as simple as navigating apprenticeship paperwork or preparing for a certification exam can become a barrier.

According to the report, Canada needs to stop treating these obstacles as individual shortcomings and start seeing them as design flaws.

But that will require a fundamental shift in thinking.

A behaviourally informed apprenticeship system would focus less on registrations and more on completions. It would simplify entry points, provide better guidance and mentorship, reduce administrative hurdles, and offer stronger support at critical times when trainees are most likely to disengage.

Importantly, it would also recognize that success depends not simply on what programs exist, but on whether real people can realistically navigate them.

Demand for skilled trades workers is expected to grow substantially. Unlike many occupations vulnerable to AI-driven disruption, skilled construction careers are likely to benefit from new technologies while remaining essential to economic growth. Housing, infrastructure, energy projects and industrial development will all require more trained workers. But none of that demand matters if the training pipeline continues to leak at every stage.

The lesson from the new research is simple and profound. The future of skills training is not merely about spending more money. It is about designing better systems.

COMPLETION RATES REMAIN STUBBORNLY LOW

By RESCON
for Canadian Contractor
July 16, 2026

Canada is spending billions to tackle its looming skilled trades shortage. However, while the funding is needed, behind the curtain there is a troubling contradiction: while investment has surged, apprenticeship completion rates remain stubbornly low and, in many cases, are declining.

This is not just a policy problem. It is a systemic failure.

For more than a decade, apprenticeship completions in Canada's construction trades have hovered at roughly 20 per cent of registrations. That means four out of five people who start down the path never reach certification. At the same time, workforce shortages are intensifying, with hundreds of thousands of additional skilled trades workers needed in the coming years.

The cost will be measured in billions of dollars in lost GDP, reduced incomes, and unrealized economic potential.

It would be easy to conclude that the solution is simply to do more of what governments have always done: increase funding, expand programs, and promote the trades more aggressively. But the evidence - and results - suggest that these traditional levers are not working.

A new independent report prepared for the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) makes that point with unusual clarity. Co-authored by leading experts in economics and behavioural science, the report argues that Canada's apprenticeship crisis is not primarily a funding problem or even an access problem. It is, at its core, a design problem.

The system, they conclude, is built on flawed assumptions about how people actually behave.

For decades, training policy has operated on a simple economic

Four out of five people who start down the path never reach certification and, at the same time, workforce shortages are intensifying, with hundreds of thousands of additional skilled trades workers needed in the coming years.

premise: if you provide information, reduce financial barriers, and expand access, individuals will make rational decisions and follow through on them. In other words, if the opportunity exists, people will take it.

But human behaviour is far more complex.

People are not perfectly rational decision-makers. They are influenced by uncertainty, time pressure, financial stress, social expectations, and cognitive overload. They abandon long-term plans when short-term costs become too real. They avoid complex systems that are difficult to navigate. They respond to incentives in ways policymakers often fail to anticipate.

The apprenticeship system, as currently designed, does not take these realities into account. Instead, it often works against them.

Consider the journey of an apprentice. It begins with navigating a fragmented and confusing landscape of programs, requirements, and career options. It continues through years of training during which financial pressures mount, especially during in-school periods when income disappears. Along the way, participants face administrative hurdles, unclear pathways, and inconsistent support.

In short, the system unintentionally encourages people to drop out.

Layer onto that the broader behavioural barriers identified in the report: fear of making the wrong career choice, the pull of immediate income over long-term rewards, the complexity of choosing among more than 140 trades, and persistent social biases that still favour university pathways over the trades.

What makes this especially concerning is the timing. Canada is at a critical economic inflection point. Massive public investments in housing, infrastructure, and energy are reshaping labour demand. At the same time, artificial intelligence is disrupting traditional career paths, pushing more workers to consider alternative options, including the skilled trades.

Demand is rising. Interest is there. But the system is failing to convert that interest into completions.

That is why the report's central conclusion is so important - and so urgent.

Canada does not need more programs layered onto an ineffective system. It needs a fundamental redesign.

A behaviourally informed approach would start by asking a different set of questions: not just what opportunities exist, but how people experience them. Where do they get stuck? What makes them disengage? What barriers - psychological, financial, or logistical - stand in the way of completion?

The answers point to a system that must be reoriented around people, not programs.

That means simplifying pathways into the trades and making information easier to understand. It means reducing financial disruptions during training, especially during in-school periods. It means creating stronger incentives to complete certification, particularly in trades where early exit is currently rewarded.

It also means supporting apprentices at critical moments - from the initial decision to enroll, through the training process, and especially at the final stage of certification, where too many fall short due to lack of structured preparation and support.

Equally important is the need for a culture shift. The trades must be presented not as a fallback, but as a first-choice career path - one that offers stability, opportunity, and long-term growth in an increasingly uncertain labour market.

Finally, Canada must embrace a discipline that has been largely absent from training policy. Behavioural solutions are not one-size-fits-all. What works in one context may not work in another. Programs must be designed, tested, refined, and scaled based on evidence, not assumptions.

This is the lesson at the heart of the RESCON report — and it is one policymakers can no longer afford to ignore.

Canada's ability to build housing, deliver infrastructure, and compete economically depends on a skilled workforce that the current system is failing to produce. We need to make changes.

CERTIFICATION RATES HAVE DIPPED

The nation's apprenticeship completion rate has been stuck at roughly 20 per cent of registrations since 2013, despite strong demand for skilled labour.

By RESCON
for Builder Bites
July 8, 2026

They say the best time to fix a problem is before it breaks. That is why it is so critical for Canada to take a good long look at its apprenticeship system and find new ways of training recruits.

Despite billions of dollars in public investment, uptake of training programs remains too low in many areas and the number of workers who complete training and receiving certification is on the decline.

Canada's apprenticeship completion rate has been stuck at roughly 20 per cent of registrations since 2013, despite strong demand for skilled labour. Skill shortages are estimated to have caused GDP to be $2.6 billion lower in 2024 alone, and to have contributed about seven per cent of our nation's growing labour productivity gap with the U.S. since 2014.

The federal government in 2026 projected excess demand of over 1.4 million skilled trades workers versus supply by 2033. With approximately 700,000 skilled trades workers across Canada expected to retire by 2028, the situation is likely going to get worse before it gets better. It's a knowledge transfer challenge the training pipeline was just not designed to absorb.

An independent report prepared for RESCON and co-authored by experts concluded that the nation's apprenticeship crisis stems from flawed system design based on incorrect economic assumptions about human behavior, highlighting barriers such as choice overload, loss aversion, present bias, social norms, and financial precarity that hinder apprenticeship completion.

The report, Are We Ready to Build Canada? A Behavioural Analysis of Canada's Construction Talent Pipeline and Skills Training Policy, was authored by Nathaniel Barr, professor of creativity and senior advisor, innovation at Sheridan College; Michael McNamara, professor of creativity and director of the Community Ideas Factory at Sheridan; and James K. Stewart, economist and a senior fellow at the C.D. Howe Institute.

The authors recommend systemic redesign, using behavioural science and embedding behavioral insights, and rigorous testing of solutions to better facilitate apprenticeship success and address workforce shortages.

In other words, we need a new approach to help boost apprenticeship completion rates. We must look beyond traditional approaches and redesign the system because it's clearly not working.

Behavioural science could be applied to significantly boost apprenticeship recruitment and completion rates in the skilled construction trades. By embracing behavioural science, we can achieve better training outcomes and improve how youth view the skilled

We need a new approach to help boost apprenticeship completion rates. We must look beyond traditional approaches and redesign the system because it's clearly not working. Behavioural science could be applied to significantly boost apprenticeship recruitment and completion rates in the skilled construction trades

construction trades.

Behavioural science is the study of cognitive constraints, social pressures, and structural frictions that shape human decisions. The premise is that decisions are shaped by limits of time, attention, cognitive energy, and available information.

Authors of the report were meticulous in examining the apprenticeship journey through a behavioural lens to identify barriers to recruitment, challenges within training, and issues affecting retention.

They concluded that policy and program design must better reflect the human factors influencing training outcomes in the years ahead.

Improved outcomes and a more skilled workforce are critical to the success of Canada's evolving economic landscape - shaped by tariffs and other adverse U.S. policy shifts, rapid advances in artificial intelligence, and long-standing productivity challenges.

Billons of dollars have been spent on apprenticeship training and, while increased funding is important, it has not solved the problem. The bigger problem is the rate at which individuals enter and complete their apprenticeship training. Low completion rates cannot be overlooked.

We must overhaul the apprentice training system from one that merely provides opportunities to one that actively facilitates meaningful usage and completion. The missing ingredient is behavioural science as it provides an understanding of why people behave as they do.

Canadian training policy has relied on the same subsidies, tax credits, and awareness campaigns. But it's not working. Applying behavioural science to the construction talent pipeline makes sense.

With a skilled trades shortage looming over the construction industry, there is no time to waste. We must act now.

WHY WE NEED TO REBUILD THE SYSTEM

By RESCON
for Senso Magazine
June 30, 2026

Canada Day is a time for reflection and celebration - a moment when we take pride in a country that continues to grow, build, and reinvent itself. However, to continue on that path to prosperity, we need to ensure there is a healthy supply of skilled trades workers in the pipeline.

Unfortunately, there are clouds gathering - quiet but consequential - over one of the most critical systems underpinning Canada's economic future: our apprenticeship system.

For more than a decade, the numbers have barely budged. Since 2013, Canada's apprenticeship completion rate has remained stuck at roughly 20 per cent of registrations. That statistic alone should give policymakers pause. It means that four out of five people who begin an apprenticeship journey never cross the finish line.

And this is happening at a time when the need for skilled trades has never been greater.

A recent report prepared for RESCON underscores the scale of the problem - and the urgency. Despite billions of dollars in public investment in training programs, uptake remains uneven, and more troubling still, the number of workers who complete training and obtain certification is declining.

In other words, the issue is not simply that too few people are entering the system. It is that too few are making it through.

That distinction matters.

For years, governments have responded to skills shortages with familiar tools: more funding, more subsidies, more awareness campaigns. These efforts are well-intentioned and, in some cases, necessary. But the persistence of low completion rates suggests a deeper problem.

The system itself is not working as intended.

At its core, Canada's apprenticeship framework is built on a set of traditional economic assumptions: give people the right information, reduce the cost of participation, and they will behave rationally and follow through. Yet the evidence - staring us in the face for more than a decade - tells a different story.

People are not perfectly rational actors. And apprenticeship systems that assume they are will continue to fall short.

This is where behavioural science offers a promising and necessary shift in thinking.

Behavioural science starts from a simple but powerful premise: human decision-making is shaped by cognitive biases, social pressures, and real-world constraints such as time, financial stress, and uncertainty. These forces influence not just whether people choose to enter an apprenticeship, but whether they persist, complete, and ultimately succeed.

Consider the reality facing many apprentices.

They are often required to navigate a complex and fragmented system with hundreds of entry points and dozens of trades. They must balance work, school, and financial obligations - often losing income during in-school training periods. They face uncertainty about long-term career prospects and, in many cases, a lack of clear guidance or mentorship.

At each stage of this journey, small barriers accumulate.

Behavioural science refers to this as “friction.” And when friction is high, even motivated individuals can disengage.

The tendency to prioritize immediate costs over future benefits can make it difficult for apprentices to stay the course when the payoff of certification feels distant.

Individuals may be dissuaded from committing fully if they fear wasted time or income. Social norms, which still tend to favour university pathways over the trades, also quietly shape decisions long before a young person considers their options.

None of these factors are addressed by traditional policy tools alone.

That is why the RESCON report argues that the apprenticeship challenge is not just economic - it is behavioural.

The system has been designed around assumptions that do not align with how people actually think, decide, and act.

If that is the diagnosis, then the prescription is clear: redesign the system.

This does not mean abandoning investment. Funding remains important. But it does mean rethinking how programs are structured, delivered, and experienced by the people they are meant to serve.

A behavioural approach would focus on reducing friction at every stage of the apprenticeship journey.

It would make pathways clearer and easier to navigate, particularly for those without industry connections.

It would ensure that financial supports are not only available but accessible at the moments when they matter most. It would provide structured mentorship and exam preparation support - features taken for granted in other professions but often absent in the trades.

It would also shift how success is measured.

For too long, the focus has been on registrations - how many people enter the system - rather than completions. But a system that celebrates entry while tolerating attrition is a system that is quietly failing.

Completion must become the metric that matters.

Perhaps most importantly, a behavioural lens would introduce a culture of testing and learning. Too often, training programs are implemented at scale without rigorous evaluation. Behavioural science emphasizes experimentation - trying new approaches, measuring outcomes, and scaling what works.

As Canada celebrates another birthday, it does so at a moment of economic transformation. Demand for skilled trades is accelerating, driven by housing needs, infrastructure investment, and technological change.

At the same time, thousands of experienced workers are nearing retirement, and new entrants are needed to replace them.

The stakes could not be higher.

A training system that loses most of its participants along the way is not just inefficient - it is a drag on productivity, growth, and national ambition.

This is the cloud hanging over our celebration. But it is also an opportunity.

By embracing behavioural science and redesigning the apprenticeship system from the ground up, Canada can turn a longstanding weakness into a source of strength.

REPORT URGES SYSTEM OVERHAUL

Apprenticeship completion rates have remained at about 20 per cent of registrations since 2013, even as demand for skilled construction workers has continued to rise.

By Ontario Construction News
June 24, 2026

Canada should adopt behavioural science principles to improve apprenticeship recruitment and completion rates in the skilled trades to address ongoing labour shortages, according to a new report from the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON).

The report, [Are We Ready to Build Canada?] says apprenticeship policies have relied too heavily on financial incentives and information campaigns while overlooking behavioural factors that influence whether people enter, remain in and complete training programs.

Apprenticeship completion rates have remained at about 20 per cent of registrations since 2013, even as demand for skilled construction workers has continued to rise, the report says.

The authors argue this gap is contributing to significant economic losses in gross domestic product, worker income and tax revenues.

The report was written by Nathaniel Barr, professor of creativity and senior advisor of innovation at Sheridan College; Michael McNamara, professor of creativity and director of the

Community Ideas Factory at Sheridan College; and James K. Stewart, economist and senior fellow at the C.D. Howe Institute.

"Canada should look to behavioural science to significantly boost apprenticeship recruitment and completion rates in the skilled construction trades," said Richard Lyall, executive director of RESCON.

"By embracing behavioural science, we can achieve better training outcomes and improve how youth view the skilled construction trades."

The report argues that skills-training policy has largely focused on economic levers such as subsidies, tax incentives and information campaigns, rather than behavioural design elements that shape decision-making and program outcomes.

"For too long, skills training policy has focused on purely economic levers — more information, subsidies and tax incentives — rather than addressing the behavioural factors shaping training outcomes," the report says.

It recommends that governments improve data collection on apprenticeship completions and the broader economic costs of labour shortages, measure success based on completions rather than registrations, and focus more on the needs and experiences of apprentices and employers.

The report also calls for faster responses to systemic issues and better program design that reflects how people actually make decisions.

"While increased funding for apprenticeships is important, the greater challenge lies in how training policies and programs are designed and delivered," Lyall said.

RESCON says the proposed changes could improve apprenticeship completion rates, strengthen the skilled trades workforce and encourage more young people to enter construction careers.

Click here to view the report.

Building on the momentum of previous summits, this year's virtual conference focuses on whether housing reforms introduced to date have been effective relative to supply targets and, if not, what are next steps.

Key industry leaders, policy makers and experts will examine the crucial factors shaping residential construction and what it will take to keep building.

The summit will focus on the critical intersection of legislation, regulations and market realities.

Attendees will be provided insights into evolving HST/GST policies, regulatory updates and practical strategies for navigating these evolving times.

The summit will also address current market pressures from the shift in sales and growing gap between housing costs and incomes and what this means for housing delivery in Ontario.

Speakers include:

Ana Bailão - Build Canada Homes
Daniel Foch - Valery Real Estate
David Coletto - Abacus Data
John White - Nova Scotia minister of housing
Ian Lee - Carleton University
Jason Mercer - Toronto Regional Real Estate Board
Marlon Bray - Clark Construction Management
Paul Smetanin - Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis
Tony Irwin - Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario

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RCCAO REPORT

- In a joint [submission] with its members, RCCAO has provided feedback to Transport Canada as part of the public consultation on the future of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.
  - As the GTA continues to grow, investing in strategic infrastructure is essential to strengthening regional connectivity, supporting economic growth and building a more resilient transportation network.

- RCCAO continues its leadership role on improving the underground locates process in Ontario and joined the quarterly meeting of the Ontario One Call stakeholder advisory committee.

- RCCAO commends the Ontario Government's continued investment in Highway 3.
  - Advancing enabling works and moving toward twinning construction in 2027 will improve road safety, strengthen connectivity and support economic growth across Southern Ontario.

- RCCAO was proud to sponsor and participate in the 25th Annual LIUNA Local 183 Charity Golf Classic.
  - Executive director Nadia Todorova joined RCCAO members on the green in support of this meaningful and important annual event.

- RCCAO and its members are looking forward to attending the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference in Ottawa in a few weeks, which always provides a valuable opportunity to connect with municipal and provincial leaders, industry partners, and stakeholders from across Ontario.
  - With municipal elections taking place this October, this year's conference promises to be an especially important forum for discussing the infrastructure priorities, policy solutions and long-term investments that will help build stronger communities across the province.

- RCCAO's newsletter is now published monthly - to read and subscribe, click here. We also remain active on all communication channels - LinkedIn and X/Twitter!

MEDIA REPORT

PRINT & ONLINE

Storeys

RESCON's Richard Lyall spoke at a SiteSummit 2026 discussion on housing. The consensus was that development charges, fragmented approvals, and decades of underinvestment in rental housing are the problem, Storeys reported in an article.

Daily Commercial News

When people feel safe, they let their guard down and it's a hard thing to battle because many don't realize it, RESCON VP Andrew Pariser explains in an article in Daily Commercial News.

CBC News

Most apprenticeships have a completion rate below 50 per cent and we need to see more students enter pre-apprenticeship programs much sooner, as early as high school, Lyall said in a CBC News article.

Canadian Contractor

RESCON has announced that Daneil Foch, broker and chief real estate officer at Varley Real Estate, will speak at Housing Summit 6.0, Canadian Contractor reports in an article.

PODCASTS

Colliers Talks

In an episode of the Colliers Talks Economics podcast, host Adam Jacobs sits down with RESCON president Richard Lyall to unpack the housing crisis and discuss whether there's a path forward. Click here to listen.

CREBTV

Lyall joined Vanessa Topple for a two-part series on Ontario's Development Charge Reduction Program and how technology and faster approvals can help increase the province's housing supply. Click here to watch.