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Q&A

WITH THE

HOUSING MINISTER

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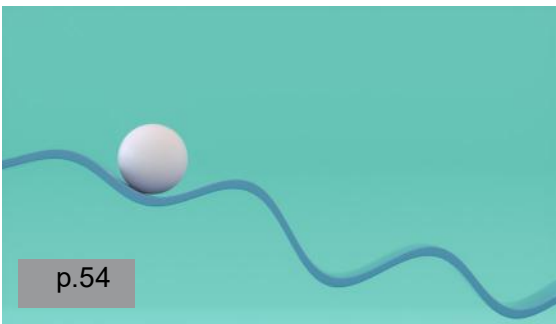
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Builder Briefs

RESCON joins meeting to discuss procurement framework

RESCON president Richard Lyall joined other leaders recently at a meeting at the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce to discuss issues with Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement Minister Stephen Crawford. The group discussed procurement reform, spec harmonization, and the practical application of 'Buy Ontario' policies.

The conversation focused on how the province can update its procurement framework to get projects moving faster and better support our supply chains.

Lyall said it was another excellent session arranged by the chamber and the minister was clearly engaged on all the issues and the need to be competitive in the face of existing and mounting challenges.

Priorities discussed were:

- Standardizing the procurement process across the broader public sector and improving access to Vendor of Record opportunities.
- Ensuring domestic-content requirements are clearly



defined and consistently applied so local businesses can actually navigate them.

- Recognizing the reality of integrated North American supply chains when enforcing

domestic procurement mandates.

- Providing industry clearer visibility on long-term infrastructure investment schedules.

New hardhat rules are coming in 2027

Type 2 hardhats will be required by July 2027 in Ontario.

RESCON is working with the MLITSD, IHSA and other associations to understand the exact rules and regulations as well as how any potential rebate may apply.

Stay tuned.

Once final details emerge, RESCON will host a webinar to ensure members are kept up to date.

Meeting with the Minister of Housing



RESCON staff met recently with Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack to discuss housing issues.

Attending were RESCON president Richard Lyall, Andrew Pariser, Paul De Berardis and Michael Giles.



HOUSING REFORM: IT'S TIME TO FINISH THE JOB

Richard Lyall
President

The plan is clear and the tools exist. Let's work together to get shovels in the ground.

Ontario is falling short of its housing targets. That should not be the case. The province has the most consequential housing minister in a generation, and recent reforms go further than any in memory.

Several of the biggest problems named in the 2022 Housing Affordability Task Force report have been tackled, at least in part.

However, by the government's own count, many task force recommendations still have not been addressed, and others only partly. Partial progress does not build homes.

So, what's the problem?

Announcements are not results. Governments are good at launching new programs and slow to fix old problems.

Writing a policy is easy. Putting it into practice is the hard part, and that is where housing reform keeps stalling.

The ratio of new home prices to household incomes is still far above the historical average. That did not happen by accident.

For years, government-imposed costs on new housing spiralled out of control, while the red tape slowing approvals kept getting worse. Homebuyers and renters paid for it at every step.

Governments have finally started going after the two biggest cost drivers: sales taxes and development charges (DCs). Both efforts matter. Neither one is finished.

The Enhanced Ontario New Housing Rebate was the right call. But it lasts only one year, its regulations came late, and claims have moved at a glacial pace.

A rebate that buyers cannot collect does not make housing more affordable. The temporary nature of the HST rebate also does not help new condo projects get off the ground.

Paying municipalities to lower their DCs is a constructive step, and many municipalities have taken part. But it is a stopgap. Ontario needs a fair, permanent way to pay for growth-related infrastructure, one that stops loading those costs onto new homebuyers and renters. Without it, relief stays temporary and uncertainty keeps holding back investment.

The solutions to the housing crisis are no mystery. They have been known for years, and they are set out in the task force report, in industry submissions, and in study after study. What has been missing is the follow-through.

Part of the problem is how the system is set up. Getting three levels of government and some 45 government agencies to move in the same direction is a huge job. When those players are not aligned, projects stall, costs climb and homes that are badly needed never get built.

We are making progress, and there is broad agreement on what has to change. But the pace is not good enough.

Building Canada Strong takes three things: money, a skilled workforce, and a steady, predictable supply of housing. We cannot attract investment, grow our workforce, or keep young families here if we cannot house them.

The answer is not another round of announcements. It is finishing what has already been started. That means turning partial reforms into complete ones, making temporary measures permanent, and making sure the programs already in place deliver as promised.

RESCON wants to help make that happen. We are working with officials to make the Enhanced Ontario New Housing Rebate claims process faster and simpler for buyers. We are working with municipalities to track how DC relief is reaching the market, and we want to help design a fair, lasting way to fund growth.

With our partners, we are helping bring digital, AI-enabled permitting to Ontario so approvals can move faster. And we are working with government, educators and industry to build the skilled workforce these reforms depend on.

Our housing ministers, at both the federal and provincial levels, have shown real leadership. RESCON is proud to work alongside them and will bring our members' practical experience to every table where solutions are being built.

Together we can match the pace this moment calls for.

The plan is clear, and the tools exist. Let's work together to get shovels in the ground.



FALL IS THE BEST TIME TO PLAN FOR WINTER SAFETY

Andrew Pariser
Vice President

The first step in construction health and safety is to commit to continuous improvement.

Many Canadians remember the phrase, “Change your clocks, change your batteries.” It was a simple reminder from the firefighters that your smoke detector can’t save your life if it isn’t working.

In construction, we need to start associating the “fall back” clock change with preparation for winter construction safety.

In some parts of Ontario, it will snow this month. In other parts, the snow will come eventually and that means now is the time to get ready for winter, as it will bring new hazards to all construction sites in Ontario. Waiting until the snow falls is not a recipe for success.

Winter hazards

Each season in Ontario brings new hazards and new challenges to on-site safety. The good news is that a lot of resources already exist. As a result, I advise using resources that already exist and focusing your time and energy on identifying the hazards your workforce faces and create an implementation plan that incorporates your unique operating environment.

Existing resources

My favourite safety resources include the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA) and Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Develop (MLITSD) webpages.

The IHSA is an excellent resource for practical and implementable tools including, but not limited to toolbox talks, hazard alerts, and other safety resources.

The IHSA has a toolbox talk [here](#) that highlights common winter hazards, including cold stress, frostbite, slips and trips, and carbon monoxide (CO). These hazards are predictable and need to be addressed before the snow falls and temperatures dip. Solutions include safety policies, education and elimination or mitigation of the on-site hazard.

For example, all employers and constructors should have policies and procedures related to winter, winter weather, and work surfaces. Some questions that need to be answered include:

- How are you and your workers going to ensure winter heat is provided?
- Will the heat source create a hazard? (CO for example)

- If a hazard is created, how can it be eliminated or mitigated?
- How is this policy going to be communicated to the workforce?
- How will propane training and other winter health and safety training be delivered?
- How are you checking for qualifications, certificates and tickets?
- Have toolbox talks been held?
- Has the importance of a debris-free site and impacts of snow, ice, and construction debris been considered?

The MLITSD [website](#) provides additional resources for implementation as well as information on hazards, MLITSD policies, legislation, regulations, and areas of focus. In order to comply, employers must first know what their obligations are.

Where to go from here

The first step in construction health and safety is to commit to continuous improvement. At its core a Continuous Improvement Model (CIM) involves creating a plan, implementing and evaluating the outcome. This approach - repeated - is proven to improve health and safety outcomes as well as build a culture of safety. What you do every day, week, month and year matters.

With winter safety, the first step is to identify the hazards that impact your site. Once they are identified you can work to eliminate or mitigate those hazards, relying on policy, education, training, implementation and enforcement.

If you are a RESCON member, give us a call. In addition to the resources shared above, RESCON has a very active health and safety committee and collection of resources designed to meet the members where they are and give them additional resources to meet the challenges they face.

Constructors and employers have extensive obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and RESCON is here to help you understand those requirements and comply.

We can also offer practical implementation tips and ensure you are kept up to date with industry-leading best practices as well as updates from the government and our other safety partners.



DC DISCLOSURE MUST PUT ACCOUNTABILITY WHERE IT BELONGS

Paul De Berardis
VP, Building Standards & Engineering

New-home purchasers deserve the right to understand government-imposed charges that contribute to the price of their home. RESCON supports greater consumer awareness and transparency, including the disclosure of municipal development charges. However, any new disclosure framework must be easy to implement, practical and designed around how development charges (DCs) are established and administered.

The Ontario government recently consulted on a proposal that would require builders to disclose the full amount of DCs applicable on a new home when an agreement of purchase and sale is signed. If the final amount is unknown, the builder would disclose a present-day estimate based on the municipality's current DC bylaw. Builders could then be required to update purchasers whenever the amount changes.

DCs are fees imposed by municipalities to fund growth-related infrastructure needed to serve new residents and businesses. They help pay for roads, transit, water and wastewater systems, stormwater infrastructure, emergency services, libraries and recreation facilities. Although developers initially pay these charges, the costs ultimately become part of the price of new housing. Giving purchasers a clearer understanding of those costs is a reasonable objective. The concern is not the government's intent. The concern is the unnecessarily complicated process being considered to achieve it.

A new home is generally sold well before building permits are obtained. During that time, municipal rates may change, be indexed or be affected by project-specific timing and transitional provisions. Builders do not create DC bylaws, set the rates or control when municipalities amend them. Requiring builders to continually estimate, monitor and report changes determined by municipalities would create considerable administrative work. It could also confuse purchasers by placing undue emphasis on interim amounts that may change before closing. What ultimately matters to purchasers is the final amount applicable to their home.

The consultation also proposed possible administrative monetary penalties where a builder fails to disclose DC information, provides an inaccurate amount or does not report an adjustment within a reasonable period. This approach could penalize builders for information originating with, and controlled by, municipal governments.

There is a clearer and more accountable solution.

Municipalities establish DC rates through their bylaws, collect the revenue and commission background studies to calculate the charges. They are therefore best positioned to provide the authoritative figures required for consumer disclosure.

RESCON has recommended that the province create a standardized DC disclosure form that every municipality levying these charges would complete, publish online and keep current. The form should clearly present the applicable charges by housing type in a consistent, easily understood format. Where upper-tier and lower-tier municipal charges both apply, the information should be co-ordinated and presented together.

Builders would provide the municipal disclosure form to purchasers when the agreement of purchase and sale is signed. At closing, the lawyers handling the transaction could access the municipality's current information and make any required adjustment.

This model would establish an appropriate division of responsibility.

Municipalities would be accountable for publishing accurate and current rates. Builders would act as the conduit, ensuring that purchasers receive the municipal DC information. Provided a builder makes the required disclosure using the authoritative municipal form, the builder should not be penalized because a municipality subsequently changes its rates.

DC disclosure should also focus attention on the magnitude of government-imposed costs embedded in the price of new housing. Transparency is most meaningful when it leads to accountability for both the amount charged and its impact on housing affordability. After all, this is what led to the current investment initiative supporting select Ontario municipalities from the federal and provincial governments under the Development Charge Reduction Program, lowering residential DCs by 40 to 60 per cent from 2026 through 2029.

The province now has an opportunity to create a simple, standardized and reliable disclosure system. It should build that system around authoritative municipal information, rather than transferring municipal responsibilities and compliance risks to homebuilders.

RESCON is ready to work with the province, municipalities and industry partners to develop a framework that genuinely informs purchasers without adding another costly layer of regulatory administration. The goal should be straightforward: disclose the right information, at the right time, from the government responsible for setting the charge.



THERE IS GOOD AND BAD NEWS ON THE HOUSING FRONT

Grant Cameron
Senior Director of Public Affairs

Canada currently builds roughly 250,000 homes annually but 400,000 to 470,000 new homes are needed each year.

First, the good news. Speakers at RESCON's recent online summit noted there is reason for optimism as government measures are beginning to show results and housing affordability has improved.

The bad news is that economic uncertainty due to ongoing trade tensions with the United States and concerns about future inflation have caused many prospective buyers to tap the brakes.

Ian Lee, associate professor at Carleton University's Sproull School of Business, summed it up, explaining that we're heading in the right direction, but housing construction continues to lag.

Jason Mercer, chief market analyst at the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB), pointed out that affordability conditions have improved substantially over the past two years.

For example, he said, the annual income required to purchase a \$1-million home in the GTA has fallen from well over \$200,000 during the peak of the rate cycle to \$140,000 to \$150,000 today.

However, the numbers don't lie. Construction of new housing is not keeping up with population growth. Canada currently builds roughly 250,000 homes annually, but 400,000 to 470,000 new homes are needed each year to restore affordability and eliminate the accumulated supply shortfall.

Unfortunately, the math doesn't add up.

For a full rundown of articles, presentations and video of the summit, [click here](#).

Following is a list of some of the articles:

- [Housing unaffordability potentially imposes greater social burden than cancer](#)
- [Green shoots of housing hope visible at RESCON Summit](#)
- [Housing targets at risk without sustainable construction workforce](#)
- [Despite small steps forward Canadian housing crisis is far from being solved](#)
- [Housing Summit 6.0 focuses on impact of housing policy in Ontario](#)
- [Housing reform is working but too slowly for Canadian homebuyers](#)

We also compiled a report on messaging by some of the speakers at the event. [Click here](#) to read a digital copy of the report and [click here](#) for a PDF of the report.

Three-part series

A three-part series of columns from RESCON ran recently in Daily Commercial News. In one [column](#) we explained why HST rebates on new housing must be made permanent. In a [second column](#) we highlighted why it is important to get development charges under control. And in a [third column](#) we noted why the housing approvals system must be modernized.

Fixes proposed

In an [article](#) in Canadian Mortgage Professional and in a separate [article](#) in Storeys, RESCON outlined six key fixes for the housing crisis. In another [column](#) in RENX Homes, we zeroed in on three fixes for the crisis.

Meanwhile, in Canadian Contractor, a [column](#) by RESCON explained why housing policies need to be revamped.

Apprenticeship changes

RESCON is calling for reforms to the recruitment of apprentices. In an [article](#) in Daily Commercial News and another [article](#) in The Toronto Sun, we explained why greater adoption of behavioural science could help keep young people in the trades.

Tax cuts

In an [article](#) in Ontario Construction News, RESCON pointed out how permanently eliminating the HST from new home purchases would boost homebuilding.

Tariffs

An [article](#) in the REMI Network highlighted a report by RESCON on the cost of tariffs. [Another](#) in Canadian Forest industries and an [article](#) in Daily Commercial News delved further into our report.

Permit platform

RESCON explained in a [column](#) in Senso magazine why we have joined a coalition dedicated to a province-wide AI-enabled permitting platform.



THE GAMECHANGERS OF HISTORY COME IN MANY FORMS

Michael Giles
VP, Government Relations

It does not take a lot of inquisitiveness to identify one of the most negative transformational figures.

Take a quick glance across the arc of history and the most challenging times are characterized by the emergence of transformative and game changing leaders. Some are seized with greatness, others with disastrous trajectories that set the world on fire.

These transformational historical figures emerge when the status quo can no longer be sustained either for positive reasons where change is required, or misguided populism that becomes the conduit of a simmering lack of faith in institutions and society in general.

In the case of the United States, the current mistrust in the foundational institutions of society can be traced to some degree back to the early 1970s.

Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, many Americans then and now refused to believe official conclusions of a one-gunman theory. They believe that a conspiracy was more realistic.

Then in 1974, the resignation of President Richard Nixon after years of exposure of conspiracies, illegality, malfeasance and cover-ups set the stage for an even more rapid descent in terms of societal trust.

It does not take a lot of inquisitiveness to identify one of the most negative transformational figures currently crowding out the space; that is, of course, U.S. President Donald Trump.

He channeled the mistrust, anger and disconnectedness of millions of Americans into a return to office in 2024. He then proceeded to instigate misguided, nationally self-defeating policies that are pounding the very voters who chose to elect him.

Very soon, the mid-term elections in the U.S. will likely see an outcome reflecting the largest example of “buyer’s remorse” in history as the Democrats take over the House of Representatives and potentially the U.S. Senate, leading to what will surely be two years of political insanity until the 2030 U.S. presidential election replaces Trump.

In what would constitute the most compelling example of two alternate universes, we here in Canada have a Prime Minister, Mark Carney, who is

the complete opposite of Trump. But he is no less transformational.

Ironically, Trump has done for Canada what we ourselves seemed incapable of accomplishing as we lingered in inertia and malaise for many years, particularly under former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and that is to propel us to make changes once thought unimaginable and unachievable.

With a vast reservoir of political capital and public trust in his abilities, Carney has, in a very short window, upended the approvals process for major projects, commenced a generational transformation of our immigration system, sought and is securing trade relationships with partners around the world, securing and encouraging on a seemingly growing basis each day investment in Canada as well as significantly changing how government operates.

With the enemy at the gate, so to speak, Carney has strikingly pulled most premiers into alignment with transformational federal policies. He has literally reignited the energy sector as he propels Canada towards “energy superpower” status.

He has reached out to the “old world,” as Winston Churchill used to call it, by embracing engagement and collaboration with the European Union.

He has catalyzed stalled economic engagement with Middle Eastern financial powerhouses and smoothed over years of cantankerous relationship dynamics with China, all the while reaching out to other Asian nations who could be trading partners with Canada.

To the mystification of Trump in Washington, rather than falling down or simply conceding following the failure of trade discussions with his administration, Carney has set about embracing the world beyond the U.S. at literal warp speed.

Few could argue successfully that the Canada-U.S. economy is mutually dependent, even if Trump doesn’t understand this, but events as enacted by Carney and Canada as a country are fast outpacing Trump’s vitriol.

In the end, time presents the leader that is needed and Carney, who like all mortals is not perfect, is clearly the right man in the right place for Canada.

CANADA NEEDS A PATH TO ADOPTION

Builders, developers and technology companies are innovating, but the success of that innovation depends on public-sector partners being able to move with them.

*By Arash Shahi
CEO of LandLogic*

Canada's housing and development sector has no shortage of ideas, emerging technologies or innovation programs. What it does have is a problem turning innovation into adoption.

Prime Minister Mark Carney recently said that Canada's future prosperity will be built by those who "innovate, adopt new technologies,

and move quickly to seize new opportunities." He also said that Digital Transformation Canada would help the federal government "lead by example" by supporting the growth of Canadian technology firms.

Digital Transformation Canada was launched with an explicit mandate to "use the Government of Canada's purchasing power more strategically to help Canadian digital and AI companies test, scale and commercialize new technologies."

Those are the right commitments. But announcements are not enough. The real question is: Can Canadian companies actually move from being supported in principle to being adopted in practice? Too often, the system becomes weakest at precisely this point: when a technology is ready to move into a real operating environment and demonstrate what it can do.

That gap matters enormously to housing and construction.

Housing delivery only works when the private and public sectors move together. Industry is already under intense pressure to adopt technology faster, reduce costs and build more housing.

Builders, developers and technology companies are innovating, but the success of that innovation depends on public-sector partners being able to move with them - to test new tools, procure solutions and carry adoption forward. When that relationship stalls, innovation stalls with it, and the productivity gains the industry is being asked to deliver become much harder to achieve.

This bottleneck raises the question: So how are startups supposed to reach the public sector?

Startups and scale-ups are being asked to innovate quickly, raise capital, build products and compete internationally. Most simply do not have the resources to also maintain sophisticated government relations networks across multiple departments and agencies, build the necessary relationships and keep those conversations moving toward adoption.

This issue has become quite close to home for me because my team at LandLogic is experiencing that gap firsthand.

LandLogic was accepted into Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Innovative Solutions Canada Testing Stream, allowing an eligible federal organization to test the technology in an operational environment at no cost. And the platform is ready, with



applications across planning, zoning, property and geospatial information, including site selection, development feasibility, portfolio analysis and regulatory workflows.

The challenge has been getting a federal partner all the way to yes. For a small startup, that means building and maintaining relationships across large organizations, reaching the right people, following up consistently and keeping the conversation moving even when the people on the other side are managing competing priorities.

That takes time and capacity that startups often do not have.

As a result, the process can stall even when the technology is ready and the program is in place, leaving the company without the testing environment, and government without the chance to evaluate a funded Canadian solution that could improve its own work.

Government needs to be more than a funder of innovation.

It also needs to be an enabler of adoption. That means creating practical pathways for emerging technologies to enter government

environments, be tested against real needs, demonstrate value and move toward broader use.

The opportunities for housing are significant.

Governments could use parcel-level land, zoning and development data to model the likely impact of housing policies before they are rolled out, set more realistic targets and measure whether programs are actually producing the intended results.

Federal and provincial agencies could compare conditions across municipalities, identify where barriers are limiting housing supply, and evaluate whether funding or policy changes are translating into real development potential on the ground.

Housing policy could be shaped by a clearer view of what can actually be built, where, and under what conditions.

Municipalities have very different levels of capacity.

Some can invest heavily in pilots and digital transformation, while others have limited resources to evaluate emerging technologies. A stronger model would allow governments, municipalities, industry, researchers and technology companies to test, learn and adopt together instead of repeatedly solving the same problems in isolation.

Canada should absolutely continue investing in innovation. But the real measure of those investments is not how many technologies are funded on paper. It is how many successfully move from development to testing, from testing to validation, and from validation to adoption.

The federal government has already set the goals, and industry is ready and waiting to meet them. What we need now are more accessible paths to help promising technologies move into real government environments. For housing and construction, the stakes are too high for adoption to remain the missing link.

A Q & A WITH THE HOUSING MINISTER

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack has stepped up with significant action to address Ontario's housing crisis, including temporarily reducing the HST on new homes as well as launching a review of the Ontario Building Code. Following is a Q & A with the minister:

How and why did you get into politics and make the leap to elected office?

I have always had a hand in politics. In my youth I supported Premier William Davis and local PC candidates. I even had the opportunity to meet President Ronald Reagan when I was in high school, which left a lasting impression.

For much of my career, though, I pursued a very different passion. My early days were spent with my grandfather on his Ottawa Valley farms, instilling a passion for agriculture that led to a fulfilling,

40+ year career at Masterfeeds Inc., a national agribusiness. When that chapter came to a close, I was called to public service — becoming MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London in 2022.

What do you see as your main accomplishments as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing?

Since 2025, we have accomplished a lot of incredible work, but I am particularly excited by the Canada-Ontario Partnership to Build, which made both the Development Charge Reduction Program and HST rebate possible. Development charges have long been an important tool used by municipalities to fund infrastructure, but their use has grown far beyond what is sustainable for homebuyers — adding well over six figures to the price of a new home in some municipalities.

This has, undeniably, contributed to our housing affordability crisis.

To reduce barriers to affordability, we have rolled out a number of major legislative changes, including deferring development charges until occupancy and clarifying eligible costs.

The Development Charge Reduction Program, in particular, builds on this work, providing municipalities that commit to reducing development charges with funding for housing and community-enabling infrastructure. It helps to ensure that these costs are not placed squarely on the shoulders of new home buyers.

The elimination of the HST on all eligible new homes has also been a tremendous win for the sector, and one that was advocated for fiercely by industry advocates like Richard Lyall and his team.

In fact, since its introduction we have seen single-family home sales triple in the GTA year-over-year in the months of July and August, according to reports by BILD-GTA.





How do you see the HST rebate spurring consumers back into the market and in so doing reviving new home construction?

I think it's fair to say that for a long time, many prospective buyers were waiting on the sidelines. The introduction of the HST rebate fundamentally changed this dynamic, making housing more affordable and creating a sense of urgency, which has helped kickstart the market. Now, homebuyers are saving up to \$130,000 on the cost of a new home. When combined with the savings enabled through development charge reductions, this impact becomes even greater.

In Vaughan, for example, these initiatives could save families up to \$230,000 off the cost of a new home. That matters for the family looking for their forever home, the young professional trying to get their foot in the door, and the senior looking to downsize.

Anecdotally, in my riding of Elgin-

Middlesex-London, builders have told me that a significant amount of stock is moving. An objective look at the numbers supports this: a recent report by BILD and the OHBA found that housing sales were up 130% year over year in the second quarter of 2026.

You have initiated comprehensive reviews of the Ontario Building Code. Why was this done, what do you hope to achieve and what is the timeline?

When I first stepped into this role, I was greeted by the sight of two massive binders. You guessed it: the Ontario Building Code. Having grown significantly since its release in 1975, the Code now holds over 7,800 provisions. It has become difficult and time-consuming to navigate, with requirements that do not always speak to the lived reality of building in Ontario.

Our review will help streamline this massive tome, making it easier

for municipalities and builders to use, without compromising on Ontario's high health and safety standards. After all, at the end of the day, it is intended to be a tool – not a barrier to building – and our expert panel will proceed with that lens in mind.

While our panel is actively reviewing potential improvements, the ERO posting for broad public consultation has now closed. Our team is now working through that feedback and holding a series of stakeholder roundtables designed to capture a wide range of perspectives. Your very own Paul De Berardis sits on the panel, and I know he will do a fantastic job of ensuring these objectives are met.

What is the government doing to reduce housing red tape. How does the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act further that cause?

Continued on next page

From previous page

From Official Plans to the Ontario Building Code, we've been working around the clock to reduce red tape throughout the entire homebuilding process.

While changes to official plans and the Building Code began in Bills 17 and 60, Bill 98 – the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act – explored something new: site plan control.

This refers to features of a property outside of the building itself, such as parking and stormwater management.

Once again, it is a tool that, in many cases, has been mired in delays and inefficiencies.

According to the Ontario Association of Architects, the broken site plan approval process costs approximately \$3.5 billion annually in lost opportunities and inefficiencies, with timelines that run far beyond the 60-day standard.

Through Bill 98 we launched consultation to identify ways to streamline this process, and we look forward to ensuring that site plan control does not act as a barrier to building.

Is the government planning more housing legislation next fall when the Legislature returns?

We're always looking at ways to improve our existing systems and cut red tape, and that includes considering new bills or amendments where they'll help get shovels in the ground faster across Ontario.

What are your priorities now that you've introduced and are implementing some of the most important housing legislation in generations?

With our pieces of legislation passed, our focus now shifts in great part to implementation.

This fall we intend to launch consultations on a wide variety of measures which may include minor variances as-of-right and minimum lot sizes, to name just two.



Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack with his wife Denise.

I am particularly looking forward to advancing Public Water Utilities, beginning with the first one in Peel.

Across the province, there is an insatiable need for more infrastructure – a need that has driven up development charges – and I believe that this is the direction we need to go in, now and in the future.

Outside of politics, how do you spend your free time, if you have any?

As both a Minister and MPP, free time is a rarity ... but when I have the opportunity I enjoy spending time with family, particularly my two new granddaughters, and playing golf.

Our family also proudly owns a beef cow-calf farming operation in the Ottawa Valley.

What is your main message to the residential construction industry and Ontario's builders?

My focus – our focus – is to create the conditions needed to get more homes built faster so we can advance affordability and keep workers on the job.

It takes too long and costs too much to get housing built in Ontario. We have and will continue to change this.

I value the candid advice we get from Richard Lyall and the RESCON team. They have been great partners in helping our government drive better public policy with bold, creative and results-driven legislation. This is only the beginning, and we will continue to drive meaningful change where it is needed most.



I value the candid advice we get from Richard Lyall and the RESCON team. They have been great partners in helping our government drive better public policy with bold, creative and results-driven legislation.

MEDIA REPORT

PRINT & ONLINE

Canadian Biomass

RESCON is urging federal and provincial governments to permanently eliminate the HST on new home purchases, reduce development charges, and expedite planning approvals, Canadian Biomass reports in an [article](#).

The Canadian Press

RESCON is calling on the federal and provincial governments, along with municipalities, to fully eliminate the HST from new home purchases, slash DCs and come up with a more sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding and implement initiatives such as digitization to modernize and accelerate the planning approvals and review processes, The Canadian Press reports in an [article](#).

MSN.com

To build the houses of the future - and the critical infrastructure like roads and water systems to support them - we must have a competent and ample supply of skilled construction workers, Lyall writes in an [article](#) on MSN.com.

Canadian Contractor

Housing Summit 6.0 Housing Reform: Is it working? will bring together industry leaders, policymakers, market analysts, real estate professionals, planners and pollsters to identify gaps in policy and chart a path toward

hitting housing supply targets and improving affordability, Canadian Contractor [reports](#).

CFI

RESCON's housing summit on Sept. 23 will bring together industry leaders, policymakers, market analysts, real estate professionals, planners and pollsters to identify gaps in policy and chart a path toward hitting housing supply targets and improving affordability, Canadian Forest Industries [reports](#).

Senso Magazine

RESCON's federal pre-budget submission notes that in light of the significant headwinds faced by the new homebuilding sector, governments must take action to permanently cut the HST and reduce development charges on new home purchases, Senso Magazine [reports](#).

DCN

The absence of housing in measures announced during the recent Canada Investment Summit was noted by RESCON, Daily Commercial News notes in an [article](#).

DCN

A new report prepared by RESCON shows the constant back-and-forth tariffs between Canada and the U.S. is raising the cost of new homes, Daily Commercial News reports in an [article](#).

REMI Network

A wave of cost escalation could be in the works for new housing as a result of the tariff dispute between Canada and the United States, a new report by RESCON reveals, the REMI Network [reports](#) in a recent article.

Canadian Contractor

There was some hope expressed by some of the speakers at RESCON's recent Housing Summit 6.0, Canadian Contractor [reports](#) in an article.

OCN

Policy reforms lack the speed and scale needed to close the massive gap in housing supply, according to an [article](#) in Ontario Construction News about RESCON's Housing Summit 6.0.

RENX Homes

Housing reform is moving the needle, but Canada still isn't even close to building enough homes, according to an [article](#) on Housing Summit 6.0 hosted recently by RESCON.

Storeys

While government measures are beginning to show results and housing affordability has improved in key markets, the progress made so far is not enough, Storeys reports in an [article](#) on RESCON's recent housing summit.

PRESS RELEASE

RESCON commends Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack as he continues to work to reduce municipal development charges and to make housing more affordable for Ontarians, RESCON president Richard Lyall said in a [press release](#).

REPORTS

Budget submission

RESCON has made a pre-budget submission to the federal government that includes 10 recommendations to address the housing crisis. [Click here](#) for the submission.

Housing Summit 6.0

RESCON held its sixth annual housing summit on Sept. 23. We compiled a report on messaging by some of the speakers at the event. [Click here](#) to read the digital version and [click here](#) to read a PDF.

MORE WORK REMAINS

By Grant Cameron
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 29, 2026

While governments have taken significant steps to boost housing supply, much more work remains to be done, says Richard Lyall, president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON).

Speaking at the opening of RESCON's recent Housing Summit 6.0, Lyall praised federal and provincial governments for introducing measures aimed at increasing housing construction. However, he also warned the progress could be derailed if there is not a sustainable workforce.

"We commend all levels of government for their efforts," Lyall told attendees.

"But the success of these initiatives is directly tied to skilled labour supply and our ability to continue delivering housing."

The annual summit brought together industry leaders, policy-makers, economists and housing experts to discuss the current state of the housing market, emerging trends and potential solutions to ongoing affordability challenges.

Lyall singled out Ontario Housing

welcome he argued successful measures should be made permanent and predictable.

He reaffirmed RESCON's commitment to supporting housing policy development through research and advocacy while continuing to work with governments and industry partners to identify solutions that will increase housing supply.

Flack told the summit the government has made significant progress on the housing file. One of the government's primary objectives, he noted, has been reducing the time required to obtain approvals and permits.

He pointed to a series of legislative changes contained in Bills 17, 60 and 98, which were designed to streamline planning and development processes.

The government's focus, he added, has been to lower the time it takes to get building permits approved while removing other obstacles that slow construction.

In addition to reducing delays, the province has worked to address construction costs, which Flack described as a major contributor to housing affordability challenges.

A key initiative was the province's partnership with the federal government to eliminate the HST on





Ontario's housing sector continues to face significant structural challenges

Minister Rob Flack for his leadership on housing issues, describing him as one of the most consequential housing ministers the province has seen in decades.

However, he noted, despite recent government action, Ontario's housing sector continues to face significant structural challenges. Affordability remains out of reach for many households, housing supply continues to lag demand in many markets, and uncertainty in the residential construction sector has forced some workers to leave the homebuilding industry altogether.

He said the market slowdown has reduced some immediate labour pressures, but a much larger workforce challenge could emerge once market conditions improve and housing production accelerates.

"As a generation of construction workers approaches retirement, and others have left the residential construction sector, we face potential labour shortages down the road," he said. "We must determine now how we are going to meet that need."

The warning reflects a growing concern across the construction industry that demographic shifts and workforce attrition could limit the industry's ability to ramp up housing production in the years ahead. Without sufficient skilled trades, housing targets could become increasingly difficult to achieve.

Lyall said governments have introduced several measures to support residential construction and improve affordability for consumers but noted many programs and incentives remain temporary. While

qualifying new homes, he said.

While some critics questioned whether the rebate would have a meaningful impact, Flack said early results suggest the policy is working.

According to data he shared, new single-family home sales in the GTA tripled in July and August compared with the same period a year earlier. Across Ontario, new home sales increased by approximately 130 per cent year-over-year during the second quarter of 2026.

"We got off to a bit of a slow start because some federal regulations needed to be put in place, but they're working, and we look forward for continued acceleration here in the fall," said Flack.

Another major initiative highlighted by Flack was the Development Charge Reduction Program, a cornerstone of the province's Canada-Ontario housing partnership.

The \$8.8-billion program is intended to encourage municipalities to lower development charges, which Flack described as a significant hidden cost embedded in the price of new homes.

He pledged to continue working with municipal leaders, housing stakeholders and industry associations to identify additional ways to reduce costs and speed up construction.

The goal, he said, remains straightforward: create the conditions that allow builders to build more homes.

"Our focus," he said, "is continuing to keep costs down and lower the time it takes to get housing built in this province."

BUYERS REMAIN ON THE

*By Grant Cameron
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 30, 2026*

Improved affordability, shrinking housing supply and growing public anxiety over home ownership are creating a complicated outlook for Canada's housing market, according to speakers at a recent housing summit hosted by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario.

Industry experts told the audience while some key indicators are moving in the right direction, economic uncertainty continues to weigh heavily on consumers and developers alike, preventing a stronger rebound in housing activity.

Jason Mercer, chief market analyst at the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board, said the Greater Toronto Area resale market now exhibits many of the characteristics typically associated with a recovery, as lower borrowing costs and softer home prices have significantly improved affordability compared with the peak of the Bank of Canada's interest-rate tightening cycle.

"Affordability is no longer the major obstacle it was during the peak of the interest-rate tightening cycle," he said.

According to Mercer, the income required to purchase a \$1-million home in the GTA has fallen dramatically and mortgage qualification costs have also eased substantially.

Yet despite those improvements, home sales remain well below levels that demographic trends would normally support.

Mercer said buyers are still exercising caution because confidence, rather than affordability, has become the market's biggest obstacle.

Economic uncertainty, trade tensions with the United States and concerns about inflation and future interest-rate movements are causing many prospective purchasers to delay major financial decisions.

"If affordability were the only issue impacting demand, we would already be seeing a much larger portion of that pent-up demand come back into the marketplace," Mercer said.

Many households that would typically be purchasing homes are remaining on the sidelines while waiting for greater certainty about the broader economy, he noted.

However, he said, inventory levels have begun to tighten after rising sharply over the past two years.

Looking ahead, he believes the ingredients for a stronger recovery are in place.

"If we start to see more clarity, if we start to see consumer confidence pick up, the preconditions are there to see homeownership transactions pick up and potentially pick up in a hurry as we move through 2027," Mercer said. "But you know, the jury's still out in terms of if that clarity will appear."

While the resale market searches for momentum, Daniel Foch of Valery Real Estate Inc. said the pre-construction sector is beginning to show signs of renewed life, even as the future housing supply pipeline continues to shrink.

Foch described a Canadian housing market increasingly divided between highly affordable regions that continue to attract growth



SIDELINES

and major urban centres such as Toronto and Vancouver, where homeownership remains out of reach for many younger households.

“The markets that continue to grow and continue to attract new residents are the ones that remain affordable,” he said.

Faced with high ownership costs, a growing number of Canadians are choosing to rent not because they have no other option, but because they see stronger financial opportunities elsewhere.

“There are many people who are renters not by necessity but by choice,” Foch said.

“They’re making a conscious economic decision not to own a home because the economics are far better for renting.”

Many high-income renters are using the gap between rental costs and ownership expenses to invest in businesses, equities and other assets instead of stretching themselves to purchase a home, he said.

At the same time, Foch warned affordability challenges and elevated financing costs are discouraging

new housing construction, particularly in the rental sector. Housing starts have slowed and fewer projects are moving forward as developers confront more challenging economics.

That slowdown could become a significant problem in future years.

“As prices have corrected, we’ve stopped seeing supply getting added to the market in a way that would trend us toward excess supply,” Foch said.

The decline in new project launches means supply is tightening just as long-term housing demand is expected to return.]

Foch argued today’s development slowdown could eventually recreate the same housing shortages policymakers have spent years trying to address.

While Mercer and Foch focused on market fundamentals, David Coletto, founder, chair and CEO of Abacus Data, provided data to show how Canadians are feeling about housing and their future.

His research suggests housing remains one of the country’s most pressing concerns, particularly

among younger generations who increasingly worry they may never achieve the security and stability their parents enjoyed.

“We’ve moved from asking, ‘Will there be enough?’ to asking, ‘Will we be OK?’” Coletto told the audience.

Roughly three in 10 Canadians still identify housing affordability and accessibility as one of the country’s most important issues.

According to Coletto, this uncertainty has contributed to what he described as a growing “precarity mindset,” where Canadians increasingly view instability as a permanent feature of modern life rather than a temporary challenge.

Research presented at the summit showed most Canadians believe the country’s housing system is failing to meet expectations, while dissatisfaction with government performance on housing remains widespread.

Coletto said many Canadians are delaying major life decisions, including moving, changing careers, starting families and retirement planning because of financial uncertainty.

IS HOUSING REFORM WORKING?

While governments have begun taking steps to address challenges, professor says they are insufficient to close a massive housing supply gap.

By Grant Cameron
for Daily Commercial News
Oct. 1, 2026

Canada has made meaningful progress on housing reform, but the country remains far from solving its housing affordability and supply crisis, according to Ian Lee, associate professor at the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University.

"Is housing reform working in Canada?" he asked during a presentation at Housing Summit 6.0 hosted by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON). "I'm going to give a qualified yes and a qualified no. It is sort of working."

While acknowledging governments have begun taking steps to address housing challenges, Lee stressed the reforms implemented so far are insufficient to close a massive and growing housing supply gap.

"Good stuff has happened," he said. "We're going in the right direction, but we've got to do more."

Lee pointed to data showing Canada continues to build homes at a rate that falls well short of demand. Housing starts are hovering around a quarter of a million units annually, but CMHC estimates the country needs between 400,000 and 470,000 new homes each year to address affordability challenges and eliminate the accumulated supply shortfall.

"The numbers clearly show that we are not building enough," Lee said. "It is crystal clear that we are still falling behind."

The problem is compounded by years of rapid population growth that significantly outpaced new housing construction. Although the federal government has reduced immigration targets and moved to stabilize population growth, Lee noted the imbalance created over the past decade continues to have lasting consequences.



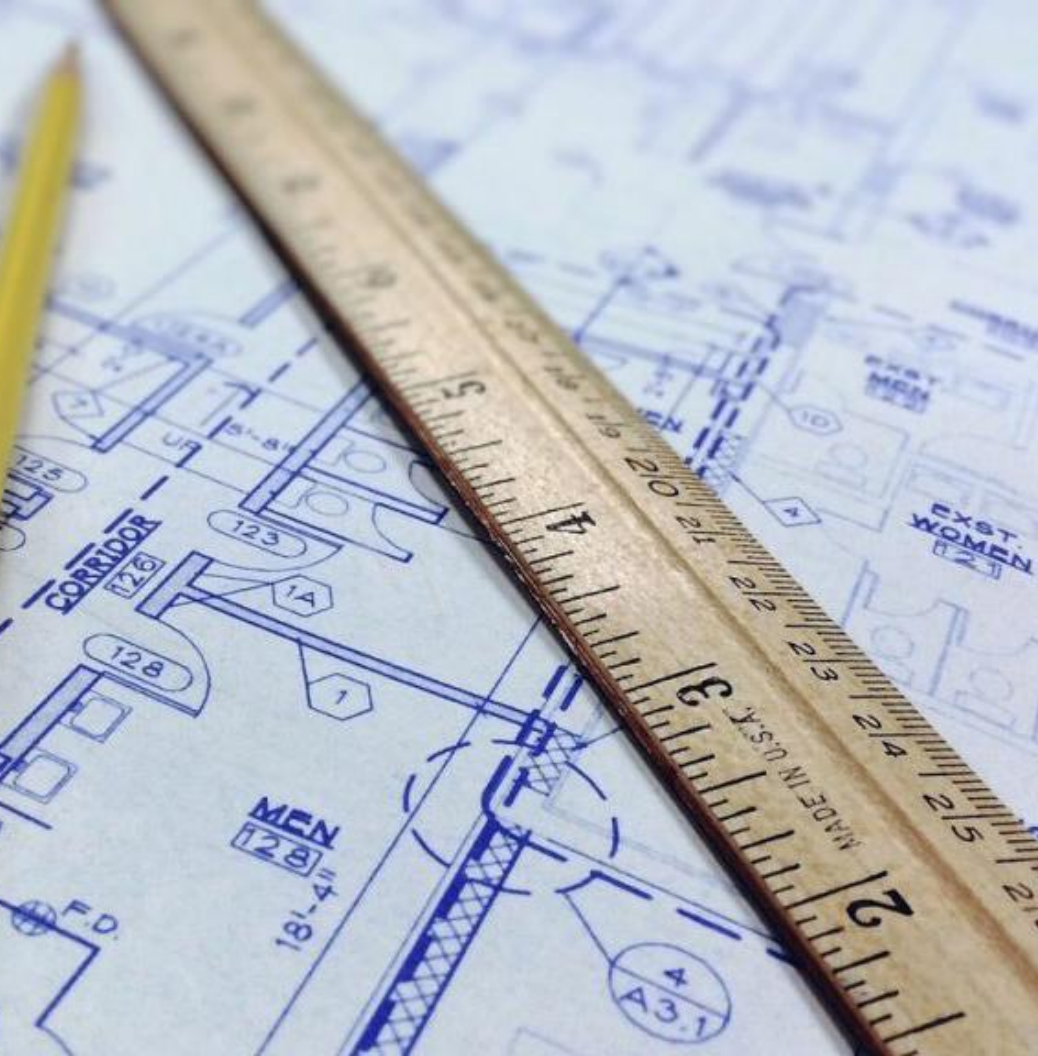
According to Lee, even with recent adjustments to immigration policy, housing shortages are unlikely to disappear anytime soon. The cumulative supply gap has become so large that it will take years of sustained construction activity to bring the market back into balance.

He highlighted the enormous economic value generated by residential construction, arguing policymakers should recognize the sector's importance to Canada's economy.

Residential construction activity in 2025 supported more than 1.2 million jobs, generated \$90.1 billion in wages and produced more than \$213 billion in economic investment.

New home construction alone accounted for approximately 259,000 housing starts, supporting more than 515,000 jobs, generating nearly \$39 billion in wages and creating close to \$92 billion in investment activity.

"Your industry is hugely



“ Even with recent adjustments to immigration policy, housing shortages are unlikely to disappear anytime soon.

important,” Lee told the audience. “1.2 million jobs, \$90 billion in wages and more than \$200 billion in investment.”

Given its economic impact, Lee argued governments should focus on removing barriers that prevent the industry from delivering the housing supply Canadians need.

While many governments have launched housing initiatives and incentive programs in recent years, Lee said public spending alone will not solve Canada’s housing shortage.

“Government programs are not going to solve housing shortages,”

he said.

He pointed to programs designed to encourage rental construction and support housing development, noting while some initiatives have helped increase rental activity, they are only making a modest contribution when viewed against the scale of the national housing deficit.

Referring to major federal housing initiatives, Lee described the impact as “barely moving the needle” relative to the country’s overall needs.

“The solution is the private sector,” he said.

A central theme of Lee’s presentation was his criticism of municipal development charges (DCs), which he described as one of the most significant contributors to housing affordability challenges in Canada.

“Our goal in our country should be zero development fees,” he said. “They are destructive and harmful and hurt our young people and new Canadians.”

While municipalities argue the charges are necessary to pay for roads, sewers, parks and other infrastructure, Lee said the costs are ultimately passed directly to homebuyers.

“They’re being passed on to individual homeowners and driving up the cost, making housing ever less affordable for young people,” he said.

According to a CMHC study, DCs account for between eight and 16 per cent of the cost of a new condominium in Ontario. For single-detached homes in Toronto, DCs can represent roughly nine per cent of the purchase price.

Lee noted DCs on a new home can exceed \$100,000 in many GTA municipalities and are among the highest in the country.

Lee pointed to research suggesting eliminating DCs in Toronto could result in an additional 10,000 to 16,250 housing units being built annually.

“Get rid of the development fees and we can substantially reduce the price of new housing,” he said.

Beyond DCs, Lee said municipalities must do more to reduce lengthy approval timelines and bureaucratic delays that increase project costs and limit housing production.

“Large cities are not doing enough,” he said. “They’ve got to reduce red-tape delays.”

He noted jurisdictions with shorter approval times and lower regulatory burdens generally experience lower housing costs and stronger housing supply growth.

FOCUS ON POLICY

SCALE OF CHALLENGE HAS BEEN GREATER THAN RESPONSE

*By Grant Cameron
for Canadian Forest Industries
Sept. 25, 2026*

Ontario's housing market is showing signs that policy changes introduced to boost construction are having an impact, but the supply gap remains stubborn, according to speakers at Housing Summit 6.0, hosted by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON).

The gains remain insufficient to close the enormous housing supply gap, they said, with economic uncertainty, affordability pressures, planning delays and a looming skilled-labour shortage threatening progress.

The annual summit brought together industry leaders, policymakers, economists and housing experts to examine where the market is headed and what will be required to build enough homes for a growing population.

Ian Lee, associate professor at the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University, summed up the state of reform with a qualified assessment.

"Is housing reform working in Canada?" Lee asked. "I'm going to give a qualified yes and a qualified no. It is sort of working."

Lee said governments have taken meaningful steps in the right direction, but the scale of the challenge remains much greater than the response so far.

"Good stuff has happened," he said. "We're going in

the right direction, but we've got to do more."

Canada continues to produce roughly 250,000 housing starts a year, while the CMHC estimates that between 400,000 and 470,000 new homes annually will be needed to improve affordability and eliminate the accumulated supply shortfall.

"The numbers clearly show that we are not building enough," Lee said. "It is crystal clear that we are still falling behind."

The GTA resale market, meanwhile, is showing some of the ingredients normally associated with a recovery, according to Jason Mercer, chief market analyst at the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board.

Affordability has improved substantially from the height of the interest-rate tightening cycle. The annual income needed to purchase a \$1-million GTA home has fallen from well above \$200,000 to approximately \$140,000 to \$150,000.

Yet sales have not responded as strongly as expected. Annual GTA resale transactions remain in the 60,000-to-70,000 range, despite demographic trends that would normally support stronger activity.

Uncertainty over the economy, inflation and borrowing costs continues to make potential buyers cautious, even as pent-up demand accumulates.

Daniel Foch of Valery Real Estate Inc. highlighted another important trend: Canada's housing markets are increasingly diverging.

Markets outside Ontario and British Columbia, he



HOUSING SUMMIT 6.0

said, are continuing to attract residents because they offer comparatively attainable home ownership. Cities such as Calgary and Halifax have benefited from migration by younger Canadians seeking opportunities that have become increasingly difficult to find in the GTA and Vancouver.

"The markets that continue to grow and continue to attract new residents are the ones that remain affordable," Foch said.

In many Canadian cities, home prices remain around four to five times household income. Toronto and Vancouver, by comparison, remain near double-digit price-to-income ratios, leaving some first-time buyers dependent on family assistance to qualify for a mortgage or assemble a down payment.

The Ontario government says it is working to address some of the structural barriers that have slowed construction.

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack pointed to legislative changes aimed at reducing approval times and making it easier for builders to get projects moving. The measures include deferring development charges until occupancy, modifying site-plan requirements, updating building-code provisions and making broader planning changes.

Flack also highlighted Ontario's partnership with the federal government to temporarily eliminate the HST on qualifying new homes, a measure long advocated by builders and housing organizations.

Early sales data, he said, indicate the policy is having an effect. New single-family home sales in the GTA tripled in July and August compared with the same period a year earlier, while Ontario new-home sales increased approximately 130 per cent year over year in the second quarter of 2026.

But public confidence remains weak. David Coletto, founder, chair and CEO of Abacus Data, told the summit that 79 per cent of Canadians believe the housing system is not working as it should, while nearly three-quarters believe not enough homes of all types are being built to meet demand.

Only about one in five Canadians surveyed said they were satisfied with the performance of federal, provincial or municipal governments on housing. In Ontario, just 16 per cent said the provincial government was moving in the right direction on housing affordability and availability.

RESCON president Richard Lyall praised governments for measures intended to increase construction and improve affordability but warned that the housing industry - in addition to trying to get back on track - must prepare now for potential future labour shortages.

"We commend all levels of government for their efforts," Lyall said.

"But the success of these initiatives is directly tied to skilled labour supply and our ability to continue delivering housing."

THE BURDEN OF UNAFFORDABILITY

By Grant Cameron
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 28, 2026

For years, the housing debate has centred on familiar statistics: home prices, rents, housing starts and interest rates.

But according to Paul Smetanin, president and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA), those numbers tell only part of the story.

The more important question, he notes, is how housing unaffordability is affecting the health, stability and overall well-being of Canadians.

At a recent housing summit sponsored by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario, Smetanin presented research that measures the human cost of housing unaffordability, revealing impacts that extend far beyond household finances.

His findings suggest housing affordability is no longer simply an economic issue. It has become a public health issue with consequences severe enough to be compared to chronic disease.

The study focused on the

Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and examined how housing circumstances influence people's satisfaction with life. Rather than relying solely on economic indicators, the research measured well-being at the individual level, drawing on survey data collected over more than a decade from hundreds of thousands of respondents.

"We're asking a different question," Smetanin explained. "How is housing unaffordability affecting the health, stability and well-being of society?"

The answer is alarming.

Nearly one in three households in the Greater Toronto Area lives in unaffordable housing, meaning they spend more than 30 per cent of their before-tax household income on housing costs. Many are faring even worse. A significant portion of households spend more than half of their income simply keeping a roof over their heads.

According to Smetanin, those financial pressures create a cascade of consequences that negatively affect daily life.

As housing costs rise, basic necessities become harder to afford.

Families have less money available for food, transportation, education, recreation and health care-related expenses. Housing options shrink, forcing many residents to accept unsuitable living arrangements, longer commutes or overcrowded conditions.

Unexpected expenses also become more difficult to manage. At the same time, stress levels increase as households struggle to balance competing financial demands.

Smetanin said the pressures contribute to reduced social participation, fewer opportunities and declining overall well-being.

"Housing burden leads to constrained choices and financial insecurity," he said.

"Those conditions ultimately produce stress, instability and lower quality of life."

People living in affordable housing reported significantly higher levels of well-being than those facing financial strain.

Average well-being among households living affordably registered approximately 7.5 on a 10-point life satisfaction scale. That figure fell by roughly seven per cent for people spending between 30





CANCEA estimates the social value cost of housing unaffordability in Ontario reaches \$26.2 billion annually.

and 50 per cent of their income on housing. For households spending more than 50 per cent, well-being dropped even further, by about nine per cent.

While those percentages may appear small at first glance, Smetanin emphasized they represent substantial declines in people's overall experience of life. The reductions reflect lasting impacts on health, security, optimism and personal stability.

To better understand the significance of those losses, researchers converted changes in well-being into economic terms. By estimating the amount of income required to restore affected households to the same level of life satisfaction enjoyed by those living affordably, they were able to calculate the social value cost of housing unaffordability.

The result was staggering.

CANCEA estimates the social value cost of housing unaffordability

in Ontario reaches \$26.2 billion annually.

That figure represents lost well-being across society and reflects the cumulative effects of chronic financial strain, diminished quality of life and reduced opportunities experienced by households struggling to afford housing.

"It is close to 15 per cent of Ontario government revenues," Smetanin noted.

Perhaps the most striking finding from the research came when CANCEA compared the burden of housing unaffordability with the burden of major diseases.

Using methodologies commonly employed in epidemiology and health research, analysts assessed the total impact of housing unaffordability across the population and compared it with the burden associated with illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

When measured across society, the social burden created by housing

unaffordability was found to be approximately one-and-a-half times greater than the social burden of cancer. It was also equivalent to roughly 70 per cent of the burden associated with heart disease and 75 per cent of that associated with diabetes.

Smetanin noted housing unaffordability touches millions of residents, creating widespread negative impacts that accumulate across the population.

The findings led to the conclusion housing unaffordability can increasingly be viewed as a disease-like condition because it chronically undermines well-being and contributes to persistent stress, insecurity and reduced quality of life.

The implications extend far beyond housing policy.

If rising housing costs continue to erode people's well-being, he noted governments may face increasing pressure on health care systems, social services and economic productivity.

Meanwhile, communities may become less resilient and social cohesion may continue to weaken as people feel trapped by circumstances beyond their control.

HOUSING HURDLES

Taxes are one of the major drivers of housing costs

This is the first in a series of three articles that offer suggestions on how to fix Ontario's housing supply crisis. The article explains how a permanent reduction in HST on new homes would spur new construction.

By RESCON
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 14, 2026

Ontario's new homebuilding sector continues to contend with a challenging market environment unlike anything experienced in generations. Builders are navigating rising material and labour costs, cumbersome approvals processes, restrictive regulations and uncertain market conditions.

But there is one obstacle that has become impossible to ignore: government-imposed taxes, fees and levies that have turned the dream of home ownership into an increasingly unattainable goal for many Canadians.

As RESCON has long argued, taxes are one of the major drivers of housing costs. Research

commissioned by RESCON and other industry organizations shows that government taxes, fees and charges now account for approximately 36 per cent of the cost of a new home.

That is an astonishing figure.

Imagine purchasing a home and discovering that more than one-third of the price is made up of government-imposed costs. No business sector could absorb burdens of that magnitude without consequences. Those consequences are now playing out across Ontario in the form of declining housing affordability, delayed projects, falling housing starts and thousands of young people questioning whether homeownership will ever be within their reach.

The numbers are troubling.

Twenty-five years ago, a typical Ontario home cost roughly three to four times a household's annual income. Today, that ratio is closer to seven to nine times income in many markets.

At the same time, wages have

not kept pace. While house prices have more than doubled since 2005, inflation-adjusted wages have increased by only 16 per cent. In Ontario, the average income required to qualify for a mortgage is about \$151,600, while average income sits closer to \$60,800.

The result is predictable.

Many millennials and members of Generation Z no longer believe homeownership is realistic. Others are leaving Ontario, or even Canada, in search of more affordable jurisdictions where the dream of owning a home remains achievable.

This should alarm policymakers. Housing is not a luxury good. It is a fundamental economic necessity.

That is why the recent decision by the federal and Ontario governments to introduce temporary HST relief on new homes was both welcome and encouraging. The rebates provide up to \$130,000 in savings on qualifying purchases and have delivered exactly what affordability measures are supposed

REBATE

to do: stimulate activity and improve confidence.

During the first three months of the rebate program, which began April 1, Ontario recorded 8,410 new home sales, a 130-per-cent increase compared with the same period a year earlier when only 3,645 homes were sold.

The lesson could not be clearer. When governments reduce taxes on housing, more homes are sold and more projects move forward.

But while industry is grateful for the temporary HST reduction, the rebate arrived with significant challenges.

A delay of several months in releasing program rules, regulations and application details consumed valuable time and limited its effectiveness. Builders, developers and purchasers were left waiting for clarity while housing activity remained stalled. The impact was particularly severe for high-rise condo projects, where lengthy development and construction

timelines make short-term policy measures largely ineffective.

RESCON believes there is a better path forward.

We are calling on all levels of government to implement permanent, predictable and functional long-term reforms. Chief among them is making HST relief permanent. Ideally, the tax should be withdrawn entirely from new home purchases. At a minimum, governments should fully restore and index the original GST rebate mechanism so that tax relief keeps pace with inflation and rising housing costs.

This is not simply a matter of helping builders. It is about helping families.

A recent Fraser Institute report highlights the growing burden taxes now place on Canadian households. Since 1961, the total tax bill of the average family has increased by 2,928 per cent, far outpacing increases in housing, food, clothing and overall inflation. In 2025, the

average Canadian family spent 41.9 per cent of its income on taxes, compared with 36 per cent on basic necessities such as shelter, food and clothing combined.

Families are now spending more on taxes than on life's essential needs. Governments need to reconsider whether housing is the appropriate place to impose additional tax burdens.

Ontario remains far behind the pace required to meet its goal of building 1.5 million homes by 2031. Housing starts are falling short, multi-unit construction has weakened significantly and young people increasingly see little hope of owning a home.

If governments are serious about affordability and supply, they must move beyond temporary fixes.

The evidence is already in front of us.

Tax relief works. HST relief has helped get the market moving again. The challenge now is to ensure that momentum is not squandered.

LIKE A RUNAWAY TRAIN

Development charges are one of the most significant and self-inflicted barriers to building new homes.

This is the second in a series of three articles that offer suggestions on how to fix Ontario's housing supply crisis. The article explains why Ontario must cut development charges and adopt a more equitable, predictable and sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding.

By RESCON
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 15, 2026

If Ontario is serious about tackling the housing crisis and increasing supply, it must confront one of the most significant and self-inflicted barriers to building new homes: development charges (DCs).

For years, DCs were viewed as a reasonable way for municipalities to fund growth-related infrastructure such as roads, sewers, water systems, and transit. But they've evolved into something far more damaging.

In many Ontario municipalities, particularly across the Greater Toronto Area, DCs have become a runaway train.

In many GTA municipalities, DCs now exceed \$100,000 on a single-family home. In some communities, when combined with other municipal levies and fees, the total burden can add as much as \$200,000 to the cost of a newly built home.

The notion that DCs are a cost borne by developers has always been misleading. These costs are not absorbed by builders. They are ultimately passed on to consumers in the form of higher home prices and rents.

In many instances, the charges are levied almost exclusively on people entering the housing market - the very people who can least afford them. At a time when housing affordability has become one of Ontario's most pressing challenges, this approach defies both logic and public policy objectives.

The numbers tell a remarkable

story.

In Toronto, DCs for a one-bedroom condominium were roughly \$7,000 in 2011. By 2025, they had climbed to more than \$50,000. Charges on larger condominiums rose from approximately \$10,000 to more than \$80,000. For a single-family or semi-detached home, DCs increased from under \$15,000 to nearly \$140,000 over the same period.

It is a striking example of how public policy can unintentionally drive affordability further out of reach.

The federal and Ontario governments deserve credit for recognizing the problem and taking meaningful action through the Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program (DCRP). The program provides municipalities with access to a portion of an \$8.8-billion funding pool if they reduce residential DCs by 30 to 50 per cent or more and maintain those reductions for at least three years.



“ The federal and Ontario governments deserve credit for recognizing the problem and taking meaningful action through the Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program.

In addition, the governments have announced a \$1-billion infrastructure fund for municipalities that do not levy DCs, helping them invest in housing-enabling infrastructure without relying on fees attached to new homes.

These initiatives represent a major policy shift and an acknowledgement that DCs have become a significant obstacle to housing affordability and housing

construction.

But they are ultimately interim solutions to a structural problem. Temporary incentives create temporary certainty. Permanent reforms create investment.

The three-year nature of the DCRP remains a concern. While it offers important relief, its limited duration creates uncertainty at precisely the moment when the industry needs predictability.

The challenges are particularly acute for high-rise condominium projects. These complex developments often require years to plan, finance, approve and build. Delays in implementing program rules and providing operational guidance have already shortened the application period. Many projects cannot realistically meet the timelines required to benefit from the program.

A three-year window is insufficient to generate the long-term investment certainty required to restart supply.

No one disputes that municipalities require funding to support new roads, transit systems, schools, water infrastructure and recreational facilities. But under today's model, it is new homebuyers who are footing the cost.

A young family purchasing its first home is effectively being asked to finance infrastructure that benefits an entire community for generations. That is neither fair nor sustainable.

Ontario needs a new model.

A more equitable, predictable and sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding should realign funding responsibility away from new homebuyers and toward the broader tax base at all levels of government.

Stable federal-provincial infrastructure transfers should permanently replace lost DC revenues. Municipalities should also be given access to alternative financing tools such as tax-free infrastructure bonds and other long-term funding mechanisms that support growth without inflating housing costs.

The public gets it.

A poll conducted by Abacus Data for the Ontario Real Estate Association found that most Ontarians understand the unfairness of forcing new homebuyers to shoulder the cost of growth-related infrastructure. Seventy-five per cent of those who were polled supported reducing DCs.

Ontario is in dire need of more homes. Getting DCs under control is one of the fastest and most effective ways to solve the problem.

PROCESSING & PERMITTING

Lengthy and unpredictable approval timelines have become one of the largest cost drivers in new housing projects.

This is the last in a series of three articles that offer suggestions on how to fix Ontario's housing supply crisis. The article explains how creating a province-wide, AI-enabled platform that modernizes development approvals and permitting processes can speed up construction of housing.

By RESCON
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 16, 2026

To fix our housing crisis, we must face up to an uncomfortable reality. Ontario remains stuck in the dark ages when it comes to development approvals.

In an era of artificial intelligence, digital banking and real-time data sharing, far too many municipalities still rely on fragmented, paper-heavy approval systems that would be more at home in the last century than in a modern economy.

Applications move from department to department, agency to agency and desk to desk. Builders are routinely required to navigate different processes, standards and requirements in every municipality. The result is a maze of bureaucracy that adds years to projects and drives up costs.

Governments at all levels have spent billions of dollars on housing programs and various modernization initiatives. Yet approval timelines remain stubbornly slow.

The problem is structural.

Ontario's approvals ecosystem is fragmented. Across 444 municipalities, there are hundreds of different permitting environments, each operating under its own procedures, technology systems and approval requirements. Even when municipalities invest in digital tools, those systems often exist in isolation from one another.

For builders, the consequences are enormous.

Lengthy and unpredictable

approval timelines have become one of the largest cost drivers in new housing projects. In many parts of the Greater Toronto Area, approvals can stretch well beyond 18 months before a shovel ever hits the ground. During that time, developers continue paying interest on land, financing costs accumulate, consultants remain engaged, and project economics become increasingly uncertain.

The irony is that Ontario should be striving to become one of the fastest and most efficient jurisdictions in the developed world for housing approvals. Instead, too often we remain among the slowest.

For more than a decade, RESCON has been raising concerns about cumbersome planning systems, excessive regulatory complexity and costly delays. We have consistently argued that faster, more predictable approvals are essential to increasing housing supply, improving affordability and enhancing the competitiveness of





Ontario's residential construction sector.

To tackle the problem, we have joined forces with AECO Innovation Lab and One Ontario as part of a growing coalition dedicated to creating a province-wide, AI-enabled platform that modernizes development approvals and permitting processes.

The vision is both ambitious and practical.

Rather than forcing applicants to navigate multiple systems and agencies, the coalition envisions a single digital platform that would manage approvals from beginning to end. Artificial intelligence would help identify requirements, prepare applications, verify compliance and track progress in real time. Municipalities, applicants and review agencies would work from the same standardized information and shared datasets.

Instead of chasing paperwork and wondering where an application currently sits, builders would have

visibility into the entire process through a single dashboard.

Such a modernized platform would reduce duplication, eliminate repetitive administrative tasks, improve transparency and create consistency across municipalities. Standardized zoning, planning and property data would allow approvals to move more predictably through the system.

Artificial intelligence could help identify missing information, flag errors before submission and streamline routine reviews.

Governments have a critical role to play in improving the system.

Through its spending power, the federal government can support the implementation of advanced planning technologies, Building Information Modelling (BIM), standardized designs, digital permitting systems and expanded as-of-right building approvals. These tools already exist. The challenge is scaling them across jurisdictions and ensuring widespread adoption.

Ontario can contribute by establishing a fully digital, standardized approvals framework across all municipalities. Approval timelines should be measured against clear benchmarks, with a target of less than one year from application to decision. The government should back those targets with automatic fee rebates when statutory timelines are missed.

The cost of inaction continues to grow. Families are increasingly being priced out of Canada's largest urban centre.

A recent Globe and Mail commentary noted that Toronto is beginning to lose people because of housing affordability. The Toronto metropolitan area grew by 269,000 people between 2023 and 2024. Yet between 2024 and 2025, the region posted a population decline. In the City of Toronto, the number of children under five dropped by 12 per cent between 2011 and 2021.

If Ontario wants to build more homes, it must fundamentally change how approvals are processed. The solutions are increasingly clear. The private sector is ready. The technology is available. We cannot build 21st-century communities using a 20th-century approvals system.

FIXES FOR THE CRISIS

Sept. 9, 2026, Vaughan, Ont. – In light of the significant headwinds faced by the new home building sector, governments must take action to permanently cut the HST and reduce development charges (DCs) on new home purchases as well as speed up the approvals process, the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) says in a federal [pre-budget submission](#).

Specifically, RESCON is calling on the federal and provincial governments, along with municipalities, to fully eliminate the HST from new home purchases, slash DCs and come up with a more sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding and implement initiatives such as digitization to modernize and accelerate the planning approvals and review processes.

“The residential construction sector continues to contend with a challenging market, due to stifling taxation and government-imposed costs, rising rates for material and labour, as well as cumbersome planning approvals processes and overly restrictive regulatory policies

that hamper the industry,” says RESCON president Richard Lyall. “This has led to a dramatic downturn in housing construction and job losses, which harms the industry and the economy.

“The cost of building must be lowered, and the process must be speeded up. Builders need to be able to build homes that people can afford. Steps must be taken to get the industry back on track. We need a rebalancing of the housing supply system and to restore the cost of home to four times a household’s income.”

RESCON is grateful and encouraged by the recent public policy decisions undertaken by the federal and provincial governments regarding the interim HST rebates and time-limited actions on development charges and other measures but wants both initiatives made permanent.

Presently, the annual income required to secure a mortgage is beyond the means of most people. The home-price-to-income ratio and the timeline required to save for a downpayment have increased dramatically. Many young people no

longer believe home ownership is realistic.

RESCON’s pre-budget submission makes 10 recommendations. Among them, RESCON suggests that:

The HST be permanently dropped from new home purchases or, at the very least, the original indexing mechanism included in the Goods and Services Tax be implemented fully.





A more equitable, predictable and sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding be implemented that would realign funding sources from new home buyers to the broader tax base at all levels of government.

The federal government, in collaboration with provincial authorities, fund initiatives that will advance mechanisms to encourage, support, finance and implement

advanced modern planning approvals processes and reviews, including digitization, building information modelling, standard designs and more expansive as-of-right building modalities.

Housing will take on critical importance with the federal government having embarked on a nation-building agenda that includes infrastructure related to energy, defence and more.

Affordable housing will be needed to accommodate the skilled labour needed to build such projects.

“Sadly, many young people have given up on the Canadian dream of ever owning a home,” added Lyall. “Interim measures just don’t cut it. We must take steps to restore the balance by initiating predictable and stable programs and funding measures to boost the supply of housing.”

The metropolitan Toronto area is beginning to lose young families and entrepreneurs because of housing affordability. Between 2024 and 2025, the region posted a population decline. In the City of Toronto, meanwhile, the number of children under five dropped by 12 per cent between 2011 and 2021. This trend must be reversed.

[Click here](#) for the pre-budget submission.

RESCON is the province’s leading association of residential builders committed to providing leadership and fostering innovation in the industry.

CALLING FOR CUTS

Lower development charges needed to boost construction of new housing

*By Robin MacLennan
Ontario Construction News
Sept. 11, 2026*

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) is calling on the federal and provincial governments, along with municipalities, to permanently eliminate the HST from new home purchases, slash development charges and come up with a more sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding and implement initiatives such as digitization to modernize and accelerate the planning approvals and review processes.

Pointing to significant headwinds faced by the new home building sector, the agency set out its demands in a federal pre-budget submission.

"The residential construction sector continues to contend with a challenging market, due to stifling

taxation and government-imposed costs, rising rates for material and labour, as well as cumbersome planning approvals processes and overly restrictive regulatory policies that hamper the industry," RESCON president Richard Lyall said in a statement. "This has led to a dramatic downturn in housing construction and job losses, which harms the industry and the economy.

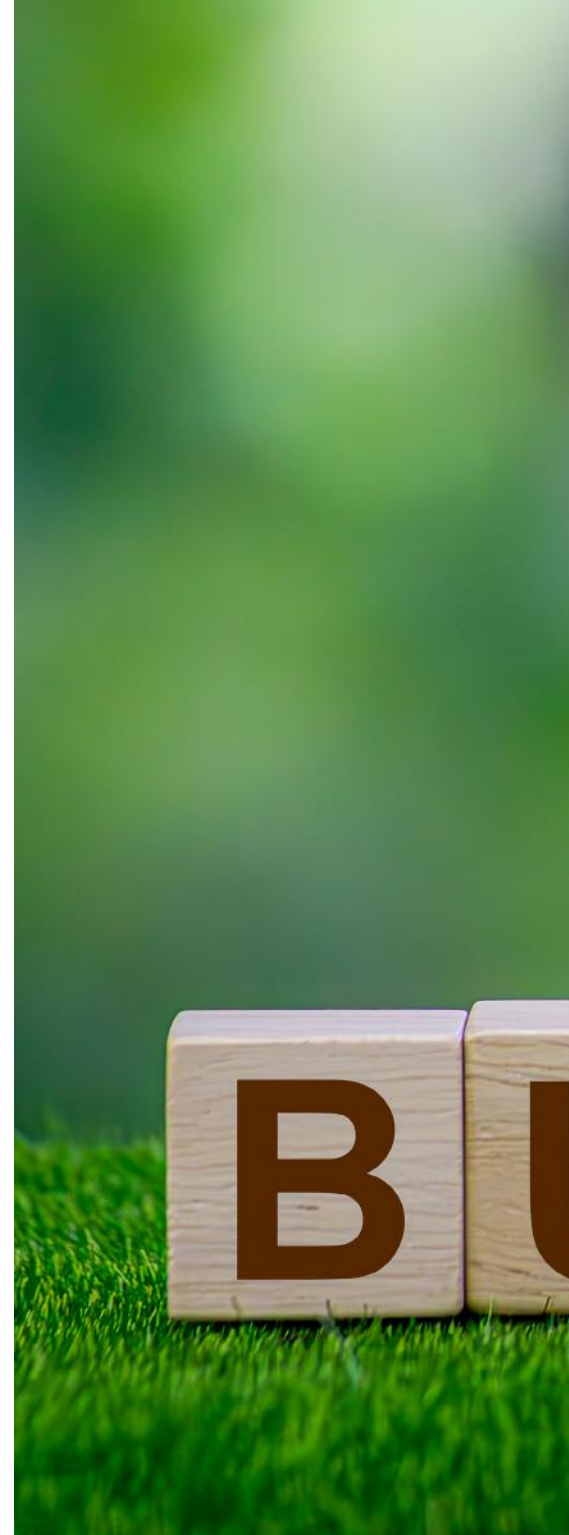
While encouraged by recent public policy decisions announced by the federal and provincial governments regarding the interim HST rebates and time-limited actions on development charges and other measures, Lyall says they don't go far enough.

"The cost of building must be lowered, and the process must be speeded up. Builders need to be able to build homes that people can afford. Steps must be taken to get the industry back on track. We need

a rebalancing of the housing supply system and to restore the cost of home to four times a household's income."

RESCON's pre-budget submission includes 10 recommendations, including:

- Permanently drop the HST from new home purchases or, at the very least, the original indexing mechanism included in the Goods and Services Tax be implemented fully.





Sadly, many young people have given up on the Canadian dream of ever owning a home.

Interim measures just don't cut it. We must take steps to restore the balance by initiating predictable and stable programs and funding measures to boost the supply of housing.



- Implement a more equitable, predictable and sustainable approach to municipal infrastructure funding to realign funding sources from new home buyers to the broader tax base at all levels of government.
- Fund initiatives that will encourage, support, finance and implement advanced modern planning approvals processes and reviews,

including digitization, building information modelling, standard designs and more expansive as-of-right building modalities.

“Sadly, many young people have given up on the Canadian dream of ever owning a home,” Lyall said. “Interim measures just don’t cut it. We must take steps to restore the balance by initiating predictable and stable programs and funding measures to boost the supply of

housing.”

The metropolitan Toronto area is beginning to lose young families and entrepreneurs because of housing affordability, according to RESCON. Between 2024 and 2025, the region posted a population decline. In the City of Toronto, meanwhile, the number of children under five dropped by 12 per cent between 2011 and 2021.

[Click here](#) for the pre-budget submission.

PROBLEM IS POLICY-MADE

The cost-to-income ratio for a new home now exceeds 9:1, compared to the historical norm of 3:1 and 4:1 that prevailed for most of the post-war period.

By RESCON
for Real Estate Magazine
Sept. 11, 2026

Despite recent efforts by the provincial and federal governments, Ontario is in the deepest housing affordability crisis in its history.

The cost-to-income ratio for a new home now exceeds 9:1, compared to the historical norm of 3:1 and 4:1 that prevailed for most of the post-war period.

However, there is some good news. The crisis is not a private-market failure. It is largely policy-constructed, which means it can also be corrected.

Government-imposed taxes, fees, levies and development charges now account for approximately 36 per cent of the final purchase price of a new home in Ontario. Meantime, regulatory complexity routinely extends approval times and ultimately adds to the cost of housing.

The government-imposed fees, along with higher interest rates and

elevated construction costs have made many housing projects too pricey to build at current selling prices.

Ontario housing starts in 2026 are running slightly ahead of 2025 levels, but the figure is expected to decline through the rest of the year because of weak demand, high construction costs and elevated inventories.

In Toronto, housing starts were down 10 per cent year-over-year in July.

To reach Ontario's target of building 1.5 million new homes by 2031, the province needs to build roughly 1.24 million more homes. Completions and starts since 2022 total around 260,000 units, leaving an average pace of over 218,000 starts per year for the remaining timeline.

That's a tall order.

To their credit, governments have taken some positive steps.

Introduction of a temporary HST rebate on new homes has helped to get the market moving again.

There were 8,410 new homes

sold in Ontario in the first three months of the rebate, which began April 1 - a 130-per cent increase over the same time last year, when there were 3,645 new homes sold.

The rebate applies to new homes purchased before March 31, 2027, and will save a buyer \$130,000 on a \$1-million home. The maximum discount stays at \$130,000 for homes priced up to \$1.5 million and is gradually phased out above that to homes priced at \$1.85 million.

The province and feds also announced the Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program (DCRP), an \$8.8-billion fund for municipalities to temporarily reduce development charges.

Under the initiative, municipalities can receive government funding if they reduce residential DCs by between 30 and 50 per cent or more and maintain those reductions for at least three years.

Development charges have become one of the most damaging barriers to housing affordability in Ontario. In the GTA, for example, they exceed \$100,000 per single-



Cost-to-income-ratio



Our housing affordability challenge is real, deep and consequential. It has been shaped by decades of fiscal, zoning and approvals decisions.

family home. In some communities, the combined impact of DCs and other municipal levies add as much as \$200,000 to the cost of a new home. Those costs are ultimately paid for by the homebuyers.

The federal and Ontario governments have also announced a new \$1-billion funding stream for municipalities that do not levy development charges. The program will provide \$500 million from each of the governments to help eligible municipalities build and renew housing-enabling infrastructure.

However, if policymakers are serious about restoring affordability and increasing housing supply, the temporary HST rebate and development charge reductions need to be made permanent.

Solving big problems requires a new way of thinking.

For governments, that means abandoning the outdated practice of treating new homes as a revenue source and recognizing them for what they are: an essential part of Ontario's economic and social future.

To remedy the situation, we must first make HST relief permanent to give builders, buyers and lenders the multi-year certainty that project financing decisions require. This is consistent with a recommendation made by the Senate Committee on Banking Commerce and the Economy.

Second, the DCRP needs to be made permanent beyond the three-year window. The lost development charge revenue should be replaced with a stable federal-provincial infrastructure transfer. Municipal financing alternatives such as tax-

free bonds for housing-enabling infrastructure should also be introduced.

Third, we need to modernize the Ontario Building code and speed up the approvals system by moving to a digital planning and building permit approval process across all 444 municipalities and standardizing as-of-right pre-approved building designs.

Fourth, four-storey buildings should be as-of-right province-wide. We must also triple skilled-trades immigration streams, expand apprenticeship funding and journeyman ratios, and support more off-site, modular and factory-built construction.

Finally, we should also remove foreign buyer bans for newly constructed housing, especially for high-rise projects.

Our housing affordability challenge is real, deep and consequential. It has been shaped by decades of fiscal, zoning and approvals decisions.

The time has come to reshape the narrative.

TIME TO CHANGE THE TRAJECTORY

THREE FIXES FOR THE HOUSING CRISIS . . .

*By RESCON
for RENX Homes
Sept. 22, 2026*

The housing crisis is one of our greatest economic and social challenges. Recent government measures have provided some much-needed help, but modest progress is not enough.

The reality is that housing construction continues to fall far short of what is needed to restore affordability and meet future demand.

If Ontario is serious about solving its housing shortage, the next phase of reform must focus on making it easier, faster and less expensive to build the homes Ontarians need.

Instead of temporary initiatives we need lasting structural reforms.

To their credit, both the federal and Ontario governments have put housing affordability on the front burner. Recent measures to provide HST relief on new homes and the Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program (CDCRP) are very significant steps in the right direction.

Ontario has also begun work on modernizing its building code.

But we are nowhere near reaching the housing targets. Ontario's goal is to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031, or roughly 175,000 annually.

We are falling dramatically short. Ontario recorded about 63,400 housing starts in 2024, and the province

needs to accelerate construction enormously if it is to close the gap.

Housing is fundamental to our economic prosperity and well-being, a core need alongside food and security. Yet it is still treated by many as an economic "want."

It isn't.

We must stop taxing housing and creating barriers to supply as if it were a luxury. The cost of production is too high - mainly due to the cumulative tax burden and inordinate amount of time it takes to get shovels in the ground.

So, what needs to happen?

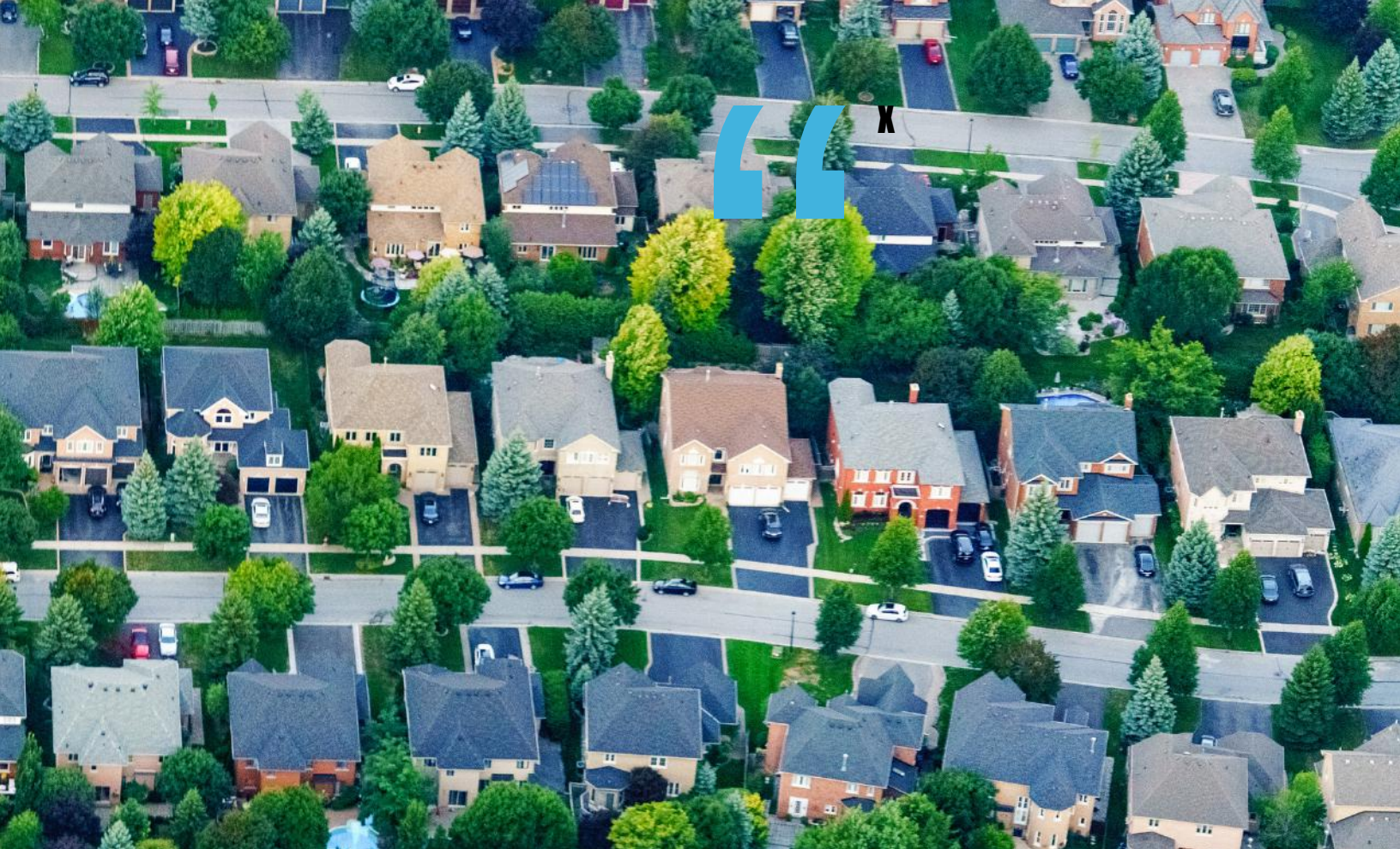
First, governments must reduce the taxes, fees and levies imposed on new housing.

Government charges now account for roughly 36 per cent of the cost of a new Ontario home. In the GTA, municipal charges can add well over \$100,000 to the cost of a new home.

Development charges are another major contributor. In Toronto, the charge on a single-detached home increased by roughly 1,015 per cent between 2009 and 2024, while consumer prices rose by about 41 per cent.

Those costs do not disappear. They are ultimately reflected in the price paid by homebuyers.

While recent HST relief measures were welcomed, they are temporary and do not provide the certainty required to finance and build housing. The one-year HST rebate for eligible new homes should be made permanent. Builders, lenders and buyers need certainty



measured in years, not months.

Permanent tax relief would reduce the cost of new housing, improve project economics and restore confidence to a market that has suffered a severe decline in new-home sales.

Second, development-charge reductions must become permanent.

The CDCRP, which provides funding to municipalities so they can reduce residential development charges, is an important innovation. But it's a three-year program and not a structural solution.

Development charges have become one of the largest obstacles to affordability in Ontario. Municipalities understandably need money for roads, sewers, transit and other infrastructure. But loading the full cost of growth onto each new home is an inefficient way to finance infrastructure.

The current reductions should be made permanent, with lost municipal revenues replaced through stable federal-provincial infrastructure transfers. Tax-free municipal bonds or other financing tools could also help fund housing-enabling infrastructure without burying the cost in the price of every new home.

If we want more homes, we cannot make each new home the financing vehicle for the infrastructure needed to support an entire community.

Third, we must modernize the building code and transform the approvals system.

Ontario has begun this work, and that deserves recognition. But reform needs to go much further.

We should allow practical, proven building solutions, including single-staircase designs for mid-rise apartment buildings. Arbitrary restrictions on floor-plate sizes and angular planes should also be reconsidered where they do not serve a clear safety or planning purpose.

At the same time, Ontario needs a fully digital, standardized approvals system across all 444 municipalities.

Too many builders still navigate fragmented, paper-heavy processes that can take years.

GTA approval timelines can stretch well beyond 18 months, creating enormous carrying costs before a shovel ever hits the ground.

The solution is straightforward: digitize planning and building permits, establish standardized data requirements, introduce AI-enabled processing where appropriate and create as-of-right, pre-approved designs that municipalities can approve quickly.

An approval target of less than 12 months needs to be established, backed by deemed-approval provisions and automatic fee rebates when governments fail to meet statutory timelines.

Every month of unnecessary delay adds cost. Those costs eventually land on buyers and renters.

Temporary programs must be made permanent. We cannot build affordable housing through an approval system designed for another era.

We have been heading down the wrong path for many years. It is time to change the trajectory.

PROGRESS MADE

but it's not enough . . .

Province must lock in six structural reforms if Ontario is to close a housing cost gap that has grown to its widest point in a generation.

*By Liezel Once
Canadian Mortgage Professional
Sept. 8, 2026*

Ontario has made real progress on housing affordability, but not enough. That is the verdict from Richard Lyall, president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), who says governments must lock in six structural reforms if the province is to close a housing cost gap that has grown to its widest point in a generation.

Homes across Ontario's major markets - Toronto, Hamilton,

Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, and Barrie - now cost more than seven times annual pre-tax household income, according to a 2025 report commissioned by the Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA).

Twenty-five years ago, the same ratio was three to four times income.

The ownership pipeline is weakening precisely when it needs to strengthen.

A recent analysis by Desjardins economist Kari Norman found rental construction reached roughly 130,000 starts over the past year, while condominium starts fell below 50,000 units, a level not recorded since the global financial crisis.



Elevated construction costs, financing pressures, and government fees have made many condo projects financially unviable at current selling prices. Taxes, fees, and government-imposed charges now represent approximately 36% of the cost of a new home in Ontario, according to RESCON research.

Development charges (DCs) in Toronto alone have increased by more than 5,000% over the past 25 years, adding tens of thousands - and in many cases well over \$100,000 - to the cost of a new build.

The pressure filters through to mortgage professionals working the new-home market.



“The problem with pre-con pricing is that even after this new rebate, it’s still priced way higher than resale,” Matthew O’Neil of Connolly Capital, Ontario, [told Canadian Mortgage Professional in March](#).

“Even with the 13% knocked off, it still doesn’t make sense from a pricing standpoint.”

[Lyall argues six reforms are essential](#). First, the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) rebate on new housing must be made permanent. Temporary programs, he argues, create uncertainty that stalls projects.

Second, DC reductions under the Canada-Ontario Development

Charge Reduction Program, currently cutting municipal charges by 30 to 50%, must be enshrined beyond their expiry date.

Third, Ontario should push ahead on building code reform, including allowing single staircases in mid-rise apartment buildings and relaxing outdated restrictions on floor plate sizes.

Fourth, governments must streamline and digitise approval timelines.

Fifth, federal policies, including the mortgage stress test and foreign buyer restrictions - designed for a pandemic-era market that no longer exists should be revisited.

Sixth, land transfer taxes including Toronto’s municipal levy should be removed. [Ontario’s housing supply targets that are increasingly out of reach](#) demand action on all six fronts at once.

“Housing should not be taxed like alcohol or tobacco as it is a basic economic necessity,” Lyall said in a February 2026 RESCON pre-budget submission.

Whether Ontario’s new housing affordability measures introduced this year signal a lasting shift or another round of temporary relief may determine the province’s affordability trajectory for years to come.

6 PRIORITIES T

*By RESCON
for Storeys
Sept. 9, 2026*

For years, the housing crisis was treated as an unfortunate byproduct of growth rather than the defining economic challenge of our time. That is finally changing.

Governments have begun to recognize that housing affordability is not merely a social issue but a fundamental economic one. Reforms have been introduced, taxes have been cut and regulatory barriers are under scrutiny. Progress is being made. But progress is not the same as success.

The reality is that Canada, and Ontario in particular, remains far from solving its housing crisis.

Housing is fundamental to our economic prosperity and well-being. It sits alongside food and security as a basic human need. Yet it is still often treated as an economic “want,” taxed and regulated as though shelter were a luxury rather than a necessity.

That mindset must change. If governments are serious about restoring affordability, they must stop treating housing like a revenue source and start treating it as critical infrastructure.

The federal and Ontario governments have introduced temporary measures that reduce housing taxes and lower development charges (DCs). However, excessive fees, slow approvals and outdated regulations

are still making homes more expensive than they need to be.

The crisis remains severe.

Latest figures show there is little chance of meeting housing supply targets. At the same time, demographic realities mean demand is not going away.

The affordability crisis cannot be ignored. Twenty-five years ago, a typical home cost roughly three to four times a household’s annual income. Today, in many Ontario markets, that figure is seven to nine times income.

A report commissioned by the Ontario Home Builders’ Association in 2025 found that homes in major markets such as Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and Barrie now cost more than seven times annual pre-tax income.

For many young families, homeownership has become little more than a distant dream. At the same time, the ownership housing pipeline is weakening.

A recent analysis by Desjardins economist Kari Norman found that while rental construction has surged, condominium starts have collapsed. Rental starts reached roughly 130,000 units over the past year, while condo starts fell below 50,000 for the first time since the global financial crisis.

Elevated construction costs, financing expenses and government fees have made many condominium projects too expensive to build at current selling prices. Canada is building more rental housing, which is



10 GUIDE REFORMS

desperately needed, but fewer homes that people can actually buy.

A growing body of research, including studies commissioned by RESCON, points to one of the key reasons. Taxes, fees and government-imposed charges have become a major component of housing cost. They now account for approximately 36 per cent of the cost of a new home.

DCs alone have exploded. In Toronto, they've increased by more than 5,000 per cent over the past quarter century, adding tens of thousands, and in some cases well over \$100,000, to the price of a newly built home.

So where does housing reform go from here? Six priorities should guide the next phase.

First, the new HST rebate on housing must be made permanent. Recent tax relief measures were welcome and will help improve project viability, but temporary programs create uncertainty. Builders and buyers need confidence that relief will remain in place for the long term.

Second, DC reductions should also become permanent. The Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program is helping municipalities cut charges by 30 to 50 per cent for a limited period.

That is a positive step, but affordability gains will disappear if the reductions eventually expire.

Third, Ontario should move aggressively on building code and regulatory reform. The government is

presenting reviewing the code. Long-delayed measures such as allowing single staircases in mid-rise apartment buildings and removing restrictions on floor plate sizes and angular planes would increase housing supply without compromising safety.

Fourth, governments should modernize and streamline approvals.

Builders continue to face lengthy and unpredictable approval timelines that add cost and uncertainty to projects. In a province facing a housing shortage, inefficient bureaucracy is a luxury we can no longer afford.

Fifth, Ottawa should reconsider policies designed for a very different market. Mortgage stress tests and foreign buyer restrictions were introduced to cool an overheated housing market during the pandemic. The environment today is dramatically different. At minimum, foreign buyer restrictions should be lifted for newly constructed housing.

Finally, land transfer taxes, particularly Toronto's municipal land transfer tax, should be eliminated. These taxes do nothing to increase housing supply and simply add another barrier to homeownership.

Governments deserve credit for the progress already made. But housing affordability will not be restored through half-measures or temporary programs.

The solutions are increasingly clear.

The challenge now is finding the political will to finish the job.

COST HIKES EXPECTED

Tariffs will escalate the cost of new home building in both Canada and U.S.

Sept. 16, 2026, Vaughan, Ont. – The escalating tit-for-tat tariffs between the United States and Canada is driving up the cost of building new homes on both sides of the border, according to a [report](#) prepared recently by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON).

Counter-tariffs imposed Sept. 8 will add \$9,000 to \$14,000 to the cost of a typical Ontario single-detached home and \$18,000 to \$28,000 to a mid-rise unit, according to the report. That's in addition to the \$15,000 to \$25,000 load that homes were already carrying from measures imposed in March 2025.

"This should not, in any way, be construed as a criticism of the

Canadian government's decision to respond to the U.S. with counter-tariffs," explains RESCON president Richard Lyall. "Faced with substantial U.S. tariffs, Canada had little choice but to act, as no sovereign nation can simply stand aside while key industries are targeted with punitive trade measures.

"However, this is not a good situation for the homebuilding industry. Tariffs inflict damage on both economies. They are not prosperity measures and will make building homes more expensive in both Canada and the U.S."

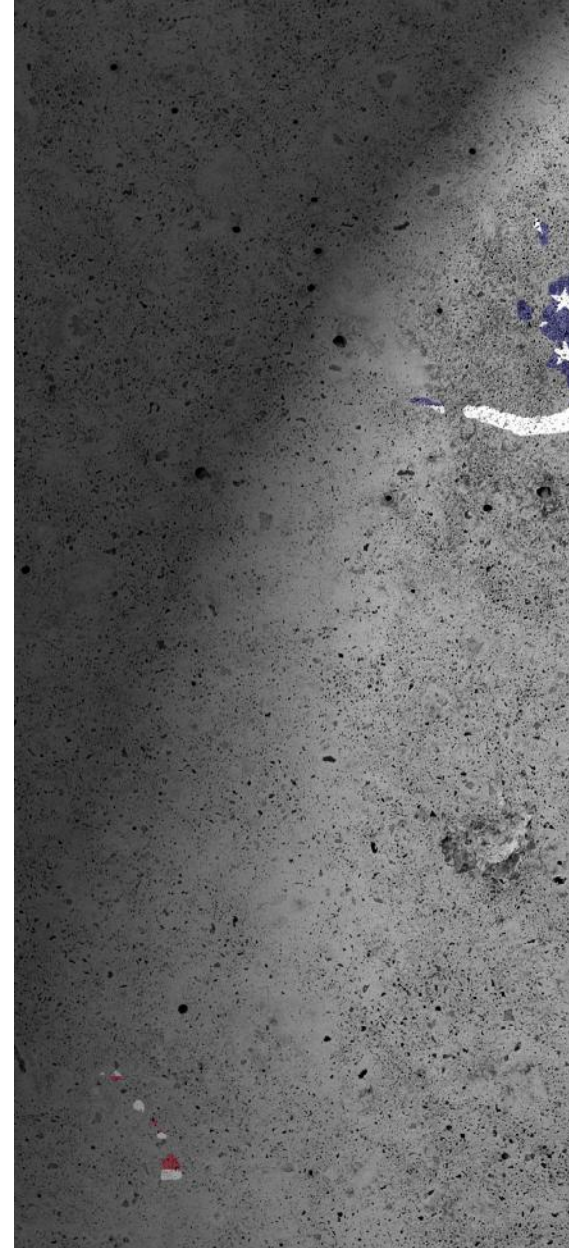
Indeed, the tariffs and counter-tariffs will drive up costs of everything from structural steel and rebar to wiring and vinyl products, radiators and cabinet hardware,

carpets and heat pumps.

Modeling by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Oxford Economics put the Ontario hit at \$2.68 billion of GDP and 14,000 construction jobs in 2026 - before the Sept. 8 counter-tariffs were implemented. A preliminary read suggests 2027 housing starts in Ontario could run 8,000 to 12,000 units below the current CMHC baseline if no residential remission is granted.

According to the RESCON report, the tariffs will worsen the housing affordability crisis in both countries, disrupt supply chains and slow housing construction.

Lyall warns that builders will not be able to absorb the increases without passing the costs on to homebuyers and renters. This will





further worsen affordability in both the U.S. and Canada at a time when housing costs are already stretching families in both nations to their limits.

The two countries are deeply integrated economically, particularly in the construction sector.

The U.S. relies heavily on Canadian lumber and engineered wood products. When one side imposes tariffs, costs rise throughout the entire supply chain, eventually finding their way into the price of housing.

"Both Canada and the U.S. find themselves struggling with severe housing affordability challenges, the last thing we need is an escalating tariff war that drives up the cost of building homes," says Lyall.

"Yet that is precisely where we

find ourselves today. The trade war between the two closest economic partners in the world will only make the housing crisis worse."

A [report](#) done by Oxford Economics for the Canadian American Business Council, meanwhile, underscores the importance of the longstanding commercial relationship between Canada and the U.S.

A complete breakdown of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) could result in cumulative economic losses reaching (U.S.) \$1.4 trillion in the U.S. and (Cdn.) \$523 billion in Canada. By contrast, an improved agreement could add (U.S.) \$432 billion to American GDP and (Cdn.) \$253 billion to Canadian GDP over the next decade while supporting tens of thousands of

additional jobs on both sides of the border.

"Imposing tariffs has created a problem where none existed," says Lyall.

"It's akin to shooting yourself in the foot. Tariffs are not the answer. And they only add to our housing supply and affordability crisis. You don't build more homes by imposing tariffs and hiking prices.

"The U.S. administration's goals are a misguided effort based on fundamentally flawed economics. The utterly false claim Canada has been ripping off the U.S. appears to be a smoke screen for darker intentions, including undermining what is recognized as the most successful trading relationship in modern history - which does not serve either nation. Truly bizarre."

TARIFFS

THERE WILL BE NO WINNERS

***Levies will make building more expensive
and costs will be passed on to buyers
and renters.***

By RESCON
for Canadian Forest Industries
Sept. 16, 2026

At a time when both Canada and the U.S. find themselves struggling with severe housing affordability challenges, the last thing we need is a trade war that drives up the cost of building homes.

Yet that is precisely where we find ourselves today. The escalating tariff battle between the two closest economic partners in the world will only make the housing crisis worse.

There will be no winners.

I should be clear that this is not a criticism of the Canadian government's decision to respond to U.S. tariffs.

Indeed, faced with substantial U.S. tariffs, Canada had little choice but to act. No sovereign nation can simply stand aside while key industries are targeted by punitive trade measures.

However, that does not make the situation desirable.

The reality is that tariffs and counter-tariffs are raising costs, disrupting supply chains, slowing housing construction, and making homeownership even less attainable for everyday families. The exchange will not lead to more homes being built. It will only make them more expensive.

A [report](#) done by RESCON estimates that the Sept. 8 measures add \$9,000 to \$14,000 to the cost of a typical

Ontario single-detached home and \$18,000 to \$20,000 to a mid-rise unit. That's in addition to the \$15,000 to \$25,000 load that Ontario homes were already carrying from measures imposed in March 2025.

The numbers are difficult to ignore. For Ontario builders, the practical effect of the tariffs is a substantial hike in the delivered cost of residential inputs sourced from the U.S.

Builders cannot absorb increases of that magnitude indefinitely. Costs will be passed on to homebuyers and renters, further worsening affordability at a time when housing costs are already stretching families to their limits.

This is not a uniquely Canadian problem.

American builders are experiencing the same challenges.

The U.S. relies heavily on Canadian lumber and engineered wood products, while Canadian builders depend on American steel, appliances, HVAC systems, electrical components, elevators, and manufactured goods.

The two countries are deeply integrated economically, particularly in the construction sector. When one side imposes tariffs, costs rise throughout the entire supply chain, eventually finding their way into the price of housing.

The outcome is predictable: fewer housing starts, slower construction activity, reduced supply, and higher prices.





**The outcome is predictable:
fewer housing starts, slower
construction activity, reduced
supply, and higher prices.**

In Ontario, early modelling already suggests significant economic damage from escalating trade barriers. Industry estimates point to potential declines in residential construction activity and the loss of thousands of construction-related jobs if tariff pressures remain in place.

At a moment when governments are desperately searching for ways to increase housing supply, the tariff war is moving in exactly the opposite direction.

Tariffs and counter-tariffs inflict damage on both economies. They are not prosperity measures.

A recent report prepared for the Canadian American Business Council by Oxford Economics underscores just how high the stakes have become.

The report concludes that the United States and Canada have built one of the most successful and integrated economic partnerships in the world, generating prosperity through interconnected supply chains and cross-border investment. Yet tariffs and counter-tariffs have disrupted these longstanding commercial relationships and introduced significant uncertainty into future investment decisions.

The economic consequences could be enormous.

A complete breakdown of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) could result in cumulative economic losses reaching (U.S.) \$1.4 trillion in the U.S. and (Cdn.) \$523 billion in Canada. The damage would come through reduced trade, lower investment, slower productivity growth, business uncertainty, and job losses.

By contrast, a successful renegotiation and strengthening of the USMCA would generate substantial gains for both countries.

An improved agreement could add (U.S.) \$432 billion to American GDP and (Cdn.) \$253 billion to Canadian GDP over the next decade while supporting tens of thousands of additional jobs on both sides of the border.

The findings reinforce a simple but important point: co-operation creates prosperity, while trade wars create costs.

The two countries would be better off negotiating a stronger and more modern USMCA.

Tariffs are not the answer.

The U.S. and Canada now stand at a precipice. Neither can solve its housing crisis by making construction materials more expensive. Neither can build more homes by disrupting supply chains.

The right path then is not higher tariffs. It is greater economic co-operation, a renewed USMCA, and free and fair trade that helps both nations build stronger economies and, ultimately, more affordable homes.

ANALYSIS:

RESCON BREAKS DOWN THE COST OF TARIFFS AND COUNTER-TARIFFS

*By Canadian Contractor
Sept. 10, 2026*

Canada's dollar-for-dollar counter-tariffs entered into force on Sept. 8, applying 15-, 25- or 50-percent surtaxes to 629 U.S.-origin tariff items covering \$27.6 billion of imports according to Finance Canada.

For Ontario builders, the practical effect is a decisive step-change in the delivered cost of residential inputs sourced from the United States - particularly primary steel, aluminum, plywood, gypsum board, appliances, HVAC and elevator/electrical components.

Critically, Finance Canada has confirmed the new tariffs are not intended to stack on the existing 25-percent counter-surtax on U.S.

steel and aluminum - that rate has instead been raised to match the U.S. Section 338 rate at 50 percent.

This removes the worst-case downside we were modelling before the surtax order was published, but it locks in a materially higher steady-state cost stack that Canadian producers will price against.

RESCON's updated central estimate: the Sept. 8 measures add \$9,000 to \$14,000 to the cost of a typical Ontario single-detached home and \$18,000 to \$28,000 to a mid-rise unit above pre-Sept. 8 exposure, phased over 2026 Q4 through 2027 Q2 as inventory turns and re-priced supply contracts flow through.

That is in addition to the \$15,000 to \$25,000 pre-Sept. 8 tariff load Ontario homes were already

carrying from the March 2025 measures.

Outlook going forward

Domestic pricing power for Canadian mills and mould With the 25 or 50 percent step-up on U.S.-origin primary steel and aluminum, Canadian mills gain effective 40 to 50 percent pricing headroom. Expect domestic list prices to rise eight to 12 percent over the next two quarters even where no U.S. product is being purchased - the classic import-competition price umbrella. Watch spot rebar and coil quotes: they typically lead by 30 to 45 days;

Supply reallocation of Canadian With U.S. tariffs stacking on Canadian softwood exports (about 24 percent combined burden), Canadian mills will divert supply domestically. Framing lumber prices





for Canadian jobs may soften five to 10 percent in Q4 2026 — a partial hedge against the appliance and finishing tariff hits. This is the closest thing to good news in the current environment;

Appliance and fixture re-pricing hits hardest in single-detached. Builder-programme kitchen packages (fridge, range, dishwasher and laundry) are heavily U.S.-sourced.

Members should expect 15 to 25 percent list-price increases from Whirlpool, GE, Frigidaire product lines by November 2026 as inventory turns.

KR/EU brand substitution takes four to six months and comes with delivery-time risk;

Cabinet and finishing squeeze
The July 31, 2025, 25 percent global

safeguard on U.S.-origin wood cabinets and vanities remains in force and is unchanged by the Sept. 8 measures. The Sept. 8 order does not appear to cover HS 9403.40 finished cabinets directly, but plywood at 50 percent flows through to cabinet manufacturing costs;

Housing starts pressure. AMO/Oxford Economics' pre-escalation modelling put the Ontario hit at close to \$2.6 billion off GDP and 14,000 construction jobs in 2026.

That estimate did not price in the Sept. 8 escalation. RESCON is refining a new provincial model; a preliminary read suggests full-year 2027 Ontario starts could run 8,000 to 12,000 units below the current CMHC baseline if no residential remission is granted;

Contract exposure - force

majeure and cost-escalation. New APS templates and trade contracts signed after Sept. 8 should include tariff-specific escalation clauses. Fixed-price contracts signed pre-Aug. 22 without such clauses carry the largest single-point exposure; members with active exposure should begin documenting audited HS-code cost increases now for change-order support;

No residential-inputs remission order yet. Finance Canada announced a \$7.5-billion support package covering regional loans, EI flexibility, BDC liquidity and a Large Enterprise Tariff Loan facility.

None of these are a targeted residential-construction remission order. RESCON's Sept. 8 one-page ask list remains the active advocacy position.

RESCON CALLING FOR SYSTEM REFORMS

Development charges are one of the most significant and self-inflicted barriers to building new homes.

*By Don Wall
for Daily Commercial News
Sept. 10, 2026*

As Ontario students return to classes for the fall semester, RESCON president Richard Lyall is calling for significant reforms to the recruitment of apprentices including more opportunities for streaming high school students into the trades and greater adoption of behavioural science to identify young people with an aptitude for the trades.

Lyall highlighted findings from a recent report commissioned by RESCON (the Residential Construction Council of Ontario) titled *Are We Ready to Build Canada? A Behavioural Analysis of Canada's Construction Talent Pipeline and Skills Training Policy*.

"The training challenges for the construction skilled trades are behavioural as well as economic," stated the report. "They are shaped by the uncertainty, time pressures, self-doubt and inertia that many people face, and by the system's

misaligned incentives and lack of support at key junctures in the skills journey."

Today's young people obtain information and learn differently than past generations, Lyall said in a recent interview, urging modernization of the apprenticeship system.

"We need to know who are these young people, what are their aptitudes? What are they suited for?" he said. "You might identify a kid as a completely visual learner, tactile, that you know would be ideal for the skill trades."

Recruitment should start in elementary school, said Lyall.

"That's the first area that really needs to be addressed, where they're getting a fulsome exposure to what potential careers are out there," he said.

"You need to have right throughout the school system is an organized introduction to skilled trades, where they actually get out and see workplaces that they might otherwise never see, and they get introduced to some of these things."

The authors argued using a behavioural lens would provide new insights into barriers to recruitment, challenges within training and issues affecting retention. They wrote policy and program design must better reflect the human factors influencing training outcomes in the years ahead.

"Canada needs to overhaul its system from one that merely provides opportunities to one that actively facilitates meaningful usage and completion. The missing ingredient is an understanding of why people behave as they do," stated the report.

Lyall offered five priority actions in his forward to the report:

- Better data on completions and systemic costs is needed to measure success.
- Measuring the right things such as completions rather than registrations is crucial.
- Focus on who the programs serve – trainees and employers – and take into account their attitudes and needs.





“ Canada needs to overhaul its system from one that merely provides opportunities to one that actively facilitates meaningful usage and completion. The missing ingredient is an understanding of why people behave as they do.

- The response to systemic deficiencies must be “urgent and nimble” to address the “low-hanging fruit” of simple changes that can be made quickly.
- Emphasize better design and implementation – program reforms are only as good as how well they reflect human behaviour.

The authors found apprenticeship completion rates in Canada have remained stuck at around 20 per cent of registrations over the last decade despite the demand for workers.

The stagnation results in billions of dollars in lost GDP, worker incomes and tax revenues.

The need for new approaches is

essential, Lyall said, given that the federal government has identified a suite of major projects that will be unrolled, all requiring a pipeline of skilled trades.

Meanwhile the demand for more homes remains a national imperative, he said.

“You can have all the finance people in the world,” he said. “You can have all the planners. You can have all the designers.

“But at the end of the day, where the rubber hits the road, the electricians, the crane operators, the drywallers, they’re the people that are making it happen on a site.”

The report suggests how behavioural psychology can identify the choices an apprentice is facing that might influence a decision to

stop their training before completing their program.

“This completion problem in Canada’s voluntary trades is, to a large degree, a deficiency in design that may be addressed by a combination of simple changes and more challenging initiatives,” states the report.

The authors highlight several success stories in Ontario involving school-age youths that can serve as templates for reforms.

Ontario’s Level Up! career fairs bring Grade 7 to 12 students into direct contact with tradespeople and employers through hands-on demonstrations in communities across the province, reaching over 35,000 students in 2024 alone.

Programs like STEP to Construction offer Grade 11 and 12 students a semester-long co-op placement on an actual jobsite, rotating through multiple trades.

The annual Skills Ontario Competition and Career Exploration Showcase also reaches thousands of potential trades workers.

TRAINING PROGRAMS FALL SHORT



Behavioural insights must be embedded into both classroom learning and on-the-job training to reduce friction points that cause apprentices to disengage.

*By RESCON
for The Toronto Sun
Sept. 11, 2026*

To build the houses of the future - and the critical infrastructure like roads and water systems to support them - we must have a competent and ample supply of skilled construction workers.

However, the latest evidence in a report commissioned by RESCON suggests we are falling well short of goals. It is something that deserves the attention of policymakers across the country.

The report, *Are We Ready to Build Canada? A Behavioural Analysis of Canada's Construction Talent Pipeline and Skills Training Policy*, reaches a troubling conclusion: despite decades of funding and strong demand for skilled labour, Canada's apprenticeship system is not producing enough certified workers.

More importantly, the report suggests that the problem is likely to worsen unless governments rethink how training programs are designed.

Let me explain.

For years, governments have responded to labour shortages with a familiar playbook.

More training programs. More subsidies. More grants. More awareness campaigns.

While those investments are important, the results have been disappointing. Apprenticeship completion rates in Canada have remained stuck at roughly 20 per cent of registrations since 2013, despite billions of dollars in public investment and persistent demand for workers.

That statistic should be setting off alarm bells because it shows that Canada does not simply have a recruitment problem; it also has a completion problem.

The difference matters. Registering an apprentice and producing a certified journeyman are not the same thing. The success

of housing strategies, infrastructure plans and economic growth initiatives depends not on how many people start training, but on how many actually finish.

Authors of the report, Nathaniel Barr, Michael McNamara and James K. Stewart, argue that the apprenticeship challenge is not primarily an economic issue. Rather, it is a behavioural one.

For the most part, training policy has largely assumed that people behave as rational actors. The theory is simple: if governments provide information, financial assistance and access to programs, participants will complete their training. But human beings don't always behave that way.

People procrastinate. They become overwhelmed by choices. They doubt themselves. They lose momentum. They struggle to balance work, family and education commitments. Small obstacles that may seem insignificant to policymakers can become major barriers for individuals trying to navigate the apprenticeship journey.

This is where behavioural science enters the discussion.

Behavioural science examines how cognitive biases, social pressures and structural barriers influence decision-making. Rather than assuming people always make rational choices, it focuses on how people actually behave in the real world.

The report argues that applying these insights to apprenticeship systems could significantly improve outcomes.

Think of a young person exploring a career in construction. In Ontario alone, prospective workers can face more than 100 skilled trades pathways, each with different requirements, credentials and career prospects. Navigating that complexity can make decision-making difficult.

There is also the challenge of persistence.

An apprentice may know that

completing training will lead to higher earnings in the future. Yet behavioural science shows that people often place greater weight on immediate costs than future rewards.

Long hours, classroom requirements, paperwork and financial pressures can all feel more significant in the moment than the benefits that may arrive years later. The result is predictable: some apprentices drop out before reaching certification.

Skills shortages are estimated to have reduced Canada's GDP by billions of dollars annually and have contributed to the country's productivity challenges.

Meanwhile, demand for skilled trades workers continues to grow. Projections show a significant gap between future labour demand and available skilled workers over the coming years.

Simply spending more money on existing programs will not be enough.

Behavioural insights must be embedded into both classroom learning and on-the-job training to reduce friction points that cause apprentices to disengage. And programs must be rigorously tested to determine which approaches work and which do not.

Countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland have built apprenticeship systems that incorporate stronger supports, clearer pathways and better integration between education and employment.

Canada and Ontario should look to those models to see if elements would work here.

The stakes are high.

If our apprenticeship pipeline continues to leak talent at current rates, labour shortages will intensify, project timelines will lengthen and our economic growth will suffer.

We must move the conversation beyond funding levels and focus on outcomes. We need a training system built for the people who use it.



Meaningful reforms have finally begun. Governments are listening. Solutions that once seemed politically impossible are now being discussed and implemented.

By RESCON
for Canadian Contractor
Sept. 23, 2026

For years, Ontario's housing crisis was treated as an unfortunate but inevitable reality. Governments talked about affordability, the industry warned about supply shortages, and home ownership drifted further out of reach for ordinary families. Meanwhile, taxes, fees and red tape continued to pile onto the cost of every new home.

That is finally beginning to change.

Governments at both Queen's Park and Parliament Hill deserve credit for acknowledging a simple truth that the housing industry has been saying for years: if you make housing more expensive to build, you make housing more expensive to buy.

The introduction of the temporary HST rebate on new homes and the Canada-Ontario Development Charge Reduction Program

(DCRP) represent some of the most significant housing reforms we have seen in years.

Both measures directly address government-imposed costs that have undermined affordability and weakened the economics of building new housing.

The early results are encouraging.

The HST rebate, which provides up to \$130,000 in relief on qualifying new homes, has helped stimulate market activity at a time when the industry desperately needed a boost. New home sales surged following its introduction, demonstrating that affordability measures can influence purchasing decisions and help restore confidence.

Likewise, the DCRP has begun addressing one of the biggest obstacles to housing construction. Development charges have increased dramatically over the years, adding tens of thousands of dollars to the price of a new home. The program offers municipalities the financial support needed to lower

those charges while still funding critical infrastructure.

These reforms matter. They are important. But they are also temporary.

That is the challenge.

If policymakers are serious about fixing affordability and increasing supply, these measures must become permanent.

Housing markets do not operate on short political cycles. Developers make investment decisions years in advance. Land is purchased some time before a shovel enters the ground. Financing is secured based on long-term assumptions.

Temporary incentives create temporary certainty. Permanent reforms create investment.

The reality is that Ontario remains nowhere near the housing production levels required to meet future demand.

You cannot attract people without places for them to live. Nor can you build a competitive economy without housing.

The federal government

THE BALL IS ROLLING

has introduced a new \$1-billion investment tool designed to encourage economic development and business expansion. However, there is little point in attracting new factories, offices and industrial investment if workers cannot afford to live nearby.

Housing is as important as roads, transit systems, ports and energy networks. Without housing, economic growth eventually hits a wall.

That is why RESCON is pushing for the next wave of reforms. HST relief and development charge reductions must become permanent initiatives.

But it cannot stop there.

The Ontario government has begun important conversations around building code modernization and regulatory reform.

Those discussions must lead to action.

Long-overdue changes such as allowing single staircases in mid-rise apartment buildings, increasing flexibility around floor plate sizes,

and removing outdated angular plane restrictions should move forward.

These are not radical ideas. They are common-sense changes that would increase housing supply while maintaining safety standards.

Approval processes also require substantial modernization.

Builders continue to face lengthy delays, duplicative reviews and administrative requirements that add cost without improving outcomes. They are paying for services that are delivered slowly and inefficiently. Every month of delay increases financing costs and reduces project viability.

We should be striving to become one of the fastest and most efficient jurisdictions in building housing in the developed world.

Instead, too often we remain among the slowest.

Federal housing policies also require a fresh look. The foreign buyer restrictions and mortgage stress test were introduced during a period of extraordinary

market activity to cool demand. But the market today bears little resemblance to the overheated conditions of the pandemic years.

When new home sales remain weak and projects struggle to achieve viability, policy should focus on supporting construction rather than suppressing demand. At a minimum, Ottawa should allow the foreign buyer ban to expire as scheduled. Better yet, newly constructed housing should be exempt immediately.

These are sometimes uncomfortable conversations. But leaders must do what is necessary, not merely what is comfortable.

The good news is that the ball is rolling.

Meaningful reforms have finally begun. Governments are listening. Solutions that once seemed politically impossible are now being discussed and implemented.

We now must finish the job. Housing policy needs to reflect current realities, not yesterday's conditions.

TEAMING UP

RESCON joins coalition that is dedicated to a province-wide AI-enabled permitting platform

By RESCON
for Senso Magazine
Sept. 14, 2026

Ontario's housing crisis has produced no shortage of studies, reports, consultations and promises. Governments have pledged to build more homes, speed up approvals and remove barriers to construction.

Yet, despite billions of dollars directed towards housing initiatives and municipal modernization, the pace of approvals remains stubbornly slow, and housing supply continues to lag demand.

That's why RESCON has joined an AI for Housing Coalition led by One Ontario, a non-profit organization dedicated to modernizing real estate development and permitting processes across the province.

The coalition is dedicated to a unified, province-wide AI-enabled

platform to modernize development approvals.

As a development partner, RESCON will help ensure the coalition remains focused on housing delivery outcomes and the realities faced by builders, developers, and housing providers across Ontario. Our group of builders will provide strategic guidance, industry insight, and advocacy support as the coalition advances its vision for a modernized approvals ecosystem.

At first glance, permitting modernization might not sound like the most exciting topic in housing policy. But it's a persistent problem. Builders must navigate a labyrinth of municipal approvals, agency reviews, studies and regulatory requirements. Delays that stretch months or even years add costs, create uncertainty and ultimately reduce the number of homes that reach the market.

RESCON has spent years calling

attention to these obstacles. In fact, our crusade began in 2014. In our policy submissions and public advocacy, we've consistently highlighted cumbersome planning approvals, regulatory complexity and municipal red tape as key factors suppressing housing starts across the province.

We represent builders who are responsible for constructing the bulk of Ontario's new homes, so we have a direct view of how fragmented approval systems across the province affect housing delivery.

Our commitment to become a development partner in the AI for Housing Coalition signals an important evolution. Rather than focusing solely on policy advocacy, we are attempting to build part of the solution.

The initiative, led by One Ontario, is based on a very straightforward observation. Ontario's housing approval system remains fragmented. Municipalities, applicants and review agencies often operate on different systems, follow different processes and rely on disconnected datasets. For builders, the overall approvals journey can feel like navigating a maze.

The coalition envisions a province-wide, AI-enabled permitting platform built on standardized zoning, planning and property data. Instead of applicants moving through multiple systems and agencies, the long-term objective is a single dashboard that manages approvals from beginning to end. The platform would identify requirements, help prepare applications, coordinate reviews, track progress and create greater transparency throughout the process.

Artificial intelligence can help eliminate repetitive administrative tasks, reduce duplication, improve consistency and create better visibility into where approvals stall. When combined with standardized data and co-ordinated processes, the result could be a more



predictable and efficient system.

This is where RESCON's role becomes particularly important.

Technology projects often succeed or fail based on whether they reflect the realities of the people expected to use them. A platform designed without input from the residential construction industry would risk becoming another well-intentioned initiative that does little to address actual approval bottlenecks.

As development partner, RESCON will bring critical real-world perspective to the problem. Our role is not simply to endorse the coalition. It is to provide strategic guidance, policy expertise, industry leadership and practical insight into how approvals affect housing projects on the ground.

Builders know where delays occur. They understand which parts of the system create unnecessary uncertainty and where duplication wastes time and resources. Input from builders can help ensure the platform addresses genuine problems rather than theoretical ones.

RESCON also brings credibility to the table. Permitting modernization requires broad support from municipalities, provincial officials,

technology providers, researchers and industry stakeholders. Few organizations are better positioned than RESCON to bridge those conversations.

We have longstanding relationships with government and our industry and has spent years advocating for practical housing solutions. Our participation sends a signal that permitting modernization is not simply a technology exercise but a very serious housing delivery priority.

The coalition has the right mix of partners. One Ontario provides the vision for a co-ordinated provincial approach. LandLogic contributes technology, AI and data infrastructure. RCI Lab brings regulatory intelligence and compliance expertise. RESCON contributes housing delivery knowledge and policy insight. Together, the partners bring capabilities that no single organization possesses on its own.

That collaborative approach matters because Ontario's housing challenges cannot be solved by any one sector acting alone. Governments can introduce reforms, but implementation remains difficult. Technology companies

can build platforms, but they need industry input. Researchers can identify challenges, but real-world adoption requires practitioners and policymakers working together.

While recent government policies such as the temporary HST rebates and development charge measures are moving the dial, digitization and modernization of the system needs to be improved. We are far behind other leading jurisdictions. We are working with a few large municipalities in Ontario to advance the One Ontario initiative, but more work remains.

RESCON exists to advocate for policies that increase housing supply, improve industry competitiveness and support a stronger residential construction sector.

Faster, more predictable approvals align directly with those objectives.

Ontario needs more homes. Delivering them will require policy changes as well as improvements to the infrastructure that governs approvals and development. By joining the coalition, we are helping move the conversation beyond identifying problems toward building practical solutions.

RCCAO REPORT

- RCCAO joined the [Vaughan Chamber of Commerce for the 2026 Infrastructure Summit](#), bringing together government and industry leaders to discuss key infrastructure priorities, including energy, procurement, transportation and project delivery.
 - RCCAO executive director Nadia Todorova moderated a discussion with Minister Andrea Khanjin on reducing barriers to infrastructure development.
 - Following the recent [provincial cabinet shuffle](#), RCCAO congratulated David Piccini on his appointment as minister of infrastructure, Trevor Jones as minister of labour, immigration, training and skills development, and Kinga Surma as president of the Treasury Board.
 - RCCAO looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the ministers and the Ontario government to advance the infrastructure needed to support communities and economic growth.
 - RCCAO attended the [Highway 413 Industry and Stakeholder Engagement Session](#), connecting with government and industry representatives to discuss the work ahead as this important project moves forward.
 - RCCAO welcomed the Ontario government's announcement of [further construction progress on Highway 413](#), including the next steps for the eastern section and the extensions to Highways 410 and 427.
 - RCCAO has consistently supported
- Highway 413 and its role in moving people and goods while strengthening Ontario's economy.
- RCCAO highlighted changes to [the relocate requirements for deep excavation work](#), which will extend the validity of relocates for eligible sites to 180 days beginning Nov. 1, 2026.
 - RCCAO was pleased to attend [the ribbon-cutting ceremony for IUOE Local 793's training facility in Oro-Medonte](#).
 - The expanded facility will help provide the next generation of skilled trades-people with the training needed to build Ontario's infrastructure.
 - RCCAO participated in [the Manuel Fine Civil Engineering Scholarship Fundraising Dinner](#), which brought industry partners together in support of the next generation of civil engineering professionals.
 - RCCAO was honoured to sponsor the [Fifth Annual Weston Community Classic](#), supporting an important community initiative alongside members and industry partners.
 - During [National Construction Appreciation Week](#), RCCAO recognized the workers, contractors and industry partners who build and maintain the infrastructure Ontarians rely on every day.
 - RCCAO's newsletter is published monthly - [read the September edition and subscribe here](#). RCCAO also remains active on LinkedIn and X/ Twitter.

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