RESIDENTIAL

BUILDER

A PUBLICATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

RESCON®

FEBRUARY 2026

RESCON AGM

"We will continue to work with you to get shovels in the ground faster."

Page 12

RESCON SOCIAL MEDIA

www.rescon.com

LINKEDIN

@_rescon

Instagram

25 North Rivermede Road
Unit 13
Vaughan, Ont.
L4K 5V4

1-905-760-7777
1-866-531-1608

media@rescon.com

RESIDENTIAL BUILDER

Official publication of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario

RESCON®
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

Published under the direction of:

Richard Lyall
RESCON President
lyall@rescon.com

Grant Cameron
RESCON senior director of public affairs
cameron@rescon.com

Residential Builder is published 12 times a year by RESCON

25 North Rivermede Rd.
Unit 13
Vaughan, Ontario
L4K 5V4
+1 905-760-7777

Advertising
For advertising information:
media@rescon.com

Subscriptions
Subscribe at:
www.rescon.com

CONTENTS

NEWSLETTER


p.18


p.36


p.42


p.48

Columns

News

Newly released report is critical of proposed tieback ban

A new report is ringing the alarm on the costly implications that a ban of tiebacks would have across Ontario's construction industry. It was done by RESCON and the Ontario Association of Foundation Specialists in partnership with the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.

The report notes that an incident in 2022 is being used as the justification to ban the use of tiebacks in several Ontario municipalities. However, the findings demonstrate tiebacks enable faster and more economical project delivery by reducing site congestion, allowing concurrent construction activities, and simplifying excavation and concrete forming procedures.

"The research shows how costly a ban would be and the industry is speaking out to educate policymakers on the realities of how this would negatively impact modern construction practices," said Paul De Berardis, VP, building standards and engineering at RESCON.

Click here to read the press release.

New regulations and statutes in effect as of new year

A number of new regulations and statutes came into force Jan. 1. Here's a few that affect builders:

- A regulatory amendment has been made under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) requiring defibrillators on construction sites with 20 or more regularly employed workers on a project that will be at least three months long.
- A new regulation under the OHSA requires constructors at construction projects or employers at all other workplaces to post cleaning records of their washroom facilities that are provided for workers.
- Amendments to the Construction Act and its regulations will support more timely payments to contractors, reduce cash flow issues and payment-related disputes on multi-year construction projects and provide greater clarity and certainty for the construction industry.
- A new framework under the Ontario Labour Mobility Act permits certified professionals from other Canadian jurisdictions to start working within 10 business days for up to six months by having their certification recognized faster with the Ontario regulatory authority while completing their full registration. The rules apply across professions regulated by more than 50 non-health regulatory authorities and 300 certifications.

AED policy development guide webinar hosted by RESCON

RESCON recently hosted a webinar that shared information on how to create an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) policy development guide specific to an organization.

Key takeaways from the event:

- Create an AED policy tailored to your site, considering factors such as site layout, worker risks, emergency response time, and potential hazards.
- When selecting the placement of an AED, ensure it is easily accessible and clearly marked with visible signage. The AED should be located within 1.5 minutes of regularly occupied work areas.
- When AEDs are required on a project, at least one CPR/AED-trained worker must always be present while work is in progress.
- Establish formal AED inspection and maintenance processes aligned with the company's first-aid program and manufacturer requirements.

Click here to watch the webinar.

Senate to deal with tax legislation

The Senate is slated to deal with an amended form of Bill C-4 on Feb. 3.

The legislation, officially dubbed An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, was passed by the House of Commons on Dec. 11 with a few amendments and sent to the Senate for approval.

The legislation waives the five-per-cent federal GST on new homes under $1 million for first-time buyers and provides partial rebates for those between $1 and $1.5 million. The province has committed to aligning with the federal debate, which means an additional eight-per-cent would come off new homes for first-time buyers. Implementation is subject to the passing of federal legislation.

As it stands, the amended bill in the Senate moves the implementation date back to March 19, 2025.

RESCON supports underwater line

RESCON is lauding the plan to build a new underwater electricity transmission line from Darlington Nuclear Generating Station to the downtown core of Toronto.

"Reliable and affordable energy supply is critical to supporting growth including within the City of Toronto," RESCON president Richard Lyall said in a statement. "New and existing homes require energy they can count on and today's announcement with respect to a new underwater transmission line is further demonstration of the Ontario government's commitment to our future energy needs which includes supporting housing supply."

2026 IS PEDAL TO THE METAL TIME FOR OUR INDUSTRY

Richard Lyall
President

We must eliminate the major cost barriers on housing, namely the excessive tax burden and development charges.

There is a famous expression in English: When the going gets tough, the tough get going. It means that when the situation becomes difficult, the strong will work harder to meet the challenge.

RESCON members are doing exactly that just now. We have just stared down one of the bleakest times in history for the residential construction industry.

After a year of slumping sales and market uncertainty, to say it has been a difficult period for builders would be an understatement.

The consequences for the economy, workforce and future homeowners could not be more serious.

But we are intent on changing the narrative.

At RESCON's recent annual general membership meeting, we elected a new board. It is full of capable leaders who care deeply about the industry.

Congratulations to the new board and thank you to all those whose tenure has come to an end. Your hard work is appreciated.

There's a lot of work to do this year to get the industry on track. But we have the right people to do it.

We heard a lot of good things from Premier Doug Ford at the AGM. He spoke about the importance of working with homebuilders to get shovels in the ground faster. This is important as it indicates the government recognizes the urgency of the moment and the critical need to take action.

The province has made some inroads, including removing the provincial portion of the HST on purpose-built rental housing and upcoming measures to offer rebates for first-time new home buyers.

The province should now take its tax cuts a step further and eliminate the full HST on all new homes, not just for first-time buyers, alongside significant reductions in development charges.

Housing Minister Rob Flack said in his remarks at the AGM that it still takes too long and costs too much to build homes in Ontario, and he is intent on creating conditions for builders to succeed.

Other speakers at the AGM were equally impressive. They included:

- Vaughan Mayor Steven Del Duca
- Economist Mike Moffatt of the Missing Middle Initiative
- Guelph Mayor Cam Guthrie and Barrie Mayor Alex Nuttall participated in a fireside chat led by John Capobianco, senior vice president and senior partner, national public affairs practice lead at FleishmanHillard.

2026 is the year that we must eliminate the major cost barriers on housing, namely the excessive tax burden and development charges that are crippling the industry. We must also modernize and speed up approvals and make the system more transparent and accountable.

We have a third housing report card coming out soon. The first two reports were well-received and clearly articulated what the problems are and the impact of industry job losses on the economy.

We can no longer be "worst in show" in the developed world with the most expensive housing. The issues must be addressed.

The first priority is to get Bill C-4 through the Senate, which will remove the federal portion of the sales taxes for first-time homebuyers. The provincial rebate will follow when that is passed.

There are other issues that will need to be tackled in the spring federal economic statement and the upcoming Ontario budget.

RESCON recently made a pre-budget submission to the Ontario government.

While government's have been driving companies to get to net zero, our industry is headed for a different net zero - net zero housing and net zero affordability - unless bold action is taken.

It is pedal to the metal time.

> **"We heard a lot of good things from Premier Doug Ford at the AGM. He spoke about the importance of working with homebuilders to get shovels in the ground faster. This is important as it indicates the government recognizes the urgency of the moment.**

COMPLACENCY IS BIGGEST THREAT TO ON-SITE SAFETY IN WINTER

Andrew Pariser
Vice President

We are two solid months into winter, have experienced record snowfall, and may have another two months to go.

While all companies focused on becoming winter-ready in the fall of 2025, I'm here to remind you that staying winter-ready doesn't happen on its own.

Here is your reminder to get on-site, hold a toolbox talk, buy some more salt, and fight complacency.

Complacency

One of the major hazards that many safety-leading companies face is complacency and, like all other hazards, it requires planning, implementation and a continuous improvement model to address.

Two months into the winter (longer the further north you go) are you checking in with your workers, ensuring adequate amounts of salt are available, and monitoring that snow removal plans are being executed before ice buildup occurs?

These are just some of the complacency issues we must address to ensure on-site hazards are either eliminated or mitigated before an incident occurs.

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.

These hazards are predictable and need to be addressed before the snow falls and temperatures dip. Solutions include safety policies, education and the 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.

Mental health

Winter safety is not just limited to physical health but also includes mental health.

Blue Monday occurs on the third Monday in January and is described as the most depressing day of the year due to limited hours of daylight (Seasonal Affective Disorder), potential financial issues related to holiday spending, and a lull in social events after the December rush. This is a further reminder to check in on your people and make sure that your mental health programs are in full swing.

Where to go from here

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 members where they are and provide additional resources to meet 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.

RESCON AGM OFFERED UP BOTH GOOD AND BAD NEWS

Grant Cameron
Senior Director of Public Affairs

Ontario Premier Doug Ford told the meeting that his government is ready to work with residential builders.

There was both good and bad news offered by speakers at RESCON's annual general meeting Jan. 22.

The bad news?

Mike Moffatt, founding director of the Missing Middle Initiative at the University of Ottawa, reported that slowing new home sales aren't just isolated to downtown Toronto and Vancouver.

The market weakness extends to other cities across the nation like Calgary and Edmonton.

The good news?

Ontario Premier Doug Ford told the meeting that his government is ready to work with residential builders to kick-start the industry as it is critical to the long-term prosperity of the province.

He listed a litany of actions the province has already taken to streamline approvals, cut red tape and reduce sales taxes on new housing.

Refreshingly, he also acknowledged more needs to be done.

The meeting, and remarks from dignitaries, generated a fair bit of coverage in the media.

Editor John Tenpenny wrote an article in ReNew Canada and Patrick Flannery penned an article in Canadian Contractor magazine.

Ontario Construction News also ran an article on the event.

I wrote one article for Daily Commercial News on Ford's remarks and another article on Moffatt's presentation, as well as an article for Canadian Forest Industries.

Development charges

We tackled the thorny issue of exorbitant development charges in a column in Canadian Real Estate Wealth, another in Daily Commercial News, and yet another in Senso Magazine.

Fixes for the industry

We addressed the state of the industry and suggested fixes in several columns. In Ontario Construction News, an article pointed out the number of jobs that could be lost due to the decline in construction.

We laid out our possible solutions in columns in Canadian Forest Industries, Builder Bites, Canadian Real Estate Wealth, Real Estate Magazine Canada, and Ontario Construction News.

Tax legislation

We discussed the importance of sales tax rebates for first-time homebuyers in a column in The Toronto Sun.

On an episode of CREB TV, RESCON president Richard Lyall discussed what needs to happen to get the industry back on track.

Report card

RESCON's housing report card continued to receive coverage.

The Brantford Expositor ran an extensive article, noting that rental apartment construction has skyrocketed in that city.

Tiebacks

In On-Site, Lyall wrote a column on the risks of restricting or tampering with the use of tiebacks.

Meanwhile, a new report released by RESCON and other groups sounded the alarm over the proposal.

You can read he press release here.

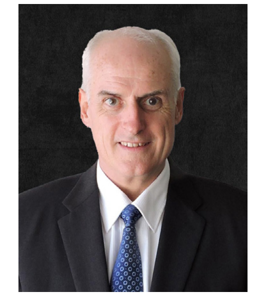
AEDs

An article in Canadian Contractor, addressed the importance of a guide to help employers build a policy governing the use of Automated External Defibrillators.

We also distributed a press release on the guide.

Parking issue

In an article in Real Estate Magazine, Lyall noted that the amount of parking included in new developments should be left to the market rather than enforced through city bylaws.



THE PAST MAY OFFER FIXES FOR THE HOUSING PROBLEMS OF TODAY

Michael Giles
Director of Government Relations

It's worth the conversation in the context of a reality where nothing is moving us toward a solution.

In the dark days after the commencement of the Second World War, things looked undeniably bleak for Britain as the country faced a powerful and evil enemy. Things became even more dire after the fall of France in spring 1940.

One of the most pressing challenges facing then new Prime Minister Winston Churchill in that uncertain summer was how to ensure that wartime production would be sufficient to produce what was needed to execute the war, and to replace military equipment lost at Dunkirk and on an ongoing basis as the war was prosecuted daily.

What Churchill recognized was the reality that conventional governmental practices and existing bureaucracies simply were not going to be able to meet the enormous challenges associated with fighting the war and solving multiple supply crises in terms of material and implementation methods.

He arrived at a solution that aggravated many but which, in the end, got the job done, perhaps in the only way possible. He appointed Lord Beaverbrook, an overly sensitive Canadian-born newspaper baron whose real name was Max Aitken, to the position of Minister of Aircraft Production. It helped that Beaverbrook was completely convinced of his own genius in getting things done.

While initially focused on aircraft production, ensuring that the output of Spitfires and Hurricane fighter planes was sufficient to win the Battle of Britain, Beaverbrook eventually morphed the role into all sorts of production initiatives.

What was critical to his role was the power given to him by Churchill. Recognizing that it was a time of unparalleled crisis where conventional means of management, procurement and production were unsuited to the task at hand, Beaverbrook was given oversight power that essentially could not be overruled.

The manifestation of this authority often irked a large number of people. Beaverbrook used his power to rachet up production even if it meant labour working much longer hours than conventional workdays. He also had the authority, and he used it, to order reallocation of resources from one site or project to another.

In essence, Beaverbrook had unchecked authority other than his reporting to Churchill himself.

The story of wartime production manifested in Churchill and Beaverbrook is a tale of extraordinary measures being taken to address what at first appeared to be an insurmountable challenge.

While fighting an all-out war may not be comparable, there are lessons to be learned from the Churchill-Beaverbrook experience for us as we contend with the most serious and enduring housing crisis we have ever faced, particularly in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area and southwestern British Columbia.

The reality is that to varying degrees governments at all levels have moved to institute their own, often-siloed solutions that they hope will move the dial on the housing affordability and supply crisis. However, regardless of the measures taken or the focus applied to date, the dire situation we find ourselves in simply continues to endure and persist.

While some measures have been able to bridge the divide over governmental jurisdictional considerations, like the finally aligned sales tax rebate, the majority of actions taken to date fall into a miasma that is not interconnected. The result is a mediocrity of solutions which fails to realize any significant or enduring progress towards a restoration of the homebuilding market.

So, while it may sound fanciful in terms of contemporary political and jurisdictional realities, one can only imagine the potential that would come from introducing a modern-day housing crisis Beaverbrook to the current landscape. Invested with virtually unlimited jurisdiction, ranging from taxation to planning policies, such a figure could move the dial and introduce needed solutions.

As noted, most will say this could never happen as systems are now. But it's worth the conversation in the context of a reality where nothing is moving us towards a solution.

" There are lessons to be learned from the Churchill-Beaverbrook experience for us as we contend with the most serious and enduring housing crisis we have ever faced.

NEW NATIONAL MODEL CODES WERE LAST THING INDUSTRY NEEDED

Paul De Berardis
VP, Building Standards & Engineering

The Canadian Board for Harmonized Construction Codes (CBHCC), which is responsible for the development of Canada's National Model Codes, delivered an early Christmas present with the release of the 2025 edition of the National Model Codes on Dec. 22, 2025. However, the new and more onerous construction regulations were the last thing the housing sector was wishing for, as Ontario new housing sales continue to slump.

The National Model Codes are technical documents that, when adopted into regulation by provinces and territories, establish minimum performance levels related to health, safety, accessibility, the protection of buildings from damage, and the protection of the environment.

The new model codes introduce updates that advance the harmonization of building design and construction requirements across Canada, incorporate forward-looking climatic data in building design to help prepare buildings for future climate conditions while reducing the construction sector's contribution to climate change, as well as improve the accessibility of homes and buildings for Canadians.

It may be clear to some, but the priorities addressed in this latest 2025 iteration of the model National Building Code (NBC) are not reflective of the current state of the housing market and economy, or the broader political environment we find ourselves in today. That is for good reason, as the last 2020 and now 2025 NBC updates were developed under the direction of ministerial mandate letters driven by former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The caveat being that current Prime Minister Mark Carney has taken a more moderate approach to many previous policies, as evidenced by actions such as the cancellation of the federal consumer carbon tax, pausing Canada's zero-emission vehicle mandate, and rethinking Canada's energy sector under a nation-building lens.

What does this all mean in a practical sense for builders and other industry partners in Ontario?

The NBC doesn't hold any regulatory authority in Ontario, as this province has its own somewhat distinctive set of construction standards, the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

However, the 2019 Reconciliation Agreement on Construction Codes between federal, provincial and territorial governments, aims to harmonize construction codes across Canada. As a result, it is up to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to figure out next steps on how exactly to work towards harmonizing the OBC with the NBC.

In terms of timeline, the agreement states that each province will bring its new construction codes into force within 18 months following the date on which the 2025 edition of the national codes are published, bringing us to sometime in the summer of 2027.

This new deadline for the next OBC is roughly only two years after the latest OBC version last came into force on April 1, 2025, much faster than the typical five-to-seven-year code cycles we are accustomed to in Ontario.

While the CBHCC states that technical changes were developed through a consensus-based process of code development committees, after having sat through countless committee meetings, I can honestly say it was more directive-based to fulfill the ministerial mandate letter objectives, rather than pragmatic decision making.

One of the biggest challenges under this approach is that construction standards are often developed devoid of any rational cost-benefit analysis, especially during a time of extreme cost sensitivity due to housing affordability challenges.

Furthermore, costing data is only considered as it relates to each individual proposed code change, of which there are hundreds of, so costing is only considered in a siloed approach and never holistically.

However, this is unrealistic when it comes to building a new home or a multi-unit residential building, as these code changes turn into death by a thousand cuts when aggregated.

Bottom line?

A majority of these new requirements are not changes being made to address problems in previous versions of the code; they are instead implementing the social policy objectives of the government to the detriment of housing affordability.

Irrespective of what the federal government is attempting to accomplish pertaining to the latest NBC changes, prospective homebuyers make the ultimate decision with their chequebooks as to whether they value what they get with new housing or if resale offerings better suit their budgets. Market forces and consumer sentiment will ultimately prevail, so governments need to tread lightly if they are truly seeking to facilitate more new housing activity.

To end on a positive note, the CBHCC has identified boosting housing supply and affordability as a priority for consideration in the development of the 2030 NBC, which reminds me of a famous quote, "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'"

PRESS RELEASE

NEW GUIDE WILL HELP EMPLOYERS BUILD A POLICY

Jan. 7, 2026, Vaughan, Ont. – The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), in partnership with Smart Safety Solutions, has put together a guide to help employers build a policy governing the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).

As of Jan. 1, all construction sites with 20 or more workers that will be active for at least three months are required to have an AED, also known as a Mikey on site. The guide outlines 13 steps and lists multiple resources which constructors can use to build their own specific policies.

The steps outline the duties, responsibilities, equipment requirements and emergency response procedures of constructors and how to select, use, place and maintain AEDs on a jobsite.

"Ontario is the first jurisdiction to make this move and it's a fantastic step forward," explains RESCON VP Andrew Pariser. "Nothing is more important on a construction jobsite than health and safety. Having an AED on a worksite could be a lifesaver if a worker experiences a cardiac event.

"The guide will help employers develop policies that reflect the specific realities of each jobsite. Construction jobsites, by their very nature, are different so it's critical to have a specific plan."

The guide will help employers define the roles and responsibilities of all workplace parties involved in a workplace AED program, figure out the equipment that's required, where it should be placed on a jobsite, what training is necessary, and how implementation should be rolled out.

"The first and most important act is for an employer to conduct a hazard assessment as construction workers face an elevated risk of cardiac events due to high-stress environments, physically demanding work, and exposure to various high-risk conditions on a jobsite," says Pariser. "The other steps in the guide will help ensure a constructor is prepared."

Click here for a copy of the guide.

A rebate has been established through the WSIB to help employers with the cost of purchasing an AED during the transition phase.

Purchases made between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2027, are eligible for reimbursements. The reimbursement application process started Jan. 1 and will run to July 3, 2027. Businesses can be reimbursed for up to $2,500 a unit. Click here for more information from the WSIB. Click here for the reimbursement request form.

RESCON hosted an AED (Mikey) webinar in November which featured an update on the program, a legal review of employer requirements, and an update on the reimbursement program.

Employers can reach out to the Mikey Network if they need an AED. The Mikey Network was started in 2002 after the death of Mike Salem, a partner in Heathwood Homes and Herity. Over the last 24 years, the organization has helped place more than 3,000 AEDs across Canada.

FORD REITERATES PLEDGE

"Let me be very clear, we will continue to work with you to get shovels in the ground faster."

Housing Minister Rob Flack

RESCON president Richard Lyall

By Grant Cameron
for Daily Commercial News
Jan. 26, 2026

Ontario Premier Doug Ford has assured residential builders that he is ready, willing and able to work with them to kick-start the ailing industry as it is critical to the prosperity of the province.

He told an annual general meeting of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) that his government has taken steps to streamline approvals, reduce red tape and lower sales taxes on new housing, but noted more action is needed to increase the supply of homes.

"We know homebuilders need government doing what we can to create the environment for growth in construction," he said. "Let me be very clear, we will continue to work with you to get shovels in the ground faster."

Ford, who was keynote speaker at the event, touted investments that the government has made over the past few years aimed at boosting the residential construction industry and other sectors.

He said the government is focused on delivering a plan of more than $220 billion to build, repair and expand critical projects like schools, hospitals, highways, housing-enabling infrastructure and other critical services. It is the largest infrastructure expansion in Canadian history.

Last summer, he said, the province announced another $1.6 billion for the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program (MHIP) to speed up construction on homes and critical projects like roads, bridges and water systems. The investment nearly doubled the MHIP funding to $4 billion.

The MHIP has already enabled the construction of 800,000 homes across the province since 2014, said Ford, and a $1.2-billion Building Faster Fund is providing communities the resources to build.

"But none of this works if we can't increase our supply of homes and keep the dream of home ownership alive for the next generation of young people," he said.

Earlier, the province removed the full eight-per-cent provincial portion of the HST on qualifying new purpose-built rental housing.

In the last fall economic update, the government also announced a rebate of the eight-per-cent provincial portion of the HST for first-time new home buyers on new housing up to $1 million and on a sliding scale for first-time buyers of homes purchased between $1 and $1.5 million.

"This rebate will save buyers up to $80,000 off the cost of a new home," he said.

The provincial rebate is contingent on the feds eliminating the five-per-cent sales tax on new housing for first-time buyers.

The legislation was approved in the House of Commons and is now before the Senate.

Together, the reductions would shave $130,000 off the cost of a new $1-million home.

Ford said the provincial government now wants to up the ante and work with the federal government to rebate the full HST off all new homes.

He said there doesn't seem to be any harm in extending the cut to all new home buyers "because if people aren't buying, you aren't making the income."

Such a change would move the needle, and more construction workers would have jobs which would lead to the purchase of more consumer goods like appliances and furniture, he said.

If sales taxes were cut, and development charges (DCs) were lowered, "you would see the market take off like you've never seen before."

Ford said DCs add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of a new home, and he is glad to see that some municipal leaders, like Vaughan Mayor Steven Del Duca, recognize that challenge. The City of Vaughan lowered rates for residential construction by 88 to 92 per cent in 2024.

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack told builders that the government understands, in no uncertain terms, the challenges faced by the industry.

The message has been conveyed loud and clear that "it takes too long and it costs too much to build homes in Ontario and we are changing that."

The minister noted that governments don't build homes; private builders do.

"Our job, as the premier says, is to create the conditions, the environment, for you to do what you do best; to help our municipal partners do the same, and work to make sure that that happens."

For starters, Flack said, the government has made changes to simplify and standardize the provincial building code.

The province is also ensuring that DCs are being used for the purpose they were intended - and not being spent on projects that have nothing to do with growth.

RESCON president Richard Lyall welcomed the remarks from both provincial leaders and others at the meeting.

He said the housing crisis has been decades in the making and the outlook is presently grim for builders, as was noted in a report prepared earlier for RESCON by Mike Moffatt of the Missing Middle Initiative.

"Tackling a complex moving crisis is no simple task," Lyall said. "There is no doubt the leaders know what is needed systemically to cut the rest of the housing Gordian Knot. The premier is committed to reducing costs imposed on all new buyers and renters.

"It was clear from the remarks that the provincial and municipal levels of government understand the challenges ahead and are determined to act further and decisively this year."

RESCON AGM

TALKING TRUTH

“There’s a belief out there that the weakness right now is isolated to downtown Toronto and downtown Vancouver primarily. But that’s not true. It’s not just condos and it’s not just Toronto."

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

The narrative that certain big cities are the only ones hit by slowing new home sales is false, says economist Mike Moffatt, founding director of the Missing Middle Initiative (MMI) at the University of Ottawa.

“There’s a belief out there that the weakness right now is isolated to downtown Toronto and downtown Vancouver primarily,” he said during a presentation on the state of the nation at a recent annual general meeting of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON).

“But that’s not true. It’s not just condos and it’s not just Toronto. We’re starting to see this as well across Canada.”

Moffatt told the audience that the MMI, a research think tank which focuses on policy solutions to improve housing affordability, is trying to change the message and set the record straight.

He said data is showing that places like Calgary and Edmonton are also showing slower sales.

Demand is down across the board, he said, as the cost of building new units is too high to compete with the resale market.

Moffatt presented data from a recent housing report card done for RESCON that showed new ground-oriented and apartment condo sales in both Toronto and the region of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge have plummeted over the past five years.

In Toronto, for example, sales of new ground-oriented and apartment condo sales declined steadily from around 40,000 in 2021 to around 2,000 in 2025. In Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, they dipped from 2,000 in 2021 to 250 in 2025.

The report examined 34 separate municipalities across nine separate metro areas in the GTA and Greater Golden Horseshoe and assessed the state of housing sales and construction over the first nine months of the year, relative to the first nine months of the previous four years.

Condo apartment starts were down 51 per cent and ground-oriented housing decreased nearly 43 per cent in almost every municipality - showing that the region’s housing weakness extends well beyond the condo market.

Based on the state of new home sales, the report indicated that things are going to get worse before they get better.

Meanwhile, Moffatt noted that latest figures from the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) are an eye-opener.

Indeed, a recent report by the organization showed that Toronto-area new home sales have tanked to their worst year on record.

“This is the worst sales that they’ve seen in 45 years’ worth of data and it’s the worst numbers that they have and that’s going back to 1981,” Moffatt told the audience.

According to the BILD report, the situation is dire and the consequences are rippling through economy of Ontario.

There were just 5,300 sales in the GTA in 2025 and 2026 doesn’t look much better due to geopolitical concerns and the Bank of Canada indicating that the cycle of interest rate cuts has ended.

Moffatt said resales aren’t doing much better, with the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board reporting that the 12-month moving average for resales has been on a steady decline since 2021.

He explained that the current lack of demand is driven by interest rates, beliefs on the future path of prices and rents, economic conditions and uncertainty and population growth.

The big problem with building, he noted, is that there hasn’t been a proportional reduction in building costs. Prices have come down about 20 per cent in the last few years but costs have not.

Moffatt said economic conditions could get so bad as to drive costs down, but the challenge right now is that

“This is the worst sales that they've seen in 45 years' worth of data and it's the worst numbers that they have and that's going back to 1981."

building costs are presently escalating.

Market forces could also eventually drive costs down, but they’re likely not going to get low enough, he added.

Moffatt laid out 10 ways governments could lead the way.

Improving the approvals system, lowering hard costs and reducing land costs, as well as slashing government fees like development charges, and keeping interest rates low would help, he said.

Reducing the duration of construction projects, de-risking projects, and cutting the HST on ventures would also help, he said, as well as deferring fees and killing the tax-on-tax that builders pay on materials, and services.

As for the future, Moffatt envisions two possibilities.

In one scenario, there is a low volume of housing construction with a high cost. The other is a high volume of construction with a lower cost.

RESCON president Richard Lyall told the meeting that the report produced by Moffatt is invaluable as it enables the association to determine exactly what’s happening in specific municipalities in Ontario.

“Some municipalities have been better than others and that’s the reality,” he said.

The numbers in the housing report card were so restrictive and disturbing and a reflection of governments waiting to pull the trigger, noted Lyall.

His message to governments?

“Fire all your guns at once,” he said. “It’s time. We can’t wait any longer.”

READY TO WORK WITH BUILDERS

By Grant Cameron
for Canadian Forest Industries
Jan. 27, 2026

Ontario Premier Doug Ford says his government is ready to work with residential builders to kick-start an ailing housing industry that economists warn is facing its worst downturn in decades.

He told the annual general meeting of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), that increasing the supply of homes is critical to the province's long-term prosperity and pledged continued action to reduce costs and speed up construction.

"We know homebuilders need government doing what we can to create the environment for growth in construction," he said. "Let me be very clear, we will continue to work with you to get shovels in the ground faster."

The premier said the province has already taken steps to streamline approvals, cut red tape and reduce sales taxes on new housing, but acknowledged more needs to be done.

He highlighted the government's more than $220-billion plan to build and repair infrastructure, calling it the largest expansion of its kind in Canadian history.

The premier also pointed to additional investments aimed at accelerating housing construction, including a $1.6-billion top-up last summer to the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, bringing total funding to $4 billion. The program has enabled the construction of 800,000 homes since 2014, he said, while a separate $1.2-billion Building Faster Fund is helping municipalities speed up development.

"But none of this works if we can't increase our supply of homes and keep the dream of home ownership alive for the next generation of young people," Ford said.

The province has already removed the eight-per-cent provincial portion of the HST on qualifying new purpose-built rental housing. In last fall's economic update, it also announced an HST rebate for first-time buyers on new homes up to $1 million, with a partial rebate on homes priced between $1 million and $1.5 million.

The rebate could save buyers up to $80,000, Ford said, and would rise to as much as $130,000 on a $1-million home if the federal government eliminates its five-per-cent portion of the tax. Legislation to do so has passed the House of Commons and is before the Senate.

Ford said Ontario wants to go further by working with Ottawa to rebate the full HST on all new homes.

There doesn't seem to be any harm in extending the cut to all new home buyers, he said, "because if people aren't buying, you aren't making the income."

He added that further reductions to development charges could dramatically boost construction, noting that the City of Vaughan cut residential charges by between 88 and 92 per cent in 2024.

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack told builders the government clearly understands the pressures they face.

"It takes too long and it costs too much to build homes in Ontario and we are changing that," he said, stressing that private builders - not governments - ultimately deliver housing.

Recent measures include simplifying and standardizing the provincial building code and ensuring development charges are used only for growth-related infrastructure.

Despite the province's commitments, new data presented at the meeting suggests the housing downturn is deepening and spreading beyond major urban centres.

Economist Mike Moffatt, founding director of the Missing Middle Initiative at the University of Ottawa, said the notion that weak new home sales are confined to downtown Toronto or Vancouver is incorrect.

"It's not just condos and it's not just Toronto," he said.

"We're starting to see this as well across Canada."

Moffatt presented findings from a recent housing "report card" prepared for RESCON, which examined 34 municipalities across nine metro areas in the Greater Toronto Area and Greater Golden Horseshoe. The study compared housing sales and construction in the first nine months of 2025 with the same period over the previous four years.

The results show new ground-oriented and apartment condo sales have collapsed. In Toronto, sales fell from about 40,000 units in 2021 to roughly 2,000 in 2025. In Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, sales dropped from 2,000 to 250 over the same period.

Across the region, condo apartment starts were down 51 per cent, while ground-oriented housing fell nearly 43 per cent in almost every municipality, indicating the slowdown extends well beyond the condo market.

Based on current trends, Moffatt said conditions are likely to worsen before they improve.

While home prices have fallen about 20 per cent in recent years, construction costs have not followed suit and continue to rise, making it difficult for new builds to compete with resale housing, he said.

Moffatt outlined a range of measures governments could take to lower costs and revive demand, including improving approvals, cutting development charges and other fees, reducing construction timelines, deferring charges, eliminating "tax-on-tax" costs and cutting the HST on new housing.

RESCON president Richard Lyall welcomed the remarks from Ford and other speakers but said incremental action is no longer enough.

"The housing crisis has been decades in the making and the outlook is presently grim for builders," Lyall said, citing the report prepared by Moffatt.

"The numbers are so restrictive and disturbing," he said, adding they reflect years of governments hesitating to act. "Fire all your guns at once. It's time. We can't wait any longer."

MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

By Grant Cameron
for On-Site
Feb. 2, 2026

Ontario Premier Doug Ford has pledged to work hand-in-hand with residential builders to breathe new life into the ailing housing market.

"We know homebuilders need government doing what we can to create the environment for growth in construction," he told a recent annual general meeting of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON).

"Let me be very clear, we will continue to work with you to get shovels in the ground faster."

Ford was keynote speaker at the event. Other speakers included Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack, Vaughan Mayor Steven Del Duca, and Mike Moffatt, founding director of the Missing Middle Initiative (MMI) at the University of Ottawa.

A panel discussion was also held with Guelph Mayor Cam Guthrie, Barrie Mayor Alex Nuttall and John Capobianco, senior vice president and senior partner, national practice lead for public affairs at FleishmanHillard.

In his remarks, Ford acknowledged that while steps have been taken to streamline approvals, reduce red tape and lower taxes, much more needs to be done to boost housing supply and restore confidence in new home construction.

He pointed to the province's more than $220-billion infrastructure plan - the largest in Canadian history - which includes investments in schools, hospitals, highways and housing-enabling infrastructure.

He also highlighted an additional $1.6 billion announced last summer for the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, nearly doubling its funding to $4 billion. According to the premier, the program has helped enable the construction of 800,000 homes across Ontario since 2014.

Earlier measures also include the removal of the provincial portion of the HST on qualifying new purpose-built rental housing.

However, Ford acknowledged that more must be done to solve the crisis if new homes remain too expensive to build and buy.

> **"Governments don't build homes - private builders do. Our job is to create the conditions and the environment for you to do what you do best.**

In last fall's economic update, the government announced an HST rebate for first-time buyers on new homes up to $1 million, with a partial rebate on homes priced between $1 million and $1.5 million.

The rebate could save buyers up to $80,000, Ford said, and would rise to as much as $130,000 on a $1-million home if the federal government eliminates its five-per-cent portion of the tax. Legislation to do so has passed the House of Commons and is before the Senate.

Ford said Ontario wants to go further by working with Ottawa to rebate the full HST on all new homes.

"If people aren't buying, you aren't making the income," he said, adding that lower sales taxes and reduced development charges would allow the market to "take off like you've never seen before."

Housing Minister Flack told builders the government understands that it takes too long and costs too much to build homes in Ontario.

"Governments don't build homes - private builders do," he said. "Our job is to create the conditions and the environment for you to do what you do best."

Flack cited changes to simplify and standardize the building code and renewed efforts to ensure development charges are used strictly for growth-related infrastructure.

RESCON president Richard Lyall said the commitments are welcome and it was clear from remarks made at the meeting that the provincial and municipal levels of government understand the challenges ahead and are determined to act decisively and take further action this year.

"We can't wait any longer," he said. "Sometimes you don't get gains until you hit a wall - and we've hit the wall."

His message to governments?

"Fire all your guns at once," he said. "It's time."

Moffatt of the MMI told the meeting that the slowdown in new home sales is not confined to downtown Toronto or Vancouver, as commonly believed.

"That's not true," he said. "It's not just condos and it's not just Toronto. We're starting to see this as well across Canada."

Data from a recent report card done by the MMI for RESCON showed condo starts across 34 municipalities in the GTA and Greater Golden Horseshoe were down 51 per cent and ground-oriented housing nearly 43 per cent.

While home prices have fallen about 20 per cent, Moffatt said construction costs have not followed suit and are still rising, making it difficult for new builds to compete with the resale market.

To reverse course, Moffatt outlined 10 measures governments could take, including faster approvals, lower land and hard costs, reduced development charges, lower interest rates, HST relief, fee deferrals and eliminating tax-on-tax costs on materials and services.

FORD TALKS HOUSING

By Patrick Flannery
Canadian Contractor
Jan. 27, 2026

The Ontario housing buck definitely stopped at the Residential Construction Council of Ontario meeting Jan. 22 in Vaughan, Ont., with Ontario premier, Doug Ford; minister of municipal affairs and housing, Robert Flack; Vaughan mayor, Stephen Del Duca; Guelph mayor, Cam Guthrie; and Barrie mayor Alex Nuttall all taking the stage to share their perspectives on the challenges facing homebuilding. The program then got a dose of scientific reality from Missing Middle Initiative's Mike Moffatt.

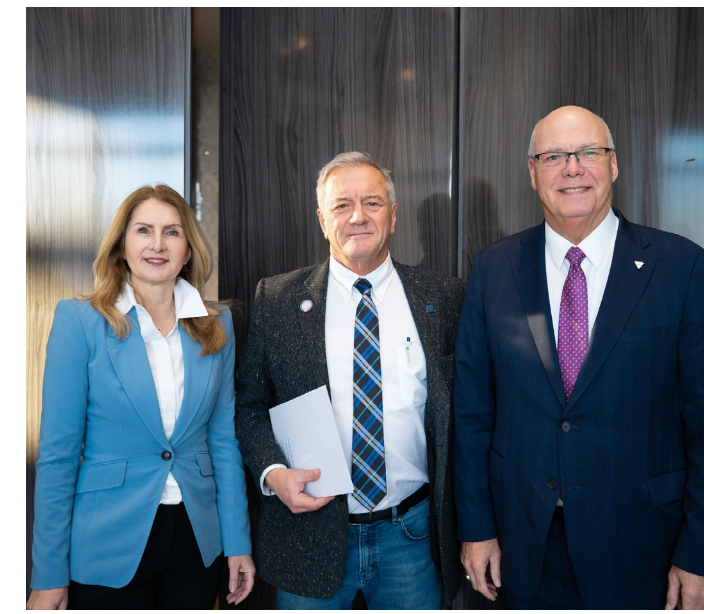
Ford hit familiar themes, speaking about the need to protect Ontario against Trump's trade hostilities and expressed his Reagan-esque economic approach, saying "nothing is worse than government" when it comes to business and that the best way to support the economy is for governments to leave money in people's pockets. He then went on to boast about his $20 billion plan for government spending on infrastructure. Maybe that is OK because he also said Ontario has attracted $70 billion in investment in the eight years he's been in power. Ford said residential construction has never been as important as it is now and it is the job of government to create the conditions for building rather than doing the building itself. He noted that Ontario is planning to rebate the eight-percent provincial portion of HST back to first-time homebuyers and seeking federal cooperation in removing the entire HST from new homes. Ontario has also removed the eight-percent provincial HST from new purpose-built rental housing. But Ford was clear that he didn't feel applying the rebates just to first-time homebuyers was going to move the needle on housing supply because "zero times zero is zero." The problem, he said, was that new homes are not being built and until they are there is nothing for new buyers to buy.

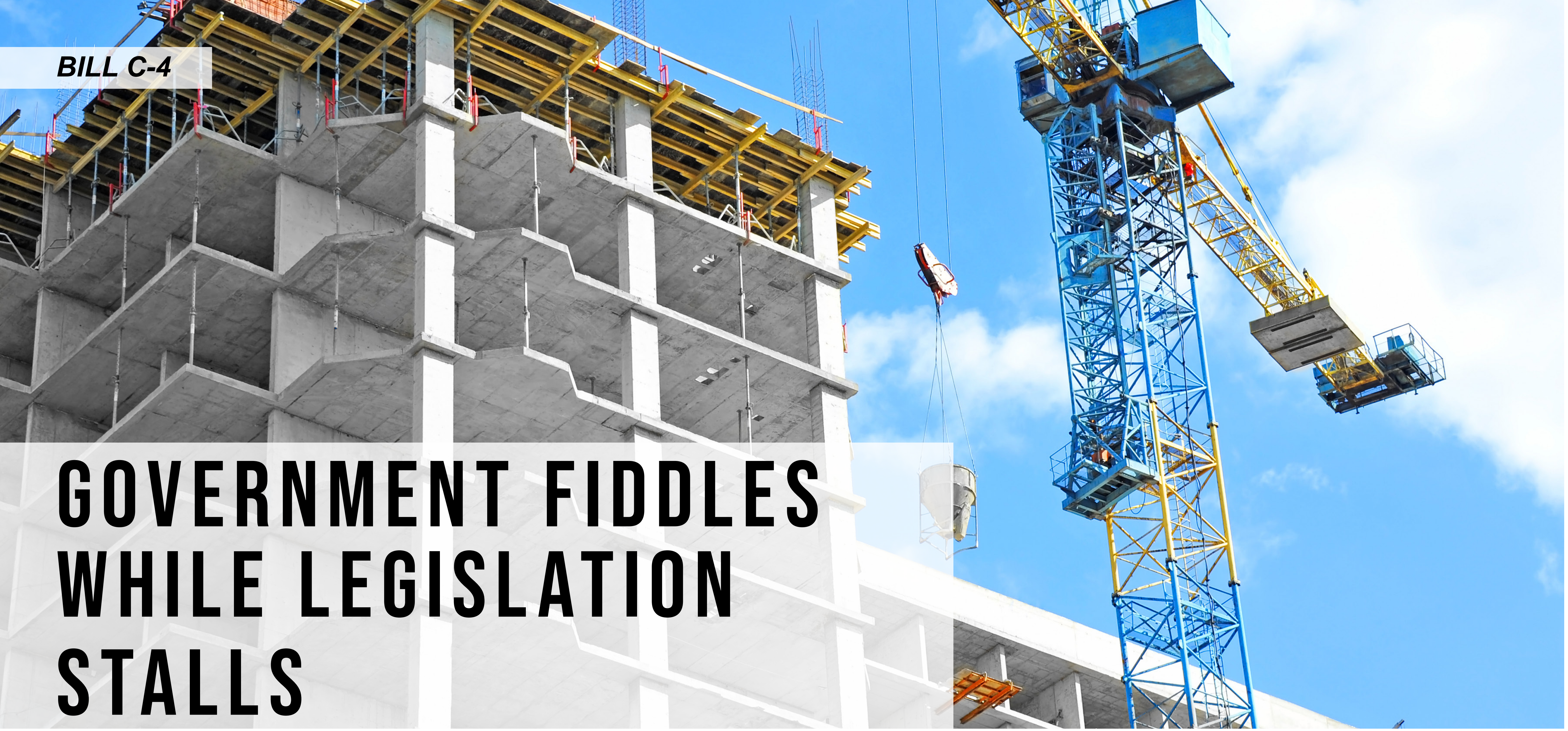
Flack then took the stage to reiterate the government's efforts to get HST relief on homes and express his support for Ontario's homebuilders, saying "Governments don't build home, you do." He was sharp in his criticism of municipalities that have not done enough in his view to reduce development charges, claiming DC money is sitting in city accounts and councils are finding loopholes in the rules for deferring collection of DC funds. He pointed to harmonization of codes and building standards across the province as a way to stimulate building, mentioning the Toronto Green Building Standard without clarifying whether the goal would be for that standard to be applied everywhere or for it to be modified to agree with standards in other places. He said spending on infrastructure was still insufficient and warned that in this environment "reducing revenue is difficult"…in other words, do not expect tax cuts. One municipal official in the audience complained that even when they waived DCs on new construction, the local region did not. Another questioner from Habitat for Humanity noted that DCs are often waived on collaborations with non-profit homebuilders.

Del Duca hit the alarm harder saying government action has not matched the rhetoric. The coming crisis in housing supply and affordability was evident, in his opinion, since 2016 but provincial leaders have been content to kick the can down the road. He pointed to his own record of cutting DCs in half as a potential solution and also referenced Mississauga's "three strikes, you're in" policy where, if a site plan goes through three rounds of comments and there are still issues, the builder gets an in-person meeting with city staff to hammer out the problems. Del Duca also called out the need to reduce red tape, saying he had reduced the city of Vaughan's official plan from 450 pages to 150. He echoed Flack's complaints about municipalities playing games with the new rule deferring collection of DCs until occupancy, saying in Vaughan they went and got a legal opinion on what "occupancy" meant and proceeded from there, while other towns have "done everything possible to delay and obscure and misinterpret what the province's intent was." The federal government did not escape Del Duca's wrath. He said Vaughan had $8 million of its $60 million Accelerator Fund grant pulled back because it failed to meet its targets for new building. That narrow perspective, Del Duca feels, did not recognize that Vaughan had done much more to incentivize building than other municipalities that did receive the entire funding package. Other mayors, according to Del Duca, had been heard laughing about getting Accelerator money while leaving DCs untouched or even raising them. He said upper levels of government should tie infrastructure grants to lowering DCs.

Then it was time for something completely different: a panel discussion with two mayors. Guthrie delivered the common municipal pushback that Guelph had 6,000 approved projects for which permits had not been pulled and shovels were not in the ground, suggesting the problem is not fees or red tape but rather market forces. Nuttall pointed to Barrie's experience in waiving DCs for affordable housing projects that resulted in over 400 units being built and a massive reduction in the homeless presence on Barrie's streets. People were, he said, yelling out of car windows to thank him. Guthrie said Toronto's affordability crisis was causing a "drive 'till you qualify" effect where people go farther and farther down the 401 looking for less expensive housing, then eat up the supply at the destination and drive prices up. Nuttall complained that municipalities get all the blame for housing shortfalls but are prevented by provincial and federal rules from taking steps that might help. He wants the power to waive certain rules and regulations for the kinds of development Barrie needs, but is constrained by provincial laws to apply the same standards to every project. Nuttall noted that, in the U.S., jurisdictions waive requirements all the time for projects considered to be of special value to the area.


RESCON
@_RESCON





GOVERNMENT FIDDLES WHILE LEGISLATION STALLS

By Richard Lyall
for The Toronto Sun
Jan. 9, 2026

Martial artist Bruce Lee once quipped that if you spend too much time thinking about something, you'll never get it done. He was right. Overthinking can lead to paralysis by analysis.

In some respects, that seems to be what's happening with Bill C-4, federal legislation that will give first-time new-home buyers a break on sales taxes they pay when purchasing a new unit.

Let me explain.

The House of Commons passed the bill with a few amendments and sent it to the Senate for approval. However, in their infinite wisdom, senators chose to delay passage of the legislation.

Representatives who occupy seats in the upper chamber unanimously voted to adjourn until Feb. 3, rather than move the bill to royal assent. This means final approval can't take place until then.

Senators had plenty of time to gather their thoughts on the legislation and contemplate what to do. They received the legislation on Friday, Dec. 12 and had four more sitting days scheduled in their calendar for precisely this type of thing happening. However, unfortunately and unexpectedly, senators voted to adjourn before the matter went to second reading.

RESCON had hoped that the Senate would undertake its review and complete it the following week. The residential construction industry is on its knees. Yet senators are heading home without taking care of business.

The purpose of the Senate's parliamentary calendar being four days longer than the House of Commons is to allow senators enough time to deal with final votes coming from the lower chamber.

The situation reminds me of two things you never want to see made - sausages and government policies.

Kidding aside, I understand that the Senate is designed to be the sober second thought on legislation and policies. But this circumstance is the exception. The residential construction industry is in crisis mode. Housing starts and sales are down significantly. We need quick action.

The legislation - officially dubbed An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure - has been in the works since June 5 when it was introduced in the House.

Opposition parties in the House stalled passage of the bill, and it didn't look like it would advance to the Senate for final review and royal assent, the process by which it becomes law.

The House of Commons was scheduled to adjourn for the Christmas break on Dec. 11 and return Jan. 26. This was a concern because if third and final reading of Bill C-4 was not allowed to proceed, the bill would not make it to the Senate and therefore be stamped into law.

However, a deal was reached and the legislation was allowed to proceed in the House of Commons. The vote in the House was unanimous and the bill moved to the Senate.

The legislation waives the five-per-cent federal GST on new homes under $1 million for first-time buyers and provides partial rebates for those between $1 and $1.5 million. The province has committed to aligning with the federal debate, which means an additional eight-per-cent would come off new homes for first-time buyers. Implementation is subject to the passing of federal legislation.

The federal bill had originally proposed that eligibility be retroactive to May 27, but it was amended to March 20 - two months earlier. Hopefully, there will be no unwanted amendments, and the legislation will get quick approval when the Senate returns in early February.

Once approved by the Senate, the public service can proceed to release all documentation and applications associated with the sales tax rebate.

Until the legislation passes, the Canada Revenue Agency cannot provide the rules for claiming the rebate even though the funds were passed in the recent federal budget. Hopefully this gets resolved as soon as the Senate returns.

Canada is knee-deep in a housing crisis. Sales and starts have fallen off a cliff, projects are being delayed or cancelled and job losses in the residential construction industry are mounting.

All this, of course, will have a dramatic effect on our economy.

Canada's construction industry accounts for about 7.5 per cent of the national GDP and generates around $162 billion annually. The residential building share of construction generally accounts for a third of total industry GDP, or $54 billion.

We need to lower the costs of building so builders can get shovels in the ground. Presently, taxes account for roughly 36 per cent of the cost of a new home. Taxes, fees and levies must be reduced.

There is no time for dilly-dallying. We need action over hesitation.

OFF-TRACK ON HOUSING

Why development charges are making homes unaffordable.

By Richard Lyall
for Canadian Real Estate Wealth
Jan. 12, 2026

Driving faster in the wrong direction won't get you to the right destination. To make progress you need to follow the correct path.

The same can be said for the housing supply and affordability crisis that we are presently facing. For years, we've been off track. And, as a result, we now find ourselves in a predicament.

The truth of the matter is that exorbitant taxes, fees and levies, including sky-high development charges (DCs), are making it difficult for builders to build homes people can afford.

The charges end up pushing the cost of a community's new growth onto the purchaser of a new home. They are footing the bill up front, even though the infrastructure will serve generations.

Add in a cumbersome, expensive and glacially slow approvals system and you have a real problem.

Reports indicate that taxes are killing the market, and the already-dire housing situation could get worse. Governments will lose money for years if the industry does not pick up. Costly taxes and fees and lengthy approvals processes combine to hinder housing development.

DCs, specifically, are out of control. These are one-time fees that municipalities collect from developers for new construction to help fund infrastructure and services like roads, water, sewers, parks, transit, and police. But they're also being used for projects like daycares and schools.

The levies are a problem and contribute significantly to the cost of buying a new home. A report done for RESCON found that 36 per cent of the cost of a new home is due to the tax burden. CMHC reports that DCs make up nine per cent of the total cost of a detached home in Toronto. The agency found that DCs alone could add more than $100,000 to the cost of new units.

Over the years, the fees have increased substantially, worsening affordability of new housing. In Toronto, DCs for a one-bedroom apartment increased to $52,000 in 2024 from $10,000 in 2014.

It is a problem that has been decades in the making. Governments now rely on revenues from DCs to fund their projects.

Four years ago, the Ontario Housing Supply Task Force Report recommended that action be taken to stem exorbitant DCs. However, the problem has not been addressed. The federal government has indicated it intends to reduce DCs, but we have yet to see any action.

The Ontario government provided some relief for builders with the passage of Bill 17. Payment of DCs will be pushed back until occupancy of the home. In the past, payment of DCs was due upon a building permit being issued. This means builders will not have to finance the cost of DCs while the home is being built.

However, there are other outstanding payments which are still due at the building permitting stage. More specifically, the payment of educational development charges, park land dedication and community benefits charges are still due during upon building permit issuance.

Admirably, the federal and Ontario governments have announced the elimination of sales taxes on new housing up to $1 million for first-time buyers as well as decreases on a sliding scale for first-time buyers of homes purchased between $1 and $1.5 million.

First-time buyers account for roughly 35 per cent of new home purchases so this will have a positive effect.

But governments must now put DCs squarely in the crosshairs. The fees have exploded over the years.

CMHC recently piloted a project to collect information on development charges in 30 municipalities across the country and found they amount to a significant financial burden on development.

The level of charges per unit varied extensively. For a condo with two or more units, the DCs in 2025 varied from $55,566 in Burnaby, B.C., to $130,200 in Toronto. For a single-detached home, CMHC found that DCs varied from $111,629 in Burlington to about $180,600 in the City of Toronto.

We cannot continue with such exorbitant fees. We are in a housing crisis that is only going to get worse. Governments need to step in and create conditions to lower the DCs on new housing.

A report done recently for RESCON by the Missing Middle Initiative at the University of Ottawa found that housing starts in the first nine months of this year in 34 Ontario municipalities have plummeted from the same period in the previous three years. Job losses continue to grow.

Sales have all but dried up. Starts are low. And many developers are pausing or canceling projects altogether.

Housing starts were down 34 per cent in the municipalities surveyed, with condos taking a beating. Only 54 new condos were sold in Toronto in October - down from 145 in October 2024.

According to the analysis, the reduction in housing starts translated into 35,377 fewer person-years of employment over the first nine months of this year, compared to the same period in the previous three years.

Tackling the excessive tax burden associated with building and buying a new home would help kick-start the residential construction industry. Lowering DCs would be a positive first step.

Time is of the essence. We can't waste it.

DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

RUNAWAY TRAIN

Four years ago, the Ontario Housing Supply Task Force recommended that action be taken to stem exorbitant development charges. However, the problem has not been addressed.

By Richard Lyall
for Daily Commercial News
Jan. 16, 2026

Buried deep in the final sticker price of a new home is a complex stack of hidden costs for land and approvals, materials and labour, as well as exorbitant taxes, fees and levies.

Development charges (DCs), which are ultimately paid by the first purchaser of a home, make up a significantly large chunk of the price tag.

The one-time fees were traditionally used to help fund infrastructure and services like roads, water, sewers, parks, transit, and police services. However, they're now being used for other projects like daycares, parks and schools.

Over the years, the charges have become a runaway train, making new housing unaffordable for many.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. recently reported that DCs alone could add more than $100,000 to some new units that are located in municipalities across the nation with the highest fees.

The most expensive fees were in Toronto, where the average condo faces $130,200 in costs, while for the average detached home, municipal development charges account for about $180,600 of the cost. The fees make up nine per cent of the total cost of a detached home in Toronto.

Canadian Home Builders' Association chief executive Kevin Lee recently noted that DCs have risen by 700 per cent in the last two decades and contribute heavily to a lack of housing affordability.

The fees have been rising as municipalities have been adjusting rates significantly higher to cover inflation and increasing costs of infrastructure projects.

Problem is the burden is putting housing out of reach for most homebuyers. People are leaving cities like Toronto because the cost of a home is out of their range.

Four years ago, the Ontario Housing Supply Task Force recommended that action be taken to stem exorbitant DCs. However, the problem has not been addressed.

The Ontario government has passed legislation that permits developers to defer DC payments to municipalities on new homes until occupancy. Before, builders were required to pay DCs when a building permit was issued by the municipality. The change will provide some relief as it will enhance a builder's cash flow during the capital-intensive construction phase.

The Liberals, meanwhile, promised to cut development charges during the federal election campaign but have not substantially address the issue.

A few municipalities, like the City of Vaughan and others like Mississauga and Burlington, meanwhile, have taken steps to lower DCs. But in light of the crisis we're facing, more action is needed.

For starters, the province should fund initiatives that require all Ontario municipalities to return the DC rate to 2015 levels for a period of five years. This would help reduce housing costs.

The Ontario government has the power constitutionally to bring to bear on municipal governments and implement solutions that, to date, have been elusive.

Presently, municipalities in Ontario have not spent what they have collected. They are sitting on $10 billion in DC reserve funds provincewide. The City of Toronto, for example, has nearly $3 billion in the pot.

DCs are particularly egregious as they are a regressive tax on those least able to afford them - the new home buyer. They front-load the cost of infrastructure that will last a lifetime onto today's buyers. The scale and pace of today's increases are no longer affordable or sustainable.

A Toronto Region Board of Trade report estimates DCs now fund about 60 per cent of the cost of a typical growth-related capital project in Ontario. For the City of Toronto, the report cites a 10-year capital plan that includes $6.1 billion in DC-funded projects (roughly 10 per cent of planned capital spending), with the city collecting roughly $520 million in development charges annually.

Higher DCs are only fueling the housing crisis, making it difficult for working individuals and families to afford the cost of a new home.

In the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) home sales are now down 71 per cent for single-family homes and condominium sales have plummeted by 90 per cent. We are in a housing crisis that promises to get even worse.

The experts are forecasting that Ontario will likely see a reduction in GDP by as much as 1.5 to 2.5 per cent in 2026 directly related to the situation affecting the residential housing sector.

Bold action is needed to reduce DCs. We can not afford to wait.

DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

CHOKING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Over the years, the fees have increased substantially, worsening affordability of new housing

By Richard Lyall
for Senso Magazine
Jan. 26, 2026

Development charges (DCs) on new housing can be a difficult concept to wrap your head around. They're confusing and different in every municipality. Let me try to put them into perspective.

Imagine it's 2014. You buy a large coffee and fork over $2.70 for the beverage. Fast forward a decade. That same coffee costs you $13.64 - a 405-per-cent increase.

That's the scenario with DCs, although the numbers are bigger. In Toronto, for example, DCs for a one-bedroom apartment or bachelor increased to $52,000 in 2024 from $10,000 in 2014.

The hike is an issue because DCs - which ultimately are paid by the purchaser - are a primary contributor to the cost of a new home. They are part of a mix of taxes we levy against new homes. A report done for RESCON found that 36 per cent of the cost of a new home is due to the tax burden.

The Missing Middle Initiative noted that if DCs continue on the same growth path over the next 25 years as they have in the previous 25, they will exceed $4 million per home in some GTA municipalities.

Over the years, the fees have increased substantially, worsening affordability of new housing.

Data from CMHC shows that DCs make up nine per cent of the total cost of a detached home in Toronto.

They are one-time fees that municipalities collect from developers for new construction to help fund infrastructure and services like roads, water, sewers, parks, transit, and police services. However, the funds are now being used for other projects like daycares, and schools.

The charges are unsustainable and are killing the residential construction industry. While housing is an essential need, it is taxed much like alcohol or cigarettes.

Governments have come to rely on revenues from DCs on new housing. It is a problem that has been decades in the making, but it needs to be fixed.

Four years ago, the Ontario Housing Supply Task Force Report recommended that action be taken to stem exorbitant DCs. However, the problem has not been addressed.

The federal government has indicated it intends to reduce DCs, but we haven't yet seen any action on that front.

In Ontario, the government has passed Bill 17, which will push back payment of DCs until occupancy. This is good news for builders. Previously, the payments were due upon issuance of a building permit, which meant builders had to finance DCs while a residential building was being constructed.

But we have to deal with the elephant in the room, which is that the fees must be reduced. We are in a housing crisis that promises to get even worse.

A comprehensive new report done for RESCON by the Missing Middle Initiative at the University of Ottawa found that housing starts in the first nine months of 2025 have slumped from the same period in the previous three-year period while industry job losses continue to grow.

The findings are alarming but confirm what the residential construction industry and our builders already know. They are living through this nightmare.

Sales have dried up and projects are being put on hold or cancelled altogether. It is a particularly dark time for the market.

The analysis looked at 34 municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area and Greater Golden Horseshoe region and found that housing starts were down 34 per cent in the municipalities over the first three quarters of 2025, relative to the January-to-September periods in 2021-24.

Condo apartment starts were down 51 per cent in 2025 relative to the same earlier time periods. Only 54 new condos were sold in Toronto in October - down from 145 in October 2024. On the positive side, purpose-built rental starts were up 42 per cent over the same periods.

The report also indicated that job losses are mounting, which will have a significant effect on the economy. The analysis estimates the reduction in housing starts over the first nine months of this year translates into 35,377 fewer person-years of employment, compared to the same period in the previous three years.

In Canada, the construction industry accounts for about 7.5 per cent of the national GDP, representing a significant economic sector that supports over 1.6 million jobs and generates $162 billion annually. Residential construction accounts for a third of the industry GDP, or $54 billion. Remove the construction industry from Canada's GDP number and there is a problem.

The report is an eye-opener, as it notes we are trending in the wrong direction.

Builders need to be able to build homes that people can afford. Steps must be taken to lower DCs and get the industry back on track.

New home buyers can not continue to foot the bill for infrastructure that benefits an entire region.

Presently, a Canadian home costs about 14 times the average disposable income, compared to 9.8 times in the city of New York.

Lowering DCs would help boost the residential construction industry - and the economy. We know what needs to happen. Procrastination will only lead to lost opportunities.

PLANNING

LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

The overlooked role of school zones in early-stage feasibility

By Arash Shahi
CEO of LandLogic

When builders and planners think about what slows projects down or introduces risk, school zones rarely top the list. Yet school catchments and the rules that govern them can quietly shape how sites are evaluated, positioned and ultimately move through the planning process.

A study from McMaster University and the University of Toronto explained how "home values dropped 7.29 per cent for every extra kilometre of distance from the closest elementary school, and 1.43 per cent for every added kilometre distance from a high school." And beyond proximity, market analysis in Ontario shows that school ratings and rankings impact buyer demand and property values.

School ratings should influence what gets built. Masoud Esfahani, CEO of AECORN, has noted in industry discussions that school ratings play a significant role in shaping housing demand and prices for families with children. That demand should be reflected early in unit mix decisions. Developments in these zones, including rental projects and multiplexes, may perform better when they prioritize two- and three-bedroom units rather than smaller bachelor-style units that are less aligned with demand. When school-driven demand is overlooked at the feasibility stage, projects risk misaligning product type with buyer and renter expectations.

But unlike zoning maps and official plan schedules, school attendance boundaries are not always standardized or centrally accessible. In many Ontario municipalities, school boards independently define and adjust catchments, waitlists and capacity rules, often outside the municipal planning process entirely. This creates an asymmetry: one set of rules (like zoning) is a defined requirement in municipal approvals, while another set of rules (school eligibility) operates semi-independently, and is not consistently incorporated into early-stage feasibility.

In practice, this means an important factor that influences value and demand is often addressed informally or deferred to later stages, rather than treated as a structured feasibility factor.

Why early clarity matters for feasibility

From a development perspective, the implications are practical and measurable. School catchments and ratings influence buyer demand and absorption which, in turn, affect pricing assumptions and risk profiles. When these factors are not understood early, feasibility models rest on incomplete data.

Planning professionals are accustomed to integrating land use, transportation, servicing, and environmental constraints at the outset of a project. School zones, however, are rarely incorporated with the same discipline, despite their potential to shift project outcomes. When school-related constraints surface late in the process, they can trigger redesigns, community discussions, or conditional approvals, all of which introduce avoidable cost, delay, and uncertainty.

Bringing school zones forward in feasibility work

What would change if school zone data and ratings were treated more like other planning layers: standardized, up-to-date, and incorporated at the outset?

For builders and consultants, that could mean:

More accurate market and demand assumptions.

Reduced rework and fewer late-stage adjustments.

Clearer communication with municipal partners and stakeholders.

For municipalities and school boards, earlier integration could support more co-ordinated service planning and clearer expectations around growth and community outcomes.

A roadblock to early integration

Yet even when teams want to account for school zones earlier, access to reliable information is often a roadblock. School catchments, enrollment rules, and program availability are typically spread across multiple school board websites, static PDF maps, and board-specific policies that change over time in response to capacity pressures.

This fragmentation means teams assessing sites for feasibility are often left to piece together incomplete or outdated information. As a result, emerging technologies like LandLogic are beginning to focus on consolidating and standardizing school data by tying it directly to individual addresses.

Just search an address and instantly review catchments, school distances, ratings, rankings, special programs and even the out-of-district options. This gives planners and developers access to school data with the same level of standardization they expect from other core planning layers, which in turn allows them to more easily incorporate it into early feasibility analysis.

From afterthought to input: school zones in feasibility

For the development and planning community, the takeaway is straightforward. Treat school zones not as a late-stage consideration, but as a foundational factor in early feasibility.

Doing so supports clearer assumptions, stronger decisions, and a more predictable planning process - outcomes that matter regardless of project scale or market conditions.

FIVE WAYS TO FIX THE CRISIS

By Richard Lyall
for Builder Bites
Jan. 16, 2026

The residential construction industry is at a precipice. The numbers paint a bleak picture and the forecasts are grim.

Housing sales, starts and completions - which have been on a progressively downward spiral since 2022 - have slumped. Projects have been shelved, workers are being let go, and layoffs have begun.

The next few years could be even worse, with new home sales, starts and completions expected to come in around 30,000 annually in Ontario, according to the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis.

That will leave the province well short of the 1.5-million new home goal by 2031.

In the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area, new home sales are now down 71 per cent for single-family dwellings and condo sales have plummeted by 90 per cent.

The experts are forecasting that Ontario will likely see a reduction in GDP by as much as 1.5 to 2.5 per cent in 2026 directly related to the situation affecting the residential housing sector.

A report done for RESCON by the Missing Middle Initiative at the University of Ottawa indicates that, given current and anticipated conditions, new home starts and sales across 34 municipalities in the GTA and Greater Golden Horseshoe are going to get worse getting better.

The analysis revealed that starts in the first nine months of 2025 were down substantially from the same period in the previous three years, while industry job losses continued to grow.

The findings are alarming but only confirm what we've been hearing from our builders. It is a particularly dark time for those who work in residential construction.

The analysis shows that housing starts were down 34 per cent in the municipalities over the first three quarters of 2025, relative to the January-to-September periods in 2021-24. Condo apartment starts, meanwhile, were down 51 per cent in 2025 relative to the same earlier time periods.

The analysis estimates that the slowdown in housing over the first nine months of 2025 translated into 35,377 fewer person-years of employment, compared to the same period in the previous three years.

To turn the situation around, I suggest five actions be taken.

First, we must lower the tax burden on new housing. Taxes, fees and levies are too high and putting home ownership out of the reach of most working individuals and families.

Taxes account for 36 per cent of the purchase price of a home. We need to reduce that by eliminating the five-per-cent federal and eight-per-cent provincial sales tax on all new homes.

The province and feds are doing it for first-time buyers of homes purchased up to $1 million, as well as reducing the taxes on a sliding scale for homes between $1 and $1.5 million. However, the initiative needs to be extended to all new home buyers.

Second, runaway development charges (DCs) must also be reduced. They have risen dramatically over the last two decades and are killing the market. In Toronto, the average condo faces $130,200 in DCs.

For a single-detached home in Toronto, development charges vary from around $125,000 in Pickering to about $180,600 in City of Toronto.

An Ontario Housing Supply Task Force recommended in a report four years ago that action be taken to stem exorbitant DCs, but the problem has not been addressed.

Third, steps must be taken to simplify, speed up and digitize the approvals process. It can take up to two years from the time a developer submits a building application to receiving approval.

No industry can work on a timeliness such as that.

Fourth, governments need to do a better job of co-ordinating their efforts around social housing and homelessness, perhaps through a Ministry of Growth Management. Both housing and infrastructure are critical to our future, so we need to be organized with firm targets.

Fifth, governments need to take steps to fix the ailing residential construction industry, as private builders account for 90 per cent of housing supply. The federal Build Canada Homes initiative is important, but it will not solve the problem. The government needs to work with the private sector.

Fixing the crisis won't happen overnight. Home building is a slow process. With very little building anticipated over the next few years, the dire situation will become even more problematic.

The longer we wait to put fixes in place, the tougher it will be. We must act now to chart a brighter future.

HOUSING FIXES

SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

Taxes, fees and levies are too high, putting home ownership out of reach.

By Richard Lyall
for Canadian Real Estate Wealth
Jan. 16, 2026

The crane count is coming down across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), a symbol of what's been happening in the residential construction industry.

There were 235 cranes atop buildings across the region as of Jan. 1, according to a tracking and analysis tool of UrbanToronto (UT), a website that covers construction development and real estate. That's a drop of 44 cranes from the 279 that were atop buildings at the same time last year.

The pipeline of projects continues to dwindle. Developers put forward 318 new projects in 2025, down from 395 the year before. The total number of dwellings proposed fell to 171,578 from 209,490.

UT also reports that the number of cranes is expected to dwindle further as new projects continue to decline.

RESCON and its builders are not surprised by these numbers. They support what we have been seeing for some time now. Residential construction projects are being shelved and many in the workforce are being let go.

Outlook is bleak

The outlook is not good. Housing starts are down by 58 per cent year-over-year in the City of Toronto, and 29 per cent year-over-year across all of Ontario's census metropolitan areas excluding Toronto.

Industry job losses are already in the tens of thousands. More people will lose their jobs in the coming months as homebuilders are faced with difficult but unavoidable choices.

Reports suggest that if significant further public sector action is not taken to support the industry and reverse the ever-increasing job losses, Ontario will likely see a reduction in GDP by as much as 1.5 to 2.5 per cent in 2026 directly related to the situation affecting the residential housing sector.

The next few years could be even worse, with new home sales, starts and completions expected to come in around 30,000 annually in Ontario, according to the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA). That will leave the province well short of the 1.5-million new home goal by 2031.

CANCEA's modelling points to continued weakness in residential construction activity for roughly the next four to five years in Ontario, with starts and completions materially below the last decade's norms.

The near-term consequence, CANCEA notes, is that roughly 35,000 residential construction workers in Ontario could be displaced on average, with displacement skewing heavily toward younger workers but with a meaningful share among older workers, which raises the risk of permanent skill loss.

Behavioural modelling done by CANCEA points to a deep and persistent slowdown. On an annual average basis, the expected scenario implies about 36 per cent fewer starts and 39 per cent fewer completions than the 10-year average.

Taxes are too high

To fix the problem, we must lower the tax burden on new housing so builders can build homes that people can afford. Taxes, fees and levies are too high, putting home ownership out of reach.

Taxes presently account for 36 per cent of the purchase price of a home. The federal and provincial governments are moving to provide some sales tax relief to first-time homebuyers, but the breaks must be extended to all buyers of new homes.

Runaway development charges (DCs), which have risen dramatically over the last two decades, also need to be reduced. DCs for a single-detached home in Toronto are around $125,000 while the average condo faces $130,200 in DCs.

The approvals process must also be digitized and simplified to speed up residential construction. In Toronto, it can take two years from the time a developer submits a building application to receiving approval.

Meanwhile, governments must do a better job of co-ordinating efforts around social housing and homelessness. They are both critical to the future, so we must have firm targets and a synchronized approach.

Finally, governments should concentrate their efforts on working with the private sector to fix what ails the industry, as private builders account for 90 per cent of housing supply.

A healthy residential construction sector is critical to the economic success of Ontario. The impact that the industry has on other sectors is enormous.

RESCON members alone directly employ more than 100,000 workers in Ontario and over 200,000 when indirect industries are included. The total size of the residential construction industry as an employer far exceeds other sectors such as steel, aluminum and auto manufacturing.

There is no time to waste. Fixes must be put in place now before it's too late. There is no good reason to delay.

HOW TO FIX THE CRISIS

People are leaving our cities because they can't find an affordable home in which to live.

The dire straits the industry is in will continue without concerted action. We can only compete with the likes of the U.S. if housing is competitive.

By Richard Lyall
for Real Estate Magazine Canada
Jan. 20, 2026

Many in the residential construction industry were happy to see 2025 in the rear-view mirror. However, 2026 could be equally disastrous for the sector if barriers to new housing are not addressed.

We are mired in the worst housing crisis in generations. Housing targets are not being met. Residential construction projects are being shelved. Sales have slumped. And jobs are disappearing.

A report card done recently for RESCON revealed that housing starts were down down a whopping 34 per cent in municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area and Greater Golden Horseshoe over the first three quarters of 2025, relative to the January-to-September periods in 2021-24.

Condo apartment starts took a much bigger hit. They were down a monstrous 51 per cent in the first nine months of 2025 relative to the same time periods in the three preceding years.

The downturn has translated into 35,377 fewer person-years of employment over the nine-month period.

It is critical that we turn the tide. People are leaving our cities because they can't find an affordable home in which to live.

The out-migration will take a significant toll on our economy.

The good news is that fixes are within our reach. With that, I propose five ways to remedy the situation.

First, we must lower taxes, fees and levies on new housing.

They presently account for 36 per cent of the purchase price of a home. On a $1-million home, $360,000 of that is due to the tax burden.

We are taxing new housing much like alcohol and tobacco. The difference is that housing is a basic need.

The federal and provincial governments have moved to eliminate the five-per-cent sales taxes on new housing up to $1 million for first-time buyers as well as decrease the taxes on a sliding scale for first-time buyers of homes purchased between $1 and $1.5 million.

The province has committed to aligning with the federal rebate, which means an additional eight-per-cent would come off new homes for first-time buyers. Implementation is subject to the passing of federal legislation.

However, the federal legislation, known as Bill C-4, is still stuck in the Senate. It was approved in the House of Commons and sent to the Senate, but prior to Christmas senators voted to adjourn until Feb. 3.

We'd hoped the Upper Chamber would undertake its review and pass the law, but it didn't.

Apparently, it was more important for senators to get home to Christmas parties than tackle legislation aimed at breathing new life into the ailing housing market.

Second, runaway development charges (DCs) must be reduced. DCs are collected from developers for new construction to help fund infrastructure and services like roads, water, sewers, parks, transit, and police.

But they're also being used for projects like daycares and schools. New home buyers should not be forced to pay for growth that benefits entire communities.

Over the years, the fees have increased substantially, worsening affordability of new housing. In Toronto, DCs for a one-bedroom apartment increased to $52,000 in 2024 from $10,000 in 2014.

Although the Ontario Housing Supply Task Force recommended in a report four years ago that action be taken to stem exorbitant DCs, the problem has not been addressed.

Third, the approvals process must be simplified, speeded up and digitized on a common open-source platform as has happened in more advanced jurisdictions. It takes far too long to get projects approved.

Presently, it can take two years from the time a developer submits a building application and receiving approval for that application. The One Ontario platform, for example, offers a solution.

Fourth, government efforts with respect to social housing and homelessness need to be better co-ordinated. Construction and housing could be aligned under a new super Ministry of Growth Management. Given the importance of new housing and infrastructure to our future, we should do as other more advanced jurisdictions have done; get organized with targets on time and on budget.

Fifth, while offsite construction and the new Build Canada Homes initiative are important, they will not solve the problem.

Private-sector builders are responsible for building 90 per cent of housing supply, so it is more critical that the government take steps to fix problems with that market.

A coalition which includes a broad array of industry stakeholders has been formed to advocate for broader sales tax action, changes to DCs, and accelerating the planning approvals processes.

The dire straits the industry is in will continue without concerted action.

We can only compete with the likes of the U.S. if housing is competitive.

IS THE PARKING SPOT DEAD?

By Eric Stober
Real Estate Magazine Canada
Jan. 5, 2026

Buildings in Toronto are including fewer and fewer parking spaces, with some not featuring any spots for residents — a trend experts expect to continue.

Richard Lyall, president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), told Real Estate Magazine it can cost a developer up to $120,000 to build a single parking space, a cost often passed on to consumers and one that affects affordability.

Lyall believes the amount of parking included in new developments should be left to the market rather than enforced through city bylaws. Toronto removed zoning rules requiring parking minimums in 2022 and is now considering doing the same for visitor parking. Lyall said developers will pay the price if they choose not to include parking in areas where it is in demand and then struggle to sell units.

Lyall argues parking is less necessary in transit-rich areas. In neighbourhoods where cars are needed, he said above-ground parking is a better option because it costs less to build. It also leaves open the possibility of converting parking areas to other uses later, such as retail or residential space.

"If someone wants parking, they can find a building that offers it and potentially pay more for their unit," he said.

Real estate platform Wahi found in May that a parking space can add up to $200,000 to the price of a one-bedroom condo.

"These parking spots are really expensive, and you don't need them all," Lyall said. "Leave it to the market."

Jennifer Keesmaat, president and CEO of development company Collecdev Markee, told REM the rising cost of parking is largely due to a city policy introduced in 2022.

That year, Toronto required new developments not to discharge foundation drainage and groundwater into the city's sewer system to avoid overwhelming it.

Often, the only way to comply is by "bathtubbing" below-grade parking — sealing lower levels so water cannot enter.

Keesmaat said the policy is aggressive and significantly increases construction costs.

"It overbuilds infrastructure because if you don't need it — if it's a bone-dry site — you don't need to be pouring that much concrete," she said. "It adds enormous costs."

Keesmaat said Toronto has reached a point where there is little room for more cars. While the city does not explicitly discourage parking, she said projects with fewer spaces often have a better chance of approval.

Removing parking minimums has effectively left the decision to the market, she said, and many developers are opting to include less parking because of the cost.

Her projects include buildings with and without parking. She said it is unrealistic to exclude parking entirely in areas not well served by transit, such as parts of North York.

"There, a developer would be committing suicide," she said. "The units just wouldn't sell."

Keesmaat said parking affects the real estate market when projects stall because parking costs are too high. She added that buildings without parking can make higher density more acceptable to nearby residents because it does not mean more cars on the road.

"Most people who oppose density, they actually don't want more cars in their neighbourhood," she said. "It's not that they don't want more people."

As the city reviews whether to remove visitor parking minimums, Toronto Councillor. Lily Cheng is speaking out against the trend toward fewer parking spaces.

Cheng says she is concerned many buildings now include too few visitor parking spaces — something buyers may overlook when purchasing a unit. She said the lack of visitor parking can have negative mental health effects on residents.

Many proposals in the development pipeline still include little or no visitor parking, Cheng said, and because they have not yet been built, the long-term impacts remain unclear.

Cheng plans to launch a survey to gather more data, but noted the province has designated Major Transit Station Areas in Toronto, limiting the city's ability to require visitor parking minimums near transit hubs. As a result, the city's review of its visitor parking bylaw is on hold until next year.

"You can choose as a resident whether you're going to drive or not, but you might not be able to choose whether your mom can take transit to visit you," Cheng said.

"If there's no visitor parking, it will present a significant challenge for people."

MAKING THE CASE

The dangers of banning construction tiebacks.

By Richard Lyall
for On-Site Magazine
Jan. 16, 2026

The age-old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," is advice that has stood the test of time. It's a philosophical principle that reminds us to leave things alone if they're doing what was intended.

Changing a system or method that is working just for the sake of change itself makes little sense. Tampering can be risky and inadvertently cause problems. It is often best to let things be.

So it is with construction tiebacks, a component commonly used to make retaining walls more stable. They've been around since the 1960s and are popular because they free up construction sites from bulky steel braces, making it easier, faster and more cost-effective to build.

In the GTA alone, more than two million tiebacks have been installed on building sites since the 1970s.

There is a long history of tieback use in Ontario and around the world. The engineering profession has established robust design, construction, and testing standards for tiebacks and they are regularly used in construction of subways, utilities, tunnels and underground parking. They are a proven way to keep an excavation open and safe while a structure is being built.

Tiebacks are permitted in public rights-of-way in most municipalities across Ontario, but there is a move afoot by some in the province, including the City of Toronto, to restrict or ban their use.

This all started because of an incident in 2022 in which a micro-tunnel-boring machine for a sewer project became stuck on old tiebacks along Old Mill Drive in Toronto. The problem could have been avoided if proper records had been provided to the tunnelling consultant or contractor.

Other municipalities have tested the water. In 2019, for example, the Region of Peel looked into banning tiebacks altogether but after considering the impact to construction and housing developments, opted to instead refresh its policies to allow their use, with extra documentation required to ensure utility tunnelling can avoid old tiebacks.

However, there is no good reason to ban the use of tiebacks, especially in light of the current state of the housing market.

Doing so would only add to the cost of residential construction. The systems enable projects to be built faster and cheaper. They simplify excavation and restoration procedures and speed up construction of a project by reducing congestion on a site.

A recent report on tieback use in Ontario found that they enable faster and more economical project delivery by reducing site congestion, allowing concurrent construction activities, and simplifying excavation and restoration procedures.

The report was prepared for RESCON and the Ontario Association of Foundation Specialists by Isherwood Geostructual Engineers, a Toronto area consulting engineering firm. The firm examined the benefits of tiebacks compared to the primary alternative of using steel bracing.

Tiebacks, sometimes referred to as earth anchors, typically consist of a hole drilled into the ground with steel cables inserted. Cement grout is then poured into the holes and the steel cables are attached to the foundation or retaining wall. The cables are stretched to support the wall.

Steel braces are ineffective when a site gets too deep or wide. They need complicated frames and supports. The braces also clutter up excavations and lengthen the time it takes to build a project.

According to the report done for RESCON, tiebacks are a safer way of supporting excavation retaining walls.

"They allow for significant cost and schedule savings, helping to provide more affordable housing and infrastructure," the report notes.

"The Ontario construction industry is geared up for the use of tiebacks, with specialized equipment and trades and over 50 years of expertise in their use. With all the challenges to provide affordable housing and infrastructure, the construction and development industries cannot afford the cost of retooling this vital retaining wall support element."

The report goes on to state that continued acceptance of tiebacks, particularly within municipal rights-of-way, would support housing supply objectives, maintain construction efficiency and speed, and reduce unnecessary additional cost burdens on developers, contractors, and ultimately, end-users.

"Permitting practices in Toronto should continue to reflect current engineering standards and construction realities," the report says.

Discontinuing or restricting the use of tiebacks in Ontario would harm the residential construction industry and raise the cost of building homes. These costs would be passed on to buyers.

Tiebacks are a safe, effective, efficient and proven technology to support excavation retaining walls. There is no reason to change the status quo.

BRANTFORD DOING WELL

New rental apartment construction has risen since 2018

> "Brantford is one of the few bright spots across the province, surpassing its housing target by a substantial amount. Kudos to the city for encouraging residential construction, particularly in the condo and rental apartment sectors.

By Dena Fehir
for Daily Commercial News
Jan. 12, 2026

A new report from the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) outlines 2025 as a stellar year for new rental apartment construction in Brantford.

RESCON's Q3 2025 GTA and GGH Housing Report Card, which was released in early December, says 537 new rental apartments were being built in the city in 2025.

That is a significant upswing, as the report points out an average of only 28 rental apartment units have been built in Brantford annually since 2018.

This sets the city apart from the majority of the municipalities examined in the Greater Toronto Area and Greater Golden Horseshoe that the report found to be in dire states of new home starts.

The report was done by the Middle Missing Initiative at the University of Ottawa, and the assessment is based on data obtained from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Altus Group.

It examined 34 municipalities across nine metro areas and assessed the status of housing sales and construction over the first nine months of 2025, relative to the first nine months of the previous four years.

Each municipality was given a grade, with many receiving a failing mark.

However, Brantford was the only one that received an A, being beat out only by Newmarket, which received an A+.

Overall, collective findings are that over the nine-months studied, housing starts were down from the same period in the previous three-years and industry job losses are on the continual rise.

"Brantford is one of the few bright spots across the province, surpassing its housing target by a substantial amount. Kudos to the city for encouraging residential construction, particularly in the condo and rental apartment sectors. Housing starts in Brantford have increased significantly compared to the same point in previous years and resulted in the addition of 1,240 new jobs to the local economy," said RESCON president Richard Lyall.

Of particular interest in Brantford are 288 condo apartment starts in 2025 versus an average of 94 over the years 2021 to 2024. For the same period, Brantford boasts 537 rental apartment starts last year versus an average of 28 over the aforementioned four-years.

These findings both warranted an A+ grade or 100 per cent grade in the study.

According to City of Brantford officials, 2025 was a standout year due to a combination of factors.

For example, since 2020, the city has implemented improvements to the building permit and development approval processes to make them faster, more efficient, and more accessible.

This includes the launch of an online permit application system called Cloudpermit, digital plan review tools and a reorganization of the building department that increased technical staff by 30 per cent.

"By modernizing our building permit process, introducing incentive programs like development charge waivers for CMHC-financed affordable units and the Tax Incremental Grant program, and maintaining development charges that are far lower than those in the GTA, we've made it easier for developers to bring much-needed housing to our community," said Brantford Mayor Kevin Davis.

"Our single-tier structure also simplifies approvals, which developers value. This progress not only helps meet the demand for rental units but also drives job creation and economic vitality. We're excited to build on this success in 2026 and continue shaping a prosperous future for Brantford."

"The steps taken by Brantford, which include getting zoning and site plans approved faster, is encouraging as the slow approvals process is one of the biggest problems facing builders. It is refreshing to see a municipality being so aggressive in streamlining the process," added Lyall. "It is critical for municipalities across the province to take action to speed up the approvals process and get shovels in the ground quicker."

HOUSING REPORT CARD

COST CUTTING IS KEY

To turn the housing crisis around, and stir the residential construction industry, the cost of housing must come down.

By Richard Lyall
for Canadian Forest Industries
Jan. 5, 2025

With Canada knee-deep in a housing crisis that's only expected to get worse, the cost of building new homes must be reduced.

There are a couple of very good reasons for this. For starters, under the present taxation system, builders can't build homes that normal working families and individuals can afford. Second, the residential construction industry accounts for a substantial chunk of Ontario's economy.

So goes the industry, so goes the economy.

Canada's construction industry accounts for about 7.5 per cent of the national GDP, representing a significant economic sector that supports over 1.6 million jobs and generates around $162 billion annually, though figures fluctuate with economic cycles and project booms.

The residential building share of construction generally accounts for a third of total industry GDP, or $54 billion.

To put that in perspective, by comparison, the auto manufacturing industry contributed around $16 billion to Canada's GDP in 2024, according to the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association.

Take the construction industry out of the equation and, "Houston, we have a problem."

A report prepared recently for RESCON looked at the state of the already-dire housing situation in 34 municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area and Greater Golden Horseshoe region. The picture wasn't pretty.

Housing starts in the first nine months of 2025 were down 34 per cent in those municipalities over the first three quarters of 2025, relative to the January-to-September periods in 2021-24. Condo apartment starts were down 51 per cent in 2025 relative to the same earlier time periods.

The analysis estimated that the reduction in housing starts over the first nine months of this year translates into 35,377 fewer person-years of employment.

Meanwhile, projects are being shelved which will have a trickle-down effect on the economy. Sales have been stopped on more than 3,200 new units between 2020 and 2025. The cost of building is just too high. Only 54 new condos were sold in Toronto in October, down from 145 in October 2024.

This, of course, is all happening at a time when we need more housing - not less - and with tariffs imposed by the Trump regime threatening to put even more pressure on the Canadian economy - who knows what the future will hold.

What we do know is that the downturn in housing construction will result in a huge hit to the Canadian economy and job losses will hurt Canadian families. Many people are also leaving cities like Toronto because they can't find an affordable place to live. A poll by Environics Analytics for CTV News reports that last year 35,000 households left the Greater Toronto Area.

Presently, a Canadian home costs about 14 times the average disposable income. For comparison, the ratio is 12.5 times in Los Angeles and 9.8 times in New York.

Meanwhile, the cost of constructing a residential building in Canada has also increased 58 per cent since 2020. And it could get worse, thanks to U.S. tariffs, according to federal briefing materials.

To turn the situation around, and stir the residential construction industry, the cost of housing must come down. The best way to do that is by lowering the tax burden.

Taxes, fees and levies presently account for 36 per cent of the cost of a new home. On a $1-million home, $360,000 of the price tag is due to taxes.

Development charges (DCs), in particular, are out of control. The fees have increased substantially over the years. CMHC reports that DCs alone could add more than $100,000 to the cost of some new units in cities across the nation.

Toronto has the most expensive fees in Canada. DCs make up nine per cent of the cost of a detached home in the city. An average condo in the city faces $130,200 in costs, while for the average detached home, municipal development charges account for about $180,600 of the cost.

> **“There is substantial evidence to indicate that lowering the tax burden on housing would boost local economies and bring revenue into government coffers.**

There is substantial evidence to indicate that lowering the tax burden on housing would boost local economies and bring revenue into government coffers.

A report from John Molson School of Business at Concordia University concluded that a $3-billion housing-supply incentive program could generate $672 million in recurring annual tax inflows.

Erkan Yönder, associate professor of real estate and finance at Concordia, correctly noted in a statement that housing affordability is not just a social issue, it's really an economic one too.

High housing costs, he said, affect everything from family finances to business productivity and municipal budgets and, due to the growing pressures on the economy, it is important to do everything we can.

When the residential construction industry is working as it should, money flows into government coffers from taxes and workers earn decent wages which they, in turn, end up spending.

The residential construction industry is presently on life support. To resurrect the sector, governments must take further action to lower taxes. Our economy and our future depend on it.

WOMEN IN THE TRADES

PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE

By Richard Lyall
for Canadian Contractor
Jan. 2, 2026

The number of women working in the skilled trades and other occupations in the construction industry is heading in the right direction, but there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Some progress has been made in recent years to further the experiences of women in the skilled trades, with latest reports indicating that the number of women in the industry has been steadily rising for the last several years. Yet, gaps remain and many more need to be recruited.

There is an urgency to removing hurdles that are impeding women and other underrepresented groups from working and succeeding in the construction sector, as more than 245,000 construction workers, or 20 per cent of the workforce, are expected to retire by 2032.

That point was made clear in a recent survey released by the Ontario Building and Construction Tradeswomen (OBCT), a standing committee of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, and at a Women in Construction webinar hosted by RESCON.

The OBCT survey found that there is a "significant need" to expand and diversify the sector's workforce over the long term as anticipated growth combined with increased retirements creates a projected need to recruit more than 154,000 workers in Ontario over the next decade.

Recruitment and retention of women will be critical during this period, as they currently make up only five per cent of the construction sector in Ontario (a total of 22,570 in 2024), according to BuildForce Canada. That is up a bit from the traditional percentage of four per cent.

The number of women on-the-tools in Ontario (excluding those in roles such as managers and supervisors) was 14,200 in 2024.

"There are many hurdles for women and other underrepresented groups to working and succeeding in the construction sector which must be addressed," the survey states.

The research initiative was done to explore how to better support women to enter and stay in the construction trades.

Overall, the report found that many tradeswomen in Ontario report strong and positive experiences working in the trades, but they also face many barriers throughout their journeys, starting with initial awareness through to career advancement – with very few women in leadership positions.

The findings were interesting. For example, researchers found that most tradeswomen who were surveyed plan to continue their careers over the long term.

They also found that many women discover trades later in their careers, suggesting untapped potential if they were reached earlier.

Meanwhile, the survey results showed that tradeswomen face unique structural barriers in construction, such as lack of appropriate facilities and equipment, that existing efforts have not gone far enough to address. More than half of tradeswomen also reported experiencing harassment at work.

At the RESCON webinar, speakers highlighted that government programs, marketing campaigns and career fairs have helped boost the number of women enrolling in construction apprenticeship programs, but for the most part they're still underrepresented in the industry.

Indeed, latest figures show the industry is still mostly male-dominated. In Ontario, women represent roughly five per cent of construction apprentices.

Sadly, historical data also indicates women are more likely to drop out of apprenticeship training programs than their male counterparts.

It seems age-old stereotypes still plague the industry and, because of the limited number of women in construction, there are relatively few mentors for new recruits to interact with.

Charmaine Williams, associate minister of women's social and economic opportunity, told the webinar that there has never been a better time for women to land a job in the building trades.

However, webinar participants indicated there is a complicating factor to getting women into the trades. After completing their pre-apprenticeship program, finding an employer sponsor can be difficult.

Emily Arrowsmith, director of research and programs at the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, said many women can't find an employer who is willing to take them on as a Level 1 apprentice.

Men still dominate the apprenticeship training system in Canada. Eighty-nine per cent of new apprentices are men and 11 per cent are women. Fewer women than men complete their training programs.

To replace anticipated retirements, the industry must recruit more women to take up the trades.

The Labourers have had some success with recruiting and retaining more women. The union has been particularly active in working with the community and organizations to recruit women.

There have been more women at union meetings which shows the effort is paying off.

One thing's for certain. You cannot change what you refuse to confront. Every journey begins with a first step.

> **"Some progress has been made in recent years to get more women into the construction trades, but there is plenty of room for improvement. There is an urgency to removing hurdles that are impeding women and other underrepresented groups from working and succeeding in the construction sector.**

MEDIA REPORT

ReNew Canada
RESCON held its annual general meeting in Vaughan, with Ontario Premier Doug Ford making an appearance as the keynote speaker at the event. Click here for the article.

HPAC Magazine
RESCON, in partnership with Smart Safety Solutions, has put together a guide to help employers build a policy governing the use of Automated External Defibrillators in Ontario, HPAC Magazine reports.

Rock to Road
RESCON) has developed a guide for employers on the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Click here for the article.

Ontario Construction News
RESCON, in partnership with safety management services provider Smart Safety Solutions, has published a guide to help employers build a policy governing the use of Automated External Defibrillators. Click here for the article.

Daily Commercial News
A guide created by RESCON and Smart Safety Solutions outlines 13 steps constructors can use to build their own specific policies governing the use of Automated External Defibrillators. Click here for the article.

CBC News
RESCON president Richard Lyall explained that he would like to see inclusionary zoning eliminated entirely because it doesn't really work. Click here for the article.

CHCH TV
Builders are welcoming the pause for three cities to require a certain percentage of affordable units in new buildings near transit stations, Lyall said in a CHCH TV article.

Canadian Contractor
RESCON has put together a guide that outlines 13 steps to help employers build a policy governing the use of Automated External Defibrillators, Canadian Contractor reports.

Canadian Contractor
Premier Ford told RESCON's annual general meeting that residential construction has never been as important as it is now, Canadian Contractor magazine reports.

Canadian Forest Industries
Premier Ford says his government is ready to work with residential builders to kick-start the ailing housing industry, Canadian Forest Industries reports.

Senso Magazine
Development charges are choking housing affordability, Lyall writes in a column in Senso Magazine.

Daily Commercial News
Premier Ford told RESCON's AGM that he is ready to work with builders to kick-start the ailing residential construction industry, Daily Commercial News reports.

Ontario Construction News
Many were happy to see 2025 in the rear-view mirror. But this year could be worse if remaining barriers to new housing are not decisively addressed, Lyall writes in an article in Ontario Construction News.

Ontario Construction News
Ontario Construction News reports on RESCON's annual general meeting.

CREB TV

Lyall was on a special episode of CREB TV to discuss new construction in Toronto and Ontario. Click here to listen to the episode.

RCCAO REPORT

- RCCAO took part in Minister Bethlenfalvy's budget consultations on Jan. 14, emphasizing our key asks of further tax relief to help restart Ontario's stalled housing industry and continued investment in critical infrastructure across the province.
- On Jan. 28, a new report titled Steel Bracing Vs. Tiebacks A Proposed Regulatory Change That Study Shows To Be Counter-Productive and Costly was released by RESCON and the Ontario Association of Foundation Specialists (OAFS) in partnership with RCCAO.
- RCCAO was pleased to see the Government of Ontario begin construction of the new Bowmanville GO extension in Durham Region.
- On Jan. 16, RCCAO was happy to attend the Government of Ontario's announcement on significantly expanding the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program to facilitate more housing across the province.
- RCCAO continues its leadership in underground utility locates through active participation in Ontario One Call's Stakeholder Advisory Council, helping ensure improvements to the locates process benefits critical infrastructure and construction development.
- RCCAO's newsletter is expanding from a quarterly to monthly publication - to read it and subscribe, click here.
- RCCAO remains active on all of its communication channels - stay on top of infrastructure news on our LinkedIn and X/Twitter pages.

The SouthWest Residential Construction Labour Bureau (SRCLB) held its third annual general meeting on Jan. 29 in Burlington.

Perth-Wellington MPP Matt Rae and Hamilton Mountain MPP Monica Ciriello joined SRCLB staff and board members and RESCON staff at the event.

Those attending the meeting heard from the MPPs and talked about housing solutions.

Marlon Bray, executive vice president at Clark Construction Management, provided a housing update.

CLICK HERE

to check out RESCON's site