

# New research centre is good news for condo buyers



RICHARD LYALL  
**RESCON**

**W**hen it comes to building into the sky, Canada is walking tall.

Our wonderful country is a respected leader internationally for constructing tall buildings, especially for residential projects. And Toronto is leading the way for the Great White North.

In a study on tall buildings by Chicago-based research firm the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, Canada stands eighth in the world behind only China, the U.S., Japan, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, Australia and Singapore for buildings over 150 metres (67, including 39 in Toronto). This is no small feat for a country of only 35 million people.

With more than half of the country's tallest buildings in

Toronto, it makes sense that Ontario's capital becomes Canada's global leader in tall buildings research.

That's why the Tall Buildings Research Centre will be housed at the U of T's Civil Engineering Department after being set up by three partners: academia, industry and government.

The builders association that I represent, RESCON — the Residential Construction Council of Ontario — has teamed up with the University of Toronto's Department of Engineering and the federal government.

So why is this important to you, the new-home buyer?

Because this is yet another way that our industry is demonstrating its commitment to construction excellence: the research centre will focus on

improving building productivity, performance of building related systems and energy performance. That means an always improving living experience for condo dwellers.

We want our city, region, province and country to be at the forefront of current tall building research. There is no shortage of demand for condo living and with the province encouraging intensification in urban centres through the provincial growth plan, Places to Grow, we are trying to build on the province's blueprint.

Meanwhile, our current generation of first-time new-home buyers, Millennials, are condo-driven. They want to be close to the action and work. And most would prefer to keep busy by socializing and obtaining new experiences rather than sitting on a Lawn-Boy in the suburbs and maintaining a big low-rise home.

The need to build tall buildings will grow exponentially and will require innovative solutions. Brenda McCabe, the centre's research director and associate professor at U of T's Department of Civil Engineer-



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ing, has set the vision for the centre.

Sam Tassone, vice-president of high-rise for The Daniels Corporation, saw a natural partnership between industry, academia and government. Indeed, it is these very connections working together that foster regional powerhouses.

The centre has an advisory committee dedicated to construction innovation made up

of RESCON builders, including Daniels, Menkes Developments and Tridel Corporation, as well as yours truly.

On the academic side, U of T is drawing from its pool of engineering experts to direct initial graduate research projects. As for the government, it is providing funding in a collaborative research role.

For this trio, this is a win-win-win.

The innovations our research centre will produce for quality of construction, energy efficiency and comfort will help new-home buyers enjoy condo life even more.

— **Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, has represented residential construction in Ontario since 1991. Contact him @RESCONprez or at lyall@rescon.com.**

## Calling for a new 'board of director-at-large'



HOWARD BOGACH  
**YOUR NEW HOME**

**R**ecently, I was asked to help someone get a seat on Tarion's Board of Directors. The question took me by surprise for a number of reasons, not least of which is the fact that as President and CEO of Tarion I have no voice or influence on who sits on the Board of Directors. In fact, in my role I am responsible to the Board of Directors not the other way around.

Tarion's Board has three Director at large positions each with a three-year term and set up on a staggered basis. In essence each year Tarion is open to receiving applications from members of the public. Directors may be reappointed to a maximum of three terms.

So, what qualifications are being sought? The candidate should have proven experience and knowledge in specialized fields which may include for example, human resources, consumer protection, real estate, administrative law, insurance, consumer advocacy and/or warranty protection. This candidate cannot be a Tarion employee, be employed by or directly associated with the Ministry of Government & Consumer Services, or be an Ontario new home builder or a representative of other Ontario builders.

It is an important job that requires patience, a commitment to consumer protection and principled thinking, and time — a lot of time.

Many of the issues that our Directors address are intricate and complex. They can have a tremendous impact on the new home warranty protection that hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents count on every year.

A Tarion Director must possess integrity and a willingness to articulate his or her views frankly and respectfully. This position is about good, effective governance. Tarion Board members are held to a high ethical standard, and are expected to critically assess corporate strategies and operations in light of Tarion's responsibilities and purpose.

Forward thinking and knowledge of potential changes and trends facing the future of the new home industry are also necessary.

Tarion plays an essential role in Ontario's new home building industry. At our core, we are a consumer protection organization that ensures new home builders are qualified and skilled, and the homes they build are safe and sound.

We look to Tarion's Board of

Directors to make sure we are fulfilling this important role. Since Tarion's mandate is widespread within the new home building industry, we require proficiency in many different areas.

Some recent developments that Tarion's Board of Directors have helped shape include enhancing our new builder registration requirements and addressing and developing new ways to combat illegal building.

As a whole, the Board offers an impressive range of skills representing builders, consumers, the financial community as well as expertise with provincial and municipal levels of government.

Over the years, Tarion's Board of Directors has evolved significantly. In 2013, Tarion announced a change in the composition of the Board of Directors to reflect a more formal skills-based selection process as well as balanced stakeholder representation.

That same year, Tarion was awarded an Excellence in Governance Award from the Cana-



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dian Society of Corporate Secretaries. Tarion is also committed to the training and development of its Directors.

I am very proud of the achievements of our Board of Directors and their contribution to Tarion's effective operation. If you think you would be an asset to Tarion's Board, fill out the nomination package on Tarion.com which will be posted in December.

Applications will be accepted until January 22, 2016. Your par-

ticipation on Tarion's Board could provide you an opportunity to contribute to the program and positively impact both new homeowners and builders across the province.

— **Howard Bogach is president and CEO of Tarion Warranty Corp., a private corporation established in 1976 to protect the rights of new homebuyers and to regulate new home builders. Visit [www.tarion.com](http://www.tarion.com).**