

NEWHOMES

E-permitting system would open housing supply bottleneck



Construction on Amico's 76-unit building in Georgetown is set to start on September 24. Three penthouse units are still available.

Construction set to start at 42 Mill St. in Georgetown

With the groundwork now complete, the shovels are raised and construction is set to start at 42 Mill St. in Georgetown.

To celebrate, Amico hosted a Summer Strawberry Social on July 24th at their Tomas Pearce designed sales centre. Priced from the mid \$400,000s, home buyers can choose from a few select one and two-bedroom designs throughout the 76-unit building and have the opportunity to own one of three final penthouse suites still available.

Suites feature spacious open-concept floor plans, oversized terraces, European-style kitchens with integrated appliances, recessed pot lights throughout the units and exclusive access to electric car charging stations.

42 Mill St. is the beginning of a new community located in Georgetown offering locals and newcomers access to the quality of life and community lifestyle.

Amenities include a fully-appointed fitness studio, an outdoor terrace with fireside lounge and BBQ and an indoor party room with adjacent business lounge, all designed to provide the privacy and sense of community only found in mid-rise developments.

Set at the corner of Mill Street and Highway 7, 42 Mill St. will be surrounded by an array of social and recreational amenities including schools, the Halton Hills Public Library, and The Club at North Halton. The building is adjacent to the newly developed Lions Club Park.

For outdoor enthusiasts, Georgetown offers beautiful scenic trails including the Georgetown's Silver Creek Trail with access to the Terra Cotta Conservation Area. Residents will enjoy the close proximity to downtown Georgetown and the Georgetown GO station. A 55-minute direct train ride takes residents right into Union Station.



RICHARD LYALL
RESCON

(This is the second in a three-part series on the report Streamlining the Development and Building Approvals Process in Ontario.)

The GTA has a housing supply shortage for new-home buyers, but there is a simple solution to getting more houses on the market.

Queen's Park has an opportunity to increase the housing supply: more detached, semi-detached, townhouses, mid-rise apartments, high-rise condos — whether to own or rent.

Aside from the lack of sufficient investment in transit and other infrastructure for decades, a long and convoluted development approvals process is contributing to the restriction of the housing supply chain — and that's what our report addresses.

While the first part of this series tackled the need for more transparency and how that would help add accountability and certainty to the process to encourage continued investment by builders, today I'm focusing on the electronic permitting process and how it can speed up the approvals process.

How bad are approvals in Toronto?

According to a World Bank ranking of jurisdictions around the planet, the city (representing Canada) ranks 54th for routine and technical approvals.

So how can we fix this? One big step in the right direction would be to implement a common platform for electronic permitting (e-permitting). What that means is Premier Ford's government can establish an open-source platform to allow civil servants across the province working on the building approvals process to use e-permitting. This would get rid of pen and paper, saving hundreds of hours of work every year and streamlining the process.

Jurisdictions such as Finland and Singapore have introduced e-permitting with great success. In fact, Singapore's experience boasted big savings, according to e-permitting provider Evolta:

- Time, 65%
- Manpower, 44%
- Printing cost, 72%
- Storage costs, 54%

This also would create an interconnected network of e-permitting systems across the province, connecting all relevant municipal departments and provincial approval agencies.

In fact, the 2017 Development Approval Roundtable Action Plan, created through a partnership of government and industry (including RESCON), recommended that the province implement a pilot project for an e-permitting system for these

very reasons.

With quicker approvals, bottlenecks in the housing supply chain are alleviated, giving buyers and renters a larger supply of new housing to choose from.

Sounds too good to be true? It's not. It really is this easy — this is exactly the low-hanging fruit that we strongly believe the Ford government wants to pick in its bid to cut red tape, fostering a stronger business environment in the public sector.

After all, the government proved it understands the merit in cutting red tape to support new office and retail space in Toronto's Lower Don area which will create 50,000 new jobs — imagine the possibilities for the rest of the province.

And implementing the e-permitting system would not involve any layoffs — redeployment would be key to its success.

We would like to see our recommendations implemented within three years by the Ontario government so that builders can continue to create the great quality construction our province and industry are known for. Unlocking the GTA's housing supply chain is the jump-start our economy needs.

— **Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, has represented the building industry in Ontario since 1991. Contact him @RESCONprez or at media@rescon.com.**

Prioritizing infrastructure helps support growth



DAVE WILKES
BILD

Time is of the essence when it comes to building communities. New GTA residents need homes, offices and infrastructure now, not years from now. But building or updating infrastructure to support growth is a challenge when communities face onerous regulatory hurdles.

One example is York Region. Expected to grow to 1,790,000 residents by 2041, the region has determined that its northern communi-

ties of Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury need a new waste water treatment plant and modifications to an existing sewage system.

York Region has conducted extensive scientific studies and consultations with stakeholders, and selected advanced technologies to meet the rigorous wastewater quality regulations that apply in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Planning for the project, known as Upper York Sewage Solutions, began almost a decade ago, yet it remains unbuilt. The region submitted an Environmental Assessment report to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in July 2014, and was informed in late 2016 that

while the Environmental Assessment had met all requirements, the Ministry needs to consult with a local first nation before it can give final approval. A year and a half later, York Region is still waiting for a decision about the project's future.

Both existing residents and potential homeowners are affected by this delay. The current waste water system uses a treatment method that is one of the oldest and least effective in the province. The proposed system would be among the best in the world and would ensure longer-term sustainability for the communities in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

In addition, building and devel-

opment are slower and more complex until sewage capacity increases. How can Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury accommodate the more than 150,000 new residents and employees they expect to receive by 2031, without new houses, condos and offices? And how many more potential new residents will they miss out on because red tape is holding up the infrastructure needed to support building and development?

Many other municipalities are also struggling to accommodate growth due to lengthy bureaucratic delays. Our GTA communities deserve better solutions. We all have the power to take action. We can speak out to

our politicians about better aligning approval processes with the provincial growth plan and prioritizing the building of much-needed infrastructure.

As the Oct. 22 municipal elections approach, we invite you to visit the website of our Build for Growth campaign, www.buildforgrowth.ca, get informed about the issues and send a letter to your local candidate.

— **Dave Wilkes is President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD). For the latest industry news and new home data, follow BILD on Twitter, @bildgta, or visit www.bildgta.ca.**