



## **ROSSI: Adequate housing supply crucial to maintain workforce**

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Construction workers build a new home in Oakville. (THE CANADIAN PRESS)

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Businesses are an integral part of every community in Ontario: Housing policies, land use planning, public transit investment, and population growth have an inordinate impact on industry in every corner of the province.

Every employer needs access to hard-working people with the rights skills.

Yet, limited access to affordable and desirable housing affects Ontario's ability to maintain our world-class workforce. The high cost of shelter — driven by a lack of supply and the right mix of housing close to transit — is limiting employers' ability to attract and retain the talent they need to be competitive.

Efficient land use planning is arguably one of the most critical components to economic development. Housing, in particular, is critical to Ontario's competitiveness.

For Ontario's businesses to compete globally, we need to continue to grow our population and build capacity. If we want to attract new Canadians and talent, we need to ensure we have affordable and diverse living opportunities that are built at the same speed our population has the potential to grow.

However, unnecessary and burdensome regulations have prevented us from building homes in a timely and efficient manner.

On average, it takes approximately 250 days for construction permits to be fulfilled in Canada — a longer time frame than in any other G7 country and nearly three times as long as in the United States.

Inefficient land use regulations which, while originally intended to ensure continuity in commerce and community, jeopardize Ontario's continued prosperity.

Much in the same way communities require a populace, industry requires employees. Land use regulations which hinder development of new residential communities and commercial opportunities impair the ability of our cities to grow.

One of the fastest growing jurisdictions in North America, the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), is expected to experience unprecedented growth over the next few decades — growth which is integral to maintaining Ontario's global trading position.

By 2041, the GGH's population is projected to grow by 50%, to 13.5 million and the number of jobs is targeted to grow from 4.5 million to 6.3 million.

According to a report released by the Residential Construction Council of Canada, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, which encompasses the GGH, is at risk of missing provincial population targets if action is not taken to reduce burdensome red tape.

Analysis of how land use restriction could hinder economic growth have painted a disturbing future, with \$1.95 billion in GDP and 165,000 homes potential unnecessarily forgone due to regulatory hindrance.

A vocal advocate of affordability and density, the Ontario Chamber Network has worked diligently to propose policies which could serve to alleviate problems before future opportunity is lost completely.

This is why we largely support Bill 108, More Homes, More Choices Act.

Among other implications, the bill aims to reduce planning decisions to 120 days for official plans and 90 days for zoning by-laws, and broaden the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal's capacity to both adjudicate and provide decisive ruling on major land use planning matters.