



THE COUNCIL:

Construction industry targets red tape

by Richard Lyall, RESCON

There is no reason why Canada should be ranked 54th out of 190 countries measured by the World Bank for a routine building approval.

The year 2018 will be marked for big steps in cutting red tape and speeding up the development approval process.

Frankly, there's no excuse that a wealthy country like Canada should be ranked 54th out of 190 countries measured by the World Bank for a routine building approval (construction permitting for a warehouse in Toronto).

I feel that this was an important topic for our debut contribution to the Builder Bites Newsletter as this is an unacceptable statistic for Toronto, Ontario and Canada that you should know about.

That's why approvals are being targeted by both the builders council that I represent – RESCON (Residential Construction Council of Ontario) – as well as the cross-sectional construction organization that I'm proud to chair this year – CDAO (Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario).

This is a continuation of a lot of good work that RESCON and other CDAO members – including BILD and OHBA – took part in through the provincial Development Roundtable Action Plan. The 14-point plan unveiled last April includes implementing the use of e-permitting as well as streamlining development processes to boost the supply of new housing.

So, what does that mean for a new homebuyer? It's simple; we're trying to get more supply on the market to slow down the increasing costs of new housing. Supply inventory in the GTA has dropped to less than half of what it was 10 years ago while more than 100,000 people move into the region every year.

But there is no silver bullet to the GTA's supply issue. It will take a multi-pronged approach to help free up supply for new homebuyers, including building with innovative new practices (including tall wood), off-site construction and panelization.

All three building practices will continue to grow in 2018 as pieces of panelized homes are constructed in a factory then shipped to sites around the GTA like massive bits of Lego. The actual on-site assembly time is reduced by months and this can save new homebuyers a lot of time.

Back to development approvals: read this space this spring when RESCON will write more about its latest published report on best practices to streamline and improve Ontario's development and approvals process. The report will have three themes: streamlining routine planning and applicable law approvals; expanding e-permitting in Ontario; and enhancing the role of professionals in regulatory compliance.

The red tape problems we are looking for include those related to excessive delays; excessive costs; problems with accountability and corporate culture within regulatory agencies; unnecessary or unclear procedures, processes and requirements; as well as last-minute/surprise requirements.



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