



October 14, 2020

The Honourable Rod Phillips  
Minister of Finance  
c/o Budget Secretariat  
Frost Building North, 3rd floor  
95 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1Z1

*Submitted electronically*

**RE: Fall 2020 Budget Consultations**

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) is pleased to submit its Fall 2020 Budget submission.

There are several industry-related elements that should be included in the Fall Budget including support for a province-wide electronic permitting system; training and apprenticeship programs; and Building Code harmonization efforts.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide the Ministry with our recommendations and look forward to continuing our work with the Province.

Regards,

Richard Lyall  
President



## **1. EXPAND THE USE OF ELECTRONIC PERMITTING IN PLANNING, ENGINEERING AND BUILDING PERMITTING AREAS**

An e-permitting system would allow for all approval agencies within a municipality and external commenting agencies to be linked together on a common platform. Through [One Ontario](#), a coalition of organizations including RESCON and OBOA, we have been working to develop guidelines for digital platform that could be used by all Ontario municipalities for the development approval and permitting processes.

The initiative would set the stage for a comprehensive e-permitting system that would replace the current patchwork for varying municipal systems and streamline the process across municipalities by developing guidelines that will establish a set of provincial data exchange standards thus introducing predictability and transparency.

This will result in an elastic housing supply as shown by our latest [report](#), which found that an additional 33,100 homes could be built in Ontario over the next five years if the development approval processes were reduced by six months. Streamlining and greater project predictability will also encourage more investment and increase the units produced even further.

- A. The Province should endorse an Ontario-wide data platform and support the effort to develop best practice approvals process standards that municipalities could then be encouraged to adopt.***
- B. Developing this Ontario-wide data platform should be led by the Province with the support of industry and municipalities. Provincial financial support and matching municipal building department reserve funds can help to fund this work.***

## **2. ADDRESS MUNICIPAL OVERREACH**

A significant impediment to a more streamlined development approvals process in Ontario is municipal overreach, especially regarding green building standards that are beyond the Ontario Building Code (OBC). This is becoming an increasingly concerning trend as more and more GTA municipalities, including City of Toronto, have, or continue to, develop their own unique municipal green requirements.

These municipal requirements create issues for industry builders in terms of policy confusion and duplication of regulations vis-à-vis the OBC but also in terms of negatively impacting housing affordability, building costs and convoluting the approvals process. Given the Canada-wide Building Code harmonization efforts currently underway, it is unnecessary and counterproductive for municipalities to undertake these divergent green building programs.

- A. The Province should continue to support the Building Code harmonization efforts currently underway and explore ways to remind municipalities that the OBC supersedes all municipal bylaws and provides high level of energy efficiency.***



### **3. CONTINUE INVESTING AND SUPPORTING TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION**

The government has made great strides in addressing the construction labour shortage through focusing on promoting the many careers in the trades. Construction continues to have a marketing problem and young people and those that “influence” them (parents and guidance counselors) will only be interested in the skilled trades if they are educated and stigmas attached to construction careers are eliminated. Articulating clear career pathways will help interested youth transition into employed youth.

The success of our industry is dependent on attracting and retaining a skilled and stable workforce, which includes greater representation of women and other marginalized groups into the skilled trades.

- A. The Province should improve incentives for employers to hire and train young people in voluntary trades.***
- B. The Province should invest in identifying and breaking down existing barriers youth, including those from underrepresented groups, face***
- C. The Province should invest in programs with proven records for successfully getting interested youth into skilled trades careers.***