



February 12, 2021

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy  
Minister of Finance  
c/o Budget Secretariat  
Frost Building North, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
95 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z1

*Submitted electronically*

**RE: Spring 2021 Budget Consultations**

RESCON is pleased to submit its Spring 2021 Budget submission.

There are several industry-related elements that should be included in the budget including support for a province-wide comprehensive electronic permitting system; training and apprenticeship programs; and continued COVID-19 mitigation resources for the construction industry.

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

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL', is positioned above the name of the sender.

Richard Lyall  
President



## 1. EXPAND THE USE OF ELECTRONIC PERMITTING FOR DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

The number of development applications continues to increase to meet housing demands yet limited resources at the municipal approvals level act as a bottleneck in the ability of the private sector to deliver much needed housing. Moreover, historically, municipalities have relied on antiquated paper-based submissions and review, leading to further inefficiencies in the approvals process. This reliance on paper-based submissions in the development and building approvals process has further exacerbated approval timelines as the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed municipal staff to work remotely without the necessary tools in place to do their jobs efficiently.

A 2020 CANCEA [report](#) showed the economic benefits to speeding up the development approvals process by adopting a comprehensive and centralized development planning and building e-permitting system across Ontario. Specifically, regions in Ontario could see thousands of additional housing units and attract millions of dollars in additional jobs and investment. The GTA alone could see up to 100,700 additional housing units by 2040 if there was a reduction in delays to the approvals process by six months and a 10-per-cent increase in investment.

While digitization of the approvals process is occurring in various Ontario municipalities, existing e-permitting programs are siloed, fragmented, and often only focus on a single department within a municipality rather than a holistic look at all development related applicable law agencies within the Province.

Through [One Ontario](#), a coalition of organizations including RESCON, we have developed a proposal for a common Development Approval Data and Information Exchange Standard; a Central Review Platform; and Central Analytics and Reporting Platform for use by municipalities, Provincial Ministries, Conservation Authorities, and other approval agencies in Ontario for the development and permitting processes.

- a) The Province should support the One Ontario proposal through the Onwards Acceleration Fund. Specifically, the One Ontario proposal is requesting \$1,975,000 from the Province.***

## 2. CONTINUED FOCUS ON COVID-19 MITIGATION WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The government's leadership in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 has been integral to the construction industry's continued operation. Collaboration with industry resulted in the construction industry being the first to produce sector-specific guidelines that continue to be used and evolved today. Industry and government collaboration also lead to the success of the Ontario Together Fund and the Workplace PPE Supplier Directory.



- a) ***The Province should continue working with the construction industry to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 including through enhanced screening measures and rapid-testing.***
- b) ***The Province should continue to maintain existing efforts including the Workplace PPE Supplier Directory to ensure that PPE supply is sustained throughout the remainder of the pandemic.***

### **3. SUSTAINED SUPPORT FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION SKILLED TRADES**

The government's prioritization of promoting careers in construction through increased awareness to students, guidance counselors, and parents is appreciated and is a step in the right direction to getting more young people interested in the skilled trades. It's integral that pathways into the skilled trades are clear and seamless so that there is no drop-off throughout a young person's career journey.

Sustaining a skilled trades labour force is directly related to our ability to maintain housing supply in Ontario.

- a) ***The Province increase support for skilled trades programs with proven high placement and retention rates to further enhance skilled trades opportunities for women and Black youth.***
- b) ***Partnering with and supporting Employers, the Province can improve and fund pathways into in-demand trades such as elevator installers/mechanics, crane operators, and finishing trades (drywall, tile setting, and trim installation).***