

Ease GTHA housing crisis by boosting family-sized rentals and ‘missing middle’ homes, report suggests

TORONTO (CNW: May 23, 2017) – At the heart of the GTHA housing crisis, a report released today says about 70% of Ontarians live in homes with too little or too much space for their households.

The report by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) is called [“Understanding the Forces Driving the Shelter Affordability Issue.”](#) Launched this morning at Ryerson University, the report uses big data analytics that consider more than 40 factors affecting housing affordability.

The analysis demonstrates that the housing affordability crisis in Ontario (and the GTHA specifically) is being driven by these linked issues:

- Insufficient housing choice: There is an availability mismatch in terms of size, location/transit access and tenure.
- A lack of housing productivity: the construction of ground-oriented, medium density housing within existing urban areas will improve the productive use of land.
- Many families forced into worse options: people buy when they should rent, or move farther away in search of more affordable housing.

“According to our research, at least \$100 billion in rental units will be needed over the next 10 years in Ontario, particularly family-sized space,” says Paul Smetanin, CANCEA president and CEO. “Since 1990, primary rental stock per capita has dropped in the GTHA by one-third. A greater supply of rental housing would slow down the rising cost of all forms of housing and provide shelter to more people.”

Thousands of Baby Boomers are among more than 50% of Ontario households with too much living space. In fact, CANCEA’s data found there are five million unused or spare bedrooms in Ontario.

“Unfortunately, these homeowners have limited options to move within the region if they want to downsize into appropriate housing,” Smetanin says. “One possible solution is an increase in the supply of ‘gentle density,’ also known as the missing middle.”

So, what is the ‘missing middle?’

It includes semi-detached homes, row homes, townhomes, multiplexes and courtyard apartments. Even a minor increase in this type of residential intensification would result in more people moving into smaller living spaces, as directed by the provincial Growth Plan, and could slow down rising housing costs.

According to the building industry consortium that commissioned the report, three other keys to easing the housing crisis and improving affordability are:

1. Eliminate barriers or create meaningful incentives to increase the supply of purpose-built rental stock.

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2. Encourage more transit-oriented development as part of the planning process for both new residential and mixed-use projects. CANCEA's research says about 70% of GTHA commuters use cars but only 20% use transit – these numbers must shift as the population increases.
3. Facilitate more mid-rise residential and mixed-use development through pre-zoning.

[Click here for the report.](#)

WHAT IS CANCEA?

CANCEA is a state-of-the-art interdisciplinary research organization that is dedicated to objective, independent and evidence-based analysis. They have a long history of providing holistic and collaborative understanding of the short- and long-term risks and returns behind policy decisions and prosperity. For more, go to cancea.ca.

WHO COMMISSIONED THIS REPORT?

The construction industry sponsors of this report include the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO), and the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS).

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