

NEWHOMES

Building new homes everywhere



MARTIN SLOFSTRA
EDITOR'S
NOTE

So, as it turns out, I spent a recent week off visiting three of the places we have featured on the cover of this *Homes and Decor* section.

First up was Southampton/Port Elgin (Cover Story, May 26). It's easy to understand why this place ends up on every *Best Places to Live* list in Ontario. And the \$2 trolley ride along beautiful Lake Huron between the towns is the best vacation deal ever. (www.sstrolley.com.)

Next up was Rockwood/Georgetown (Cover Story, June 23). For us, a pleasant drive along the old Highway 7 featured a stop at the Rockwood Conservation Area, and a hike along Eramosa river to the ruins of a historic mill that makes you instantly stop and take pictures.

And also, we visited Niagara Falls (Cover Story, May 19). The drive along Niagara Blvd. — from Niagara-On-The-Lake to Fort Erie with all its great stop-offs and rest areas including the floral clock, the Falls and Floral Showhouse/Miniature Village — is a personal favourite.

Tourist attractions aside, though, it's hard not to notice all the new home site activity in each area. And we did not have to veer off the main routes to see them, new homes are being built everywhere.

For example, on the drive from Rockwood to Georgetown, we drove right past Fernbrook Homes' Rockwell Estate Residences, and no doubt its proximity to Rockwood Conservation Area, is a huge draw.

Further along the highway and into Georgetown, and in plain sight, was the 42 Mill St. Condo site, which takes its inspiration from its close proximity to a quaint downtown and abundant parkland.

Port Elgin and area keeps getting busier and the Niagara region is bursting at the seams, so you can't help but wonder what effect all this

development will have on these communities.

The new home building appears to be respectful and in harmony with the surrounding environment, but talk to people who live there, and you will be sure to get a variety of opinions.

Business owners in specialty shops and restaurants like the new energy (and customers) that growth brings. Local residents, I talk to, value their quality of life, refer to their places as best kept secrets and would like to keep it that way.

As for me, it might be tempting but moving to any of these places won't happen any time soon, not as long as I commute into Toronto.

But with all the population growth and so many options throughout Ontario, you do wonder how long before it all changes.



Checking out the mill ruins at Rockwood Conservation Area.

Coordinating professional can help municipalities unlock housing supply



RICHARD LYALL
RESCON

(This is the conclusion of a three-part series stemming from the research findings of the RESCON report "Streamlining the Development and Approvals Process in Ontario.")

You've read here the last two weeks that more transparency and expanding the e-permitting system in Ontario can help to unlock the housing supply chain.

The third key recommendation relates to more complete applications — this means we are asking more from industry professionals so that we have more complete compliant and successful applications with less back and forth engagement with regulators.

After all, regulatory agencies often say applications from industry are not complete — and this is a major contributor to delays. In the report, we want to address this problem head on.

In a nutshell, we need to change the way we achieve regulatory compliance. To get more efficiency, it makes

sense if professionals, who already have an obligation to comply with all regulations, provide complete applications along with the supporting documentation, to show that they have taken all necessary steps to demonstrate and provide assurance of regulatory compliance.

When this happens, regulatory authorities can take on more of a process management and auditing role, which includes random and sometimes targeted expert technical audits. For this to work properly, we need to rely on our highly qualified building officials and other regulatory officials to take on more of an expert auditing role.

To make having a coordinating professional a legal requirement, we recommend that Queen's Park amend the Ontario Building Code, as recommended by the Elliot Lake Inquiry and other reports, to require a coordinating professional and supporting documentation for professionally designed projects that have more than one professional (like an architect or engineer)

Having a coordinating professional will also help to

avoid design errors, as seen with the mall collapse in Elliot Lake. British Columbia introduced a requirement for coordinating professionals more than 20 years ago, leading to a more streamlined system with higher quality applications.

Building officials from willing municipalities, working with stakeholders, could test an expanded version of the complete professional submissions — one that would go beyond documentation and verifying design coordination; it would also include peer (third-party) review of critical design elements.

We are happy to help the government discuss how to implement these goals. We strongly believe that doing so would meet their mandate of cutting red tape and streamlining approvals to help business thrive, give new-home buyers more choice of new houses and condos, and strengthen the economy.

— **Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, has represented the building industry in Ontario since 1991. Contact him @RESCONprez or at media@rescon.com.**

The GTA West corridor needs to be re-visited



DAVE WILKES
BILD

My work day has me driving across the GTA to attend meetings with stakeholders and I often find myself sitting in traffic on the 401 going nowhere fast.

I see drivers commuting to work, trucks transporting goods across the region and many like me trying to get to somewhere on time.

Earlier this year the Ontario government decided on the advice of an advisory panel's recommendation not to go

forward with the GTA West Corridor, instead a narrower corridor that is approximately one-third of the size of the analysis area of the environmental assessment will be protected from development.

While there have been some improvements, there have been no significant new highway addition to the western part of the GTA since the 407 nearly 20 years ago.

A recent Metrolinx study notes that traffic congestion will cost the GTA residents and businesses \$7 billion a year by 2031. Something must be done to improve traffic congestion in our region. Transportation infrastructure is vital to each

and every one of us as it links people to where we live, work, shop and play.

Where does the cancellation leave the residents of the GTA? The GTA Corridor West was not just a proposed highway. It was a means to unlock both commercial and residential land for development.

Its central location, running from highway 400 in Vaughan, across Caledon and Halton Hills and connecting to highways 401/407 in Milton, would have been a pressure relief for existing highways.

The economic benefits of the corridor would have been enormous. In Peel Region alone \$1.8 billion in goods is

moved to and from the area every day. Furthermore, four in nine jobs in Peel depend on the movement of goods.

The corridor would connect urban growth centres, facilitate the growth of new employment and businesses areas and create greater economic competitiveness.

Much of the recent development in the Town of Milton happened around highways 401 and 407. The GTA West Corridor would have had the same economic growth potential bringing new housing to the GTA that will see its population grow to 9.7 million by 2041.

BILD strongly supports a transportation network like

the one the GTA West Corridor would enable. It plays a significant role in sustaining the type of development that is in line with the the province's intensification policies.

It would allow us to plan and create complete communities within the area which is needed to meet future population growth.

During the 2018 provincial election campaign, the new provincial government made a commitment to re-visit the environmental assessment for the GTA West Corridor. It is important for the residents of the GTA that the provincial government make good on this promise.

As the municipal elections

approach, we are encouraging voters to talk to their candidates about ways to bring new of housing to market that people can afford to buy.

Visit www.buildforgrowth.ca and send a message to your local council or mayoral candidate to commit to increase housing supply and affordability for the people of the GTA.

— **Dave Wilkes is President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD). For the latest industry news and new home data, follow BILD on Twitter, @bildgta, or visit www.bildgta.ca.**