



Ontario builders want province to support proposal that will set the stage for e-permitting system

Feb. 16, 2021, Vaughan, Ont. – The [Residential Construction Council of Ontario \(RESCON\)](#) is urging the provincial government to provide funding for an initiative that will set the stage to expand the use of e-permitting and speed-up the development approvals process for new housing.

The organization also wants the province to continue working with the construction industry to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as well as increase support for skilled trades programs with proven high placement and retention rates to further enhance skilled trades opportunities for women and Black youth.

The requests are laid out in a provincial pre-budget submission made to Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy.

“Ontario municipalities need a standardized development approvals process and streamlined e-permitting system to help reduce the amount of time it takes to get housing projects approved in Ontario,” says RESCON president Richard Lyall. “Government has made digitization of services a priority through its Ontario Onwards Action Plan, and we are in desperate need of new housing, so this is a good fit.”

Housing supply is a serious issue in Ontario that has persisted throughout the pandemic. Development applications continue to rise to meet demand, but municipal resources are limited, causing bottlenecks which slows the process. The use of paper-based submissions only adds to the problem, especially with municipal staff working remotely.

Specifically, RESCON is asking the province to support the [One Ontario](#) proposal which is requesting funds to establish guidelines for provincial data exchange standards for a comprehensive e-permitting system.

A 2020 [report](#) by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis indicated the GTA could see up to 100,700 additional housing units by 2040, with the City of Toronto seeing 21,100 additional units by 2025, if there was a reduction in delays to the approvals process by six months and a 10-per-cent increase in investment.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, RESCON is requesting that the province keep working with the industry on enhanced screening measures and rapid-testing, as well as maintain existing efforts, including the Workplace PPE Supplier Directory, to ensure that PPE supply is sustained throughout the remainder of the pandemic.

The pre-budget submission notes that the government's leadership in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 has been integral to the construction industry's continued operation.

RESCON also recommends that support for training and education programs in the residential construction trades be sustained, as a skilled labour force is necessary to build new housing. By partnering and supporting employers, the province can improve and fund pathways into in-demand trades.

"It's essential that we promote careers in construction to students, guidance counsellors and parents in order to let them know that the skilled trades are a viable, well-paying career path," said Lyall.

[Click here](#) to view the pre-budget submission.

Background on RESCON: *RESCON is the province's leading association of residential builders committed to providing leadership and fostering innovation in the industry.*

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