

on the market

New, low-rise homes continue to achieve high sales volumes in growth communities. Hunters Crossing in Ajax by Stafford Homes, Seaton in Pickering by Fieldgate Homes, Riverland in Breslau by Empire Communities and Wallaceton in Kitchener by Heathwood Homes all had over 100 sales for the month of January.

Much of the new home sales are townhome product in the lower square footage range. Builders are also offering extended deposit structures, incentives such as free assignment, and reduction of parking costs.

Expanded transportation infrastructure will aid new home sales in growth areas such as Collingwood, Barrie, Wasaga Beach, Blue Mountain, Oshawa, Bowmanville, Kitchener, Hamilton and Burlington.

The advantages of virtual sales are important in creating a quick market entry for new sites.



Oshawa Breeze Phase 3 Midhaven Homes

Prices range from \$704,900 to \$834,900 for 1,290 sq. ft. to 2,228 sq. ft.
Detached homes on 30' and 40' lots
www.midhavenhomes.com



Aurora Aurora Hills Sorbara and Canvas Developments

Prices range from \$1,322,990 to \$1,409,990 for 2,374 sq. ft. to 3,614 sq. ft.
Detached homes on 40' lots
www.sorbara.com



Kleinburg Urban Green Kleinburg Pine Valley Estates

Prices range from \$969,900 to \$1,219,900 for 1,813 sq. ft. to 2,804 sq. ft.
Townhomes
<https://urbangreentowns.com>



Maple Julien Court Pace Developments

Prices range from \$1,099,990 to \$1,199,990 for 2,118 sq. ft. to 2,175 sq. ft.
Townhomes and semis
<http://juliencourt.ca>



Oakville Glen Abbey Encore Countrywide Homes

Prices range from \$1,689,990 to \$1,884,990 for 2,632 sq. ft. to 4,457 sq. ft.
Detached homes on 42', 45' and 60' lots
www.countrywidehomes.ca

Shortage of construction workers could get even worse



RICHARD LYALL
RESCON

Canada must find a way to bring in more immigrants who are interested in working in construction. Otherwise, our homebuilding industry could find itself in dire straits.

The sector could run short of skilled trades workers if the numbers aren't increased, resulting in a possible delay of much-needed housing builds.

We're already under-producing on housing, especially in the Greater Toronto Area, but the present situation will only make matters worse.

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) recently had a report done that crunched the numbers and resulted in some interesting findings.

The research was done by Ahd AlAshry, a University of Toronto graduate who is interning as a policy and programs co-ordinator at RESCON. She did a deep dive into the immigration numbers and found that a considerable labour shortage has been looming over the industry for the past few years.

The industry's current growth projections, along with the number of baby boomers set to retire very

soon from jobsites, place the sector at risk of a sharp labour deficit.

The construction sector will need to recruit about 310,000 new workers by 2029, however current training will provide only about 228,000 new workers, leaving the market with an 82,000 deficit.

Immigration has always been one of the main ways that construction has filled its labour shortages, relying on European immigrants to fill the gap but this is no longer the case as European countries are looking for ways to fill their own labour shortages.

Other developed countries are facing the same problem as Canada, and they are now increasingly competing with us to recruit workers. And often, qualifications of immigrants with a background in the skilled trades doesn't match Canadian requirements, which means they need additional certification.

Presently, Canada takes in about 310,000 immigrants a year. In 2020, due to the pandemic and its restrictions, there was a shortfall in admissions. Only 283,390 immigrants came to Canada in 2020, almost 58,000 short of the original 341,000 target and nearly 20,000 to 30,000 less than the past two years.

However, there is some good news on the horizon.

The federal government has raised its targets and hopes to bring in 401,000 permanent residents in 2021, 411,000 in 2022, and 421,000 in 2023.

The government has also vowed that 60 per cent of those immigrants will be from the "economic class" to rebuild and boost the Canadian economy.

There are a number of pathways for skilled trades immigrants to enter Canada, but many of the federal immigration programs are either too expensive or have strict requirements.

The Temporary Foreign Workers program, for example, is costly and takes a long time, which is not ideal for an employer who is seeking workers right away. The Federal Skilled Worker Program and the Federal Skilled Trades Class, meanwhile, have strict language and educational requirements.

Despite COVID-19, people are still buying homes, so the need remains. It is imperative that we find more ways to bring in immigrants that are interested in careers in construction. Our economic future depends on it.

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

New regulatory agency launches in Ontario

MARTIN SLOFSTRA
Editor Homes And Decor

A new Ontario regulator aimed at improving protection for new home buyers, which takes over the licensing function from Tarion, has started operations as of this month. The Home Construction Regulatory Authority (HCRA) is now responsible for regulating and licensing the people and companies who build and sell new homes in the province.

Among the key changes, the HCRA is also implementing a streamlined complaints process, "providing a clear, straightforward way for a new home buyer to raise real concerns about a builder or vendor's conduct," says Tim Hadwen, interim CEO of HCRA.

In addition to licensing, the HCRA plans to expand and add to educational resources it provides for consumers. This includes the Ontario Builder Directory (OBD) — the official source of background information about each of Ontario's more than 5,000 new home builders and vendors.

The OBD provides current information on each builder and vendor's licence status and specifics such as whether they have had any convictions, the number of homes they have built, and their warranty history.

It also lists illegal builders and provides details about charges and convictions to better protect consumers. "We will also ensure consist-

ency across the sector, curtailing unethical and illegal builders and maintaining a fair marketplace," says Hadwen.

Previously, Tarion was responsible for both licensing and warranty administration; it will continue to deliver Ontario's new home warranty program. The creation of a separate licensing body was recommended by a major review of Ontario's homebuilding sector to remove any potential for a conflict of interest.

"In essence, the HCRA will ensure professional standards for the builder, and Tarion will backstop responsibility for the building," Hadwen said.

Hadwen says if new home buyers don't exactly where to turn, the HCRA and Tarion are committed to a "no wrong door" approach, meaning new home buyers will be directed to the right place to deal with their specific issues.

For additional information, visit www.hcraontario.ca.