

Needless duplication of effort is stifling development



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Premier Doug Ford's comments this past week that regulations and red tape are big elements in getting the economy moving again is music to my ears.

The fact he wants to work closely with municipalities to get buildings approved faster across the region is certainly good news. He rightly noted that delays in getting building permits causes economic leakage as companies leave the province and go south to build faster and easier.

This is a big step towards fixing barriers to jobs and investment, eliminating duplication and getting funding into infrastructure which is needed for housing development.

On the subject of infrastructure, meanwhile, a new report done by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis indicates that the federal government is underfunding Ontario infrastructure to the tune of two per cent of GDP.

Yet the feds are playing games with the province on providing badly needed support to municipalities hit hard by the shutdown.

Municipalities are now cutting or delaying infrastructure projects at the same time the feds are apparently looking for "shovel ready" projects.

That makes no sense and the delays are damaging Ontario's economy as the province tries to get running. The only thing shovel-ready from Ottawa on infrastructure thus far has been the rhetoric. That's likely because there is more to be gained politically from announcing new projects than helping with existing work.

We also have climate change

duplication with municipalities on a sophomoric pursuit of climate change building initiatives even though we have perfectly good building codes responding to said challenge.

Why the duplication which has to be carried by new homeowners and renters? Climate change is a global problem that does not stop at municipal, regional or even provincial boundaries within our Canadian context.

There is no need for local governments trying to independently lead the charge with their own unique building mandates when we have a building code. Evidence shows they really don't know what they are doing, yet taxpayers are footing the bill.

Fragmented municipal requirements affecting residential construction adds another layer to an already challenging development and building process, making it very complex for a homebuilder who operates in multiple jurisdictions to navigate.

It is illogical for construction standards to differ from town to neighbouring town, especially as climate change does not stop at municipal boundaries.

Municipal governments who develop their own construction requirements operate under a decentralized framework of regulation, have the least amount of funding and resources to develop and administer these "standards."

Simply put, they can't afford the necessary research and development to prove their practices are effective. Even Toronto, representing the largest municipality in Ontario which pioneered the development of its own green standard, has reported there is no transparency into how the programs they developed are actually working. That is nuts.

The Toronto Green Stand-

ard, for example, was not established through disciplined technical practice and proof. Rather, it morphed from a voluntary standard originating out of the planning and development approvals process into the now mandatory standard.

It is now applicable to all building types, likely at the behest of local councillors who often know little about the technical nature of construction.

There are more pragmatic ways to go about pursuing green initiatives than having each municipality go down a rabbit hole of developing green standards. Unintended consequences ultimately cost homeowners and new renters money and add to construction complexity for builders. Because municipalities don't have in-house building science expertise or resources, developing and implementing these green policies is burdensome and delays projects. Technology, new product offerings and construction methodologies also change quickly and municipal programs can not keep pace. So, their policies often become stagnant and outdated soon after they come into effect.

Do the homeowner and renter a favour; let the building code and related experts address green building. Instead, time and money would be better spent on affordable housing, shelters, retrofitting older buildings and streamlining the zoning process for affordable housing.

Kudos to Premier Ford for deciding to cut waste and speed up the building approvals process. Now we need to get the feds to sing off the same song sheet. They must stop dithering, support municipalities and put away the duplicate climate bandwagons.

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



Working closely with municipalities to get building approved faster will go a long way to getting much needed housing on the market. *CITY OF TORONTO IMAGE*

on the market

The new home market is recovering well with new home sales offices re-opening their physical locations with safety precautions.

Low-rise sales significantly declined in April and are now moving in a positive direction with an 88% increase in May over April.

Approximately 50% of all sites have re-opened their offices with more to come and new site openings are now previewing.

The top ten builders on Trimart's Top Builder List 2020 are: 1. Mattamy Homes; 2. Minto Homes; 3. Great Gulf Homes; 4. Townwood Homes; 5. National Homes; 6. Tribute Communities; 7. Regal Crest Homes; 8. Pace Developments; 9. Sorbara Group; 10. Starlane Homes.

Examples of notable sites are: Orchard West in Bowmanville by Treasure Hill Homes; Oh Townhomes in Oshawa by Falconcrest Homes and Graywood Developments; Victorian Village in Alliston by Previn Court Homes; Pathways in Brampton by Brookfield Residential; and, Glendor Towns in Burlington by DVLP Property Group.



Alliston
Victorian Village
Previn Court Homes

Prices range from \$519,900 to \$879,900 for 1,700 sq. ft. to 3,950 sq. ft. (finished basement) Townhomes plus detached homes on 32', 40', 45', 50' and 60' lots



Bowmanville
Orchard West
Treasure Hill Homes

Prices range from \$569,900 to \$1,039,900 for 1,615 sq. ft. to 3,643 sq. ft. Townhomes plus detached homes on 37', 40', 45' and 50' lots
www.treasurehill.com



Brampton
Pathways
Brookfield Residential

Prices range from \$989,990 to \$1,419,990 for 2,660 sq. ft. to 4,350 sq. ft. Detached homes on 36', 38', 42', 46' and 50' lots
www.brookfieldresidential.com



Oshawa
Oh Townhomes
Falconcrest Homes and Graywood Developments

Prices range from \$555,990 to \$605,990 for 1,622 sq. ft. to 1,889 sq. ft. Townhomes
www.ohtowns.com/



Burlington
Glendor Towns
DVLP Property Group

Prices range from \$554,900 to \$834,900 for 771 sq. ft. to 1,965 sq. ft. End-unit bungalow townhome and townhomes
www.glendortowns.com

Information provided by Trimart Research Corporation. Prices and features subject to change. For more information or to list a new site opening, contact Trimart Corporation at admin@trimart.ca.

