

onthemarket

New home builders are releasing more homes strategically across the GTA. Many growth communities are launching and selling over 100 homes at a time in areas like Oshawa, Markham and Courtice.

Builders selling larger lots and many corner lots are releasing 10-20 homes at a time while prices have risen over the last several months. New infrastructure in and around major transit hubs is aiding development.

Post pandemic economic recovery and political leadership will be very important to sustain the current and higher levels of new home development.

Development charges, fees and levies are adding to the cost of new homes. Also, municipal approval times can greatly influence the number of new homes brought to the market.



Richmond Hill
Richmond Hill Grace
 Grand Grace Developments
 Prices range from \$788,990 to \$1,018,990 for 855 sq. ft. to 1,385 sq. ft.
 Townhomes
<http://richmondhillgrace.com>



Oshawa
Dreamscape
 Fieldgate Homes

Prices range from \$908,990 to \$1,508,990 for 1,249 sq. ft. to 3,249 sq. ft.
 Detached homes on 30', 36' and 42' lots
www.fieldgatehomes.com



Milton
16 Mile Creek
 Primont Homes
 Prices range from \$949,990 to \$2,098,990 for 1,318 sq. ft. to 4,545 sq. ft.
 Townhomes plus detached homes on 30', 36' and 43' lots
www.primonthomes.com



Richmond Hill
Jubilee Towns
 Arista Homes

Prices range from \$1,394,990 to \$1,524,990 for 1,750 sq. ft. to 2,275 sq. ft.
 Townhomes
www.aristahomes.com



Richmond Hill
Uplands of Swan Lake
 Caliber Homes
 Prices range from \$999,990 to \$1,489,990 for 1,960 sq. ft. to 2,830 sq. ft.
 Townhomes
www.caliberhomes.ca

Too many agencies and too many zoning bylaws



RICHARD LYALL
 RESCON

Famed theoretical physicist Albert Einstein is credited with saying that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. He was right. If we are to get a handle on the current housing crisis in Ontario, we need to think out of the box and find ways to boost supply.

The current way of doing things is not working. We have the lowest number of housing units per capita of any G7 nation. To match the average ratio of the G7, we would need to build 1.8 million homes. That will not happen, as we have averaged 188,000 home completions a year for the last decade.

The shortage has contributed to the rising cost of housing. Prices for new builds and existing homes have surged. The Toronto Regional Real Estate Board reports that in

July the average sale prices of a detached home in the GTA increased 21.7 per cent. The lack of inventory has resulted in bidding wars for existing homes and rentals as well.

A recent survey from RBC found that more than one-third of Canadians between ages 18 and 40 no longer believe they will be able to own a home. It is obvious that minor tweaking will not bring us to where we should be.

With more than 400,000 new immigrants expected to enter Canada in 2021 and 2022, it is estimated that the shortage of affordable housing is already costing the GTA up to \$7.9 billion annually. So that is the picture. What is the solution?

The core of the issue is the dysfunctional nature of the system. There's an abundance of zoning bylaws that restrict the supply of homes and too many agencies involved in the approvals process.

For starters, we need a standardized e-permitting system in Ontario to speed-up routine approvals for projects

that will deliver housing. Another idea would be to have a planning co-ordinator at the local level who would be tasked to work with a developer's consulting team to help co-ordinate approvals between municipalities, and conservation and transportation authorities.

Presently, there is no one body in Canada or Ontario that is responsible for ensuring there is an adequate supply of housing. Hence, we have a crisis.

A provincial housing summit would be a good idea to figure out what steps must be taken in order for the province to meet demand. Perhaps we should revisit the *More Homes More Choice Act*. What the legislation achieved was a step in the right direction, but more fixes may be needed.

We need a system that recognizes housing is essential to our quality of life, economic growth and competitiveness. Lack of housing will hamper our recovery coming out of the pandemic. We must take action soon.

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

'I'll take more space and a bigger yard with that'

DIANNE DANIEL

Special to Postmedia Network

After more than a year of staring at walls and reflecting on choices during lockdowns, Canadians are reassessing home life. And the verdict is in: we want more space — both indoors and out.

New research from financial comparison site Finder.com shows that nearly half of Canadians are planning a move in 2021 and the top priority is to upsize.

"The number one thing Canadians want in their next home, whether it's a rental or they're going to buy, is bigger," said Finder.com's Nicole McKnight, lead researcher on the report, noting that about 14 million Canadians are planning to change where and how they live.

"I was a little surprised when I first saw that, but I think it speaks to having that year-and-a-half in your home, thinking about what more would you want," she said.

According to the report, the top five factors Canadians want in their next home are: larger square footage (48.3%), an elevated, more luxurious style (48%), a more spacious yard (43.8%), a driveway or garage (43.7%) and a low-crime neighbourhood.

According to McKnight, size matters most to Ontarians where more than half of those on the move are looking for larger homes with more rooms, including a home office.

"24 per cent of Ontarians want a home office in their next place, more than any other province, indicating Ontarians have really embraced the notion of virtual work," said McKnight. "Priorities are changing."

Overall, the findings indicate Canadians remain in a period of housing transition and several trends may be happening at once. For example, people are leaving hot housing markets in urban settings to gain more square footage in bedroom commu-

nities or rural settings.

They may also be nervous to take public transit due to the pandemic, making "car culture" more of a priority. And researchers saw "three times as many break ups in the last year," said McKnight, which could account in part for so many people being on the move.

Millennials, aged 25 to 40, are driving the upsize trend with 52 per cent looking to "level up" in their next home. They also want to be close to amenities like restaurants, bars and gyms. "Whether it's bigger, more stylish or more luxurious, they're looking for something better," said McKnight.

For Gen Z (24 and younger), the top priority in a home is proximity to work, transit and friends, while Baby Boomers (aged 57 to 75) cite a driveway or garage and low crime neighbourhood as main features, with one in four looking for an energy efficient home as well.

The only thing Gen X (aged 41 to 56) cares about more than any other generation is a spacious yard, which could be a reflection of the fact that they are most likely to have school-aged children, noted McKnight.